

**REGNUM STUDIES IN GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY**

(Previously GLOBAL THEOLOGICAL VOICES series)

**Series Preface**

The latter part of the twentieth century witnessed a global level of change in Christian dynamics. One significant development was the rise of the churches in the global south, not only in their number but also in their engagement with their socio-cultural contexts. *Regnum Studies in Global Christianity* explores the issues that the global church struggles with, focusing particularly on churches in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

The series publishes studies that will help the global church learn not only from past and present, but also from provocative and prophetic voices for the future. The editors and the publisher particularly pray that the series as a public space will encourage the southern churches to make an important contribution to the shaping of a healthy future for global Christianity. The editors invite theological seminaries and universities from around the world to submit relevant scholarly dissertations for possible publication in the series. It is hoped that the series will provide a forum for South-to-South as well as South-to-North dialogues.

**Series Editors**

Ruth Padilla DeBorst    President, Latin American Theological Fraternity, Santiago, Chile  
Hwa Yung                Bishop, The Methodist Church in Malaysia, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia  
Wonsuk Ma                Executive Director, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, UK  
Damon So                Research Tutor, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, UK  
Miroslav Volf            Director, Yale Center for Faith and Culture, New Haven, MA, USA

**ORTHODOX HANDBOOK ON ECUMENISM**

**Resources for Theological Education**

“That they all may be one” (John 17:21)

*Editors*

Pantelis Kalaitzidis  
Thomas FitzGerald  
Cyril Hovorun  
Aikaterini Pekridou  
Nikolaos Asproulis  
Guy Liagre  
Dietrich Werner

Volos Academy Publications  
(in cooperation with WCC Publications, Geneva, and Regnum Books International, Oxford)  
Volos, Greece, 2014

chance to be employed. Religion is taught according to the respective religion of the student, taught by the teacher who practices that respective religion.

"Ours are the only schools to have never carried out missionary activity. Others who came tried to proselytize to the local population. The Latins (Romans) and Protestants took advantage of the local congregation here, as they were faced with war and hunger. They were offered free schooling and refuge in return for joining their Churches. For this reason, any non-Orthodox Christian Arabs had converted at some point throughout the years," says Archimandrite Innokentios.

In the year 1917, during the Russian Revolution, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem had fallen into debt following the British Mandate period, which lasted until 1947. During this time, the patriarchate lost numerous properties. But within the past 30 years, substantial change has occurred. There has been about 30,000 square meters of construction added to the patriarchal school properties this past decade. About 200 high school students graduate each year from the schools in Jordan alone. Since the repair of the patriarchate's financial status, much more focus has been reverted to the educational initiatives. Ranking second and third place among all private schools in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the patriarchal schools are in high demand.

One problem of the past that has been solved with the growth of the schools and influx of highly qualified teachers is that many young people are being offered employment, especially women. "The societies we live in are theocratic, and therefore women can't just take any job, especially in Arab society. For women within an Arab society, to be a teacher is a dignified position; it's not just any job. It commands respect," says Patriarch Theophilos III.

It is an aspiration of Patriarch Theophilos III to re-open the Theological School of the Holy Cross, which closed in 1912 due to financial adversities. He says the facilities are ready for use, and the patriarchate is prepared to host a theological faculty. However, financial resources in order to pay student tuitions and faculty salaries are the main reason for the delay of the school's re-opening.

The Greek (Rum) Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem is a supporter of ecumenism in the capacity that theology, sacraments, and tradition do not deviate from their apostolic succession. The patriarchate has assigned representatives to the central committees of the World Council of Churches as well as the Middle East Council of Churches. It does make a distinction, however, between being ecumenist, which it rejects, versus being ecumenical. The patriarchate's main objective is to participate and benefit from dialogue, disregarding the notion of becoming one in the Eucharist. Clergy consider their responsibilities to be multi-faceted. They are obligated to their duties imparted to them at ordination, while also serving as protectors of the most precious shrines in Christendom. A man's willingness to devote his life to such a cause is usually not discernable by his desire to go to the Holy Land, but rather, to stay. Nevertheless, Jerusalem and the Holy Land will be visited by pilgrims from all faiths undoubtedly for all time. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem continues to uphold its belief that all are welcome to venerate that, which for them, makes Jerusalem the capital of the world, while protecting the holy places for what they once were, and what they will become again.

#### Bibliography

- Montefiore, Simon Sebag, *Jerusalem: The Biography*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2011).  
 Wagner, Donald E., *Dying in the Land of Promise: Palestine and Palestinian Christianity from Pentecost to 2000*, (London: Melisende, 2001).  
 Runciman, Steven, *A History of the Crusades* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1987).  
 Woods, David, "The 60 Martyrs of Gaza and the Martyrdom of Bishop Sophronius of Jerusalem" *ARAM Periodical* 15 (2003): 129-150.

*Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism*

- Betts, Robert Brenton, *The Southern Portals of Byzantium*, (London: The Musical Times Publications Limited, 2009).  
 Papadopoulos Chrysostomos, *History of the Church of Jerusalem*, (1910) (in Greek).  
 Al-Sakakini, Khalil, *The Diaries of Khalil Sakakini Volume Two: Orthodox Renaissance, World War I, Exile to Damascus*. (Ramallah: The Institute of Jerusalem Studies, 2004).  
 Montefiore, Simon Sebag *Jerusalem: The Biography* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011).  
 Dowling, Theodore Edward, *The Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1909).  
 Gaganiaras Damaskinos *The administrative structure of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem*, (Thessaloniki: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2008) (in Greek).  
 Katz, Itmar and Kark, Ruth *The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and its Congregation: Dissent Over Real Estate*. *International Journal Middle East Studies*, vol. 37, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

## Bishara Ebeid

The Holy Land where God decided to incarnate and to conclude the economy of salvation, and Jerusalem, the center of the world where God was crucified in the flesh and resurrected, is the place where the Patriarchate of the Greek (Rum) Orthodox Church is settled. Through this paper we would like to point out the role of the Patriarchate in the ecumenical movement and its statement on this movement. We will begin by arguing the historical role of the Patriarchate in the dialogue among Christians, then we will focus on the current situation of the Patriarchate and the ecumenical movement, and end with some critical remarks.

#### Introduction

When someone talks about the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, one cannot forget the particular situation of the area and how the political and economic conditions reflect the view that the people and the ecclesiastical hierarchy can have on the ongoing situation of the Christian world. One can describe the particularity of this land in one phrase: where the Love was incarnate, where the Prince of the Peace has established his kingdom of Peace, there is no love, there is no peace, it is a zone under conflict.

Talking about the ecumenical movement brings to mind one word "dialogue", meaning discussion in a synodical way. The fact is that ecclesiastical life started in Jerusalem with the apostolic synod in 49 AD<sup>12</sup> The lesson that this synod gives is how to live in unity in diversity, unity in plurality, and demonstrate the message of love that goes to embrace the "other", the "different". And today in the area of Jerusalem, the Holy City, we live with the others, with the different, and one can ask, do we embrace them? Do we try to live in unity in plurality and diversity? To respond to this question, we need to take a historical view of the Patriarchate and the zone.

#### A Historical view<sup>13</sup>

Egeria during her pilgrimage in the holy land (4th-5th cen.) mentions that when the Bishop of Jerusalem was speaking in Greek, one deacon was translating his speech into Syriac-Aramaic, to make his speech comprehensible

<sup>12</sup> Acts 15.

<sup>13</sup> It is not easy to make a historical view with all the details, the nature of our article limit as to point the most important events that could help us to understand better the historic background of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

*Part IV: Ecumenical Dialogue in various Orthodox Churches and Settings*

to those who did not understand Greek.<sup>14</sup> This testimony can demonstrate the coexistence of cultures, and respect for diversity in one period of divisions and schisms (Council of Ephesus and Council of Chalcedon). That means that even if Greek was considered the language of the orthodoxy of Chalcedon, the people of Palestine and the Patriarchate had no problem using other languages<sup>15</sup> to serve as one bridge of dialogue with the non-Chalcedonians.

The monasteries of Palestine had special missionary campaigns in Arabia, which means they were in rapport with different cultures.<sup>16</sup> In these monasteries, and because of the particularity of being in the Holy Land, one can notice the plurality in the liturgical life<sup>17</sup> and the liberty in expressing theological views. It is clear that Palestine was the hostile land of a dialogue between Chalcedonians and the non-Chalcedonians.<sup>18</sup> The Origenist monks received hospitality in the monasteries of Jerusalem,<sup>19</sup> and we cannot forget to mention that Caesarea of Palestine was the second home of Origen himself where he found a refuge. All these facts show the openness of the people of Palestine and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. We absolutely need to see these events of the history of the church of Jerusalem by reading it in their context. This means that having a dialogue in that time is not the same thing when we talk about ecumenism and the ecumenical movement today. But it surely demonstrates the plurality and the acceptance of others in some conditions.

This situation continued under the Arabic conquest of the Holy Land (638 AD). But, we must notice that now we have a new element. The center of control is not Constantinople but the capital of the Arabic empire, al-Medina, Damascus or Baghdad etc., and the language now is a frank language for the Christians of the zone: the Arabic language. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem had begun a new period now. We can say that when Sophronius, the patriarch of the Holy City, gave the keys of Jerusalem to the Caliph 'Umar bin al-Hattab, a new chapter of the history of the Patriarchate began.

In this period we have a lot of works written, especially by the Melkite monks (Chalcedonians) of the monasteries of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, in Arabic, which demonstrate the ecumenical dialogue that led the Patriarchate. It was a challenge that the first Christians who used the Arabic language were Melkites of Palestine and belonged to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The oldest, in fact, Christian work written in Arabic, *On the Triune Nature of God* (Sinai Arabic MS 154)<sup>20</sup> comes from this zone and shows how the Christians in this land knew Islam and the Qur'an, and they could write apologetic works to defend their faith and their identity.<sup>21</sup>

Another work that can show us this open minded atmosphere are the letters that were written by Theodore Abū Qurrah, the theologian of the patriarch of Jerusalem Thomas (811-820): one letter was sent to his friend who had been Jacobite and became Melkite, and the another one was sent to the Armenian to ask them to return to the Melkite

<sup>14</sup> Egeria, *Itinerarium*, PLS 1, 1091, 47, 4.

<sup>15</sup> S. Griffith, "From Aramaic to Arabic: The Languages of the Monasteries of Palestine in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods" in *The Beginnings of Christian Theology in Arabic. Muslim-Christian Encounter in the Early Islamic Period* (Variorum collected studies series 746), (Padstow 2002), X 16 - X 24.

<sup>16</sup> S. Griffith, "The Arabic account of 'Abd al-Masīh an-Naḡrānī al-Ḡassānī" in *Arabic Christianity in the Monasteries of Ninth Century Palestine* (Variorum collected studies series 380), (Padstow 1992), X 331- X 332. See more in, Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City. An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire*, (Basil Blackwell and Mott Ltd: Oxford 1966).

<sup>17</sup> S. Griffith, "From Aramaic to Arabic", X 16- X 24.

<sup>18</sup> Cfr. L. Perrone, *La chiesa di Palestina e le controversie cristologiche. Dal concilio di Efeso (431) al secondo concilio di Costantinopoli (553)* (TRSR 18), (Brescia 1980).

<sup>19</sup> Cfr., Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy. The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); especially read the first chapter; Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City*, 123-142 (chapter VII).

<sup>20</sup> *Fī Taḥlīq al-Lāh al-Wāḥid*, in: *An Arabic version of the Acts of the Apostles and the seven Catholic Epistles from an eighth or ninth century ms. In the Convent of St Katherine on Mount Sinai, with a treatise On the Triune nature of God with translation, from the same codex*, ed. Margaret Gibson, (London, 1899), (English translation) 2-36, (Arabic text) 74-107.

<sup>21</sup> Cf., S. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque. Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam*, (Princeton-Oxford, 2008), 53ss.

confession. Because of this letter, Abū Qurra went to Armenia to have a dialogue with the theologians there. The same theologian had a dialogue with Muslims mutakallimūn (theologians) in the court of the Caliph al-Ma'mūn.<sup>22</sup>

This view can help us to understand the exact spirit of the Patriarchate in that time, a spirit of dialogue of faith and truth. Having a dialogue means having a longing to the unity of Christians. Again we must read these theological politics in the context of their period.

With the Ottoman Empire we have a new character in the situation of the Holy Land, and especially of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Having the knowledge that the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophanes (1608-1644), went to Istanbul (Constantinople) and submitted documents to the Sultan Murād IV to prove that the privileged position claimed by the Greek Orthodox church with respect to the holy sites had been acknowledged and reaffirmed by the greatest leaders of Islam,<sup>23</sup> we can understand that the division of the Christians divided also the pilgrimages of the Holy Land. And from that time, meaning from the time that the Sultan gave rights to some groups of Christians to have control in some pilgrimages and another time to others, the problems between Christians started to become more complicated. The rights which became a *Status quo* for the Christians are still in practice today, even if there is no more Sultan.<sup>24</sup>

For the Greek patriarchates in the Ottoman Empire we have a new phenomenon: the Hellenization and re-Byzantinization of these patriarchates. Especially in Jerusalem we have the foundation of *The Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher*.<sup>25</sup> This fact can demonstrate the new politics of these churches; unfortunately, it was the beginning of a period of enmity between the different groups of Christians, between hierarchy, monks and laity.

Another element of this period that helped to force this division between Christians were the movements of missionaries in the whole Ottoman empire from Europe and Western Christianity (and the Russian Orthodox Church).<sup>26</sup> With these movements we have the start of the phenomenon of proselytism, which left a negative imprint in the memories of the Eastern churches, among them the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.<sup>27</sup> A very logical reaction was the closed politics, and the writings about the falsity of the other Christians. There is no longer an atmosphere of dialogue, but an atmosphere of protection, which had its origins in the time of the Crusades. One glimpse of the works of this period can tell us about the negative atmosphere. Most of these works are polemical works,<sup>28</sup> without a place for a dialogue or discussion, and are absolutely related to the following conditions: historical, political, economical and theological.

#### Ecumenical Movement and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem

With the start of the Ecumenical Movement in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we have the start of a new chapter of the life of the devised churches. The patriarchate of Jerusalem was involved in this movement too, because

<sup>22</sup> Cf., Samir K. Samir, *Abū Qurrah. Al-sīrah wa-l-marāḡi*, (Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 2000), 33-46.

<sup>23</sup> Cf., Oded Peri, *Christianity under Islam in Jerusalem. The Question of the Holy Sites in Early Ottoman Times*, (Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 2001), 105.

<sup>24</sup> The book of Oded Peri is so important to understand the question of this period, see, *idem*. The last paragraph of the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter is so illustrative: "Ottoman policy in the Question of the Holy Sites seems to have been a working combination between a religious world view, political sagacity and practical considerations of economic profitability", *idem*, 200.

<sup>25</sup> *Idem*, 98ss.

<sup>26</sup> For more information about this period you can see the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of, Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World. The Roots of Sectarianism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>27</sup> For the relation between the Papacy in Rome and the Sultan in Istanbul you can see the work, Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans. The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453-1923*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); its so important to understand the foundation of the oriental catholic churches and their rule in proselytism and the negative relation with the eastern orthodox churches.

<sup>28</sup> You can see the 3<sup>rd</sup> vol. of the work of G. Graf in which we have the name of works and the authors and a description of each one, Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur. Dritter Band: Die Schriftsteller von der Mitte des 15. Bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts Melchiten und Maroniten*, (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1949).

of some reasons and conditions which will talk about in the next paragraphs. After the Ottoman Empire, in the Holy Land after the First World War, we had the English conquest. Then after the Second World War we have in 1948 the foundation of the new state of Israel, which made a very big change to the zone. We can notice that the real necessity of a dialogue within the churches started after the First World War; the churches started to argue their role in the world and how they could help in the establishment of peace.<sup>29</sup> In fact, from the Orthodox perspective we can see this beginning with the encyclical letter of the ecumenical patriarchate Joachim III in 1920.

### The Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Anglicans

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem, due in part to its own diverse population of different Christian confessions and groups and also to other political and economic reasons, started very important and serious ecumenical dialogues, first of all with the Anglican Church. During the Ottoman period, the Russian Orthodox Church helped the Orthodox Church in the Middle East. Such help for the Patriarchate of Jerusalem was so important, because the Russians were a precious economical source. The Hellenization of the patriarchate and the help for the Patriarchate were two reasons that influenced Damianos, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, in that time to approach England for help. We think that the description by Bryn Geffert makes it evident:

The patriarchate of Jerusalem was every bit as troubled as the patriarchate of Constantinople. Deep divisions separated its laity and parish priests (most of whom were indigenous Arabs) from the Greek monks who governed the Jerusalem synod from their headquarters at the convent of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulcher. The Brotherhood elected the patriarch and all members of the Synod, excluding the Arab laity from administrative matters. Russia had long provided economic assistance to the Jerusalem patriarchate, due both to her political interests in the region and her wish to aid the thousand of Russian pilgrims to the Holy Land. But the Great War bankrupted Russia, Russia lost its Orthodox tsar, and Jerusalem lost its main source of income...<sup>30</sup>

The Brotherhood got help from Greece, precisely from Venizelos. Into this situation entered England, which had soon occupied Jerusalem. In this situation the Church of England had its word. Damianos accepted the Anglican's orders, even if the synod did not agree with this decision, showing how the political and economical conditions were behind this approach. And like Bryn Geffert mentioned in his conclusions that "*Greeks and Arabs in Jerusalem each sought to convince their British overseers to support their respective, feuding camps*",<sup>31</sup> England decided to help the Greek side due to a political interest in the area.<sup>32</sup>

This atmosphere between the Patriarchate and the Anglican Church is demonstrated by the Remarks of the Patriarch Theophilos III<sup>33</sup> at the installation of Hosam Naoum as Dean of Saint George's Cathedral in Jerusalem. On 17 May 2012, he said,

The Anglican Communion has a long and important relationship of particular significance. We remember with warmth the recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose commitment to closer relations with the Orthodox Church is well known, and whose support of the Christian communities of the Holy Land has been especially encouraging to us all.

<sup>29</sup> Bryn Geffert, *Eastern Orthodox and Anglicans. Diplomacy, Theology, and Politics of Interwar Ecumenism*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 32.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 448-449.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 95s.

<sup>33</sup> We must notice that Theophilos III studied in England (Durham University) and there he received his post-graduate education which means a lot to the rapport between the Church of England and the patriarchate of Jerusalem. See, <http://www.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/en/diathrwsh.htm> (last accessed, 7.6.2012).

As Orthodox and Anglicans in the Holy Land, we share many of the same challenges as well as many commitments. Most of all we share the commitment of ensuring the well-being and the security of the Christian presence in the Holy Land. Christianity is native to this region, and we regard the Holy Land as our home. And we understand that a vital, vibrant Christian presence is essential to the true nature of the Holy Land as a place of genuine religious, cultural and ethnic diversity and co-existence.<sup>34</sup>

The words of the Patriarch have a big significance to the situation in the Holy Land, and show the reality of this area, which we will discuss at another point. We wanted by this citation to demonstrate that the rapport between the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Anglican Church which started after the First World War, still exists and behind this rapport there is always an interest. Today we are talking about the support of the Christians communities of the Holy Land that comes from the Anglican Church and the need for co-existence. This means that the reasons are political and social, at the beginning, and that behind such rapport was a political and economical motivation.

### The Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the WCC

The rapport with the Anglican Church was a first step of the Patriarchate to the ecumenical movement. In 1948 in Amsterdam we have the first assembly of the WCC, the Assembly of the Foundation. In this assembly, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem was a member of the WCC. But from the eighth assembly held in Harare 1998, the Patriarchate stopped sending representatives to the assemblies and delegates to the WCC's events, but did not cancel his participation as a member. With the patriarch Theophilos III, after the Patriarchate being absent in the 9<sup>th</sup> assembly too in Porto Alegre 2006, returned to being present in the events of the WCC, meaning a new start to a new ecumenical period. The symbolic meeting between the Patriarch Theophilos III and the General Secretary of the WCC Reverend Dr. Olav Tveit can demonstrate this new period, and to make it more clear we will cite how the patriarchate had expressed this meeting:

His Beatitude pronounced the blessings of Jerusalem to the recently elected General Secretary of the WCC. This election was made by the Central Committee of the WCC convened during the months of August and September 2009, with duties being assumed from the beginning of the year 2010. Reverend Dr. Olav Tveit, in order for Reverend Dr. Olav Tveit to be able to continue his mission on behalf of the Christian rapprochement for the protection of human rights and for the peaceful coexistence between nations and religions, as an ecclesiastic and not as a secular organization, as a place of prayer and of theological dialogue and not as a place of political activities.

The General Secretary explained to His Beatitude that he strongly wishes to renew communication with the Land where the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ took place.

His Beatitude emphasized how important it is for the Patriarchate to contribute to the preservation of the Christian character of the city of Jerusalem and of its status as an open city to the adherents and believers of all religions.<sup>35</sup>

The interest of the patriarch is so clear: "to contribute to the preservation of the Christian character of the city of Jerusalem and of its status as an open city to the adherents and believers of all religions." In reality of the everyday life of the Patriarchate, there is a necessity to say such words. The patriarch spoke also of a unity among Christians without confusion, which explains his theological view of the ecumenical dialogue, he said,

As you know, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem has long supported and continues to support and encourage, the mission of the World Council of Churches, a mission that is based firmly in the common witness that we bear to the Triune God and to the Gospel of our Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. <http://www.jp-newsgate.net/en/2012/05/17/2035/#more-2035> (last accessed, 7.6.2012).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. <http://www.jp-newsgate.net/en/2010/08/29/943/> (Last accessed 7.6.2012).

The Orthodox Church participates in the life of the World Council of Churches not in order to create some sort of "super Church", but to work together for the unity of all Christians in faith, in the creation of, to use a Chalcedonian phrase, "unity without confusion". In our ecumenical journey we are all obliged to maintain a spirit of Christian love one for the other as well as a spirit of integrity.<sup>36</sup>

The words of the Patriarch are so positive and demonstrate a desire for dialogue to promote the unity of all Christians, the unity of faith, as he said.

#### The Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church

After the decision of the Pan-Orthodox Synod of Rhodes, which had proclaimed the orthodoxy of the dialogue with the non-Orthodox churches, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, with respect to this decision took place in the dialogue officially with the Roman Catholic Church. The presence of the Catholics in the Holy Land had a long history; the Patriarchate could help a lot in the dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church if he used representatives from her flock. The representatives of the Patriarchate were Germanos, Metropolitan of Petra, and Prof. Georgios Galitis from the University of Athens. These two have participated in the meeting of Patmos-Rhodes (1980), Munich (1982), Crete (1984), the second part of Bari (1987), Valamo (1988)<sup>37</sup>. After the meeting of Valamo the patriarchate did not send representatives to the meeting in Freezing (1990) and Balamand (1993). According to Frans Bouwen, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem stopped participating in the dialogue in 1989.<sup>38</sup> It is known that the dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox churches was stopped after the meeting of Balamand for a period, and with the meeting of Emmetsburg-Baltimore (2000) it began again.<sup>39</sup> The Patriarchate of Jerusalem started to send representatives again to the dialogue after the enthroning of the Patriarch Theophilos III. But the road was beginning to be ready during the visit of Pope John Paul II in the Holy Land (Marc 2000).<sup>40</sup> So we see that Theophanis, the Archbishop of Jerash, and Prof. Georgios Galitis are present in the meeting of Belgrade (2006),<sup>41</sup> Ravenna (2007),<sup>42</sup> Paphos (2009)<sup>43</sup> and Vienna (2010).<sup>44</sup>

The decision to return to participate in the dialogue can be clarified by the speech given by the Patriarch Theophilos III during the visit of Pope Benedict XVI in the Holy Land:

Our task is to extend and deepen the moral task of mutual respect, reconciliation, and lasting peace in the Holy Land. In this great work, Christians from every confession are called to join forces. Let our life together model the words of the psalmist, who said "steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other." (Ps. 84 (85): 10).

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.jp-newsgate.net/en/2010/09/02/930/> (Last accessed, 7.6.2012).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Dimitri Salachas, *Il dialogo teologico ufficiale tra la chiesa cattolico-romana e la chiesa ortodossa. iter e documentazione*, (Bari: Quaderni di o Odigos, 1994), 223-243.

<sup>38</sup> Frans Bouwen, "Emmitsburg-Baltimore 2000. VIII<sup>e</sup> session plénière de la Commission mixte international pour le dialogue théologique entre l'Église catholique et l'Église orthodoxe" *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 50 (2000): 317.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 309-314.

<sup>40</sup> We can notice that reading the discourse made by the Patriarch Diodoros, see, Frans Bouwen, "Dimensions Ecuménique du pèlerinage du Pape Jean-Paul II en Terre Sainte" *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 50 (2000): 143-149.

<sup>41</sup> Frans Bouwen, "Belgrade 2006. IX<sup>e</sup> session plénière de la Commission mixte international pour le dialogue théologique entre l'Église catholique et l'Église orthodoxe" *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 56 (2006): 280-281 (see note 2 p. 281).

<sup>42</sup> Frans Bouwen, "Ravenna 2007. X<sup>e</sup> session plénière de la Commission mixte international pour le dialogue théologique entre l'Église catholique et l'Église orthodoxe" *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 58 (2008): 62-63 (see note 2 p. 63).

<sup>43</sup> Frans Bouwen, "Paphos 2009. XI<sup>e</sup> session plénière de la Commission mixte international pour le dialogue théologique entre l'Église catholique et l'Église orthodoxe" *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 60 (2010): 91-92 (see note 13 p. 92).

<sup>44</sup> Frans Bouwen, "Vienna 2010. XII<sup>e</sup> session plénière de la Commission mixte international pour le dialogue théologique entre l'Église catholique et l'Église orthodoxe" *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 60 (2010): 345-346 (see note 13 p. 345).

In this great task, we are all summoned to move dynamic dialogue- a dialogue between our Churches, as well dialogue between Christians and the believer of our faiths. Let us never forget that the unity of faith to which we Christians are summoned is not an end in itself, but a means by which we witness to the unity of humankind.

Your Holiness, we know that you have come to the Holy Land as a pilgrim, but you are welcome also by the people here as a messenger of peace and reconciliation. At the same time, as Patriarch of Jerusalem, we greet you with the words of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, who exhorts us at every Divine Liturgy to "love one another, that with one mind we may confess Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the consubstantial and undivided trinity."<sup>45</sup>

Theophilos III's message is clear. Christians are called to collaborate and to dialogue to give a witness of Love and Peace, because "Let us never forget that the unity of faith to which we Christians are summoned is not an end in itself, but a means by which we witness to the unity of humankind." This expresses the need for unity, at least in the collaboration and the witnessing, especially in such a land as Palestine, Israel and Jordan where Christians live among Muslims and Jews. These lands need to give a model to live the diversity within the unity.

#### The Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the dialogue with the Lutheran Church

It is important for us to focus on this dialogue because the last meeting of the joint commission of the dialogue between the Orthodox and the Lutheran churches took place in Bethlehem, and the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III, gave a welcoming speech in which he said,

We welcome you to the holy city of Jerusalem with great joy, and we are pleased that you have accepted our invitation to hold your meeting in Bethlehem. In this city, in the place where the eternal Logos became incarnate in Jesus Christ, we celebrate together our common origin in the faith of the Gospel.<sup>46</sup>

For the Patriarch the base of the inter-Christian dialogue is the common origin in the faith of the Gospel. He continued and presented the history of the dialogue between the Orthodox and the Lutheran churches. After that he mentioned:

As the oldest continuous religious Institution in the Holy Land, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem takes seriously our vocation of *diakonia* both to all those, regardless of religious, ethnic or cultural origin, who make this region their home, as well as to all those, of whatever religious affiliation, who come here throughout the year as pilgrims. In this ministry of *diakonia* to humankind and for the sake of the unity of all Christians, we extend to you our appreciation and encouragement.

We look forward to the 15<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the Lutheran- Orthodox Joint Commission next year, and to the results of your dialogue in deepening our understanding of the Nature and Attributes of the Church. It is our fervent prayer that, as we can say together the common words of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, we may also one day be able to share a common understanding of the mystery of the Church, and one day also be able to share the common Chalice. We are fully aware that the road to the fullness of the unity of faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit is difficult and painful. Nevertheless, we have to continue in our efforts in doing our part and the rest we leave in faith to the Lord.<sup>47</sup>

It is clear also that for the Patriarch, the dialogue is a type of *diakonia* to humankind, and within it the Christians can achieve the unity of faith, which is difficult and painful.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. <http://www.jp-newsgate.net/en/2009/05/15/670/> (last accessed 18.6.2012).

<sup>46</sup> Cf. <http://www.jp-newsgate.net/en/2010/05/26/824/> (last accessed 18.6.2012).

<sup>47</sup> Cf., *ibid.*



### The Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC)

With its foundation (May 1974), the Patriarchate of Jerusalem was a member of the MECC. Theophilos III was elected one of the presidents of the MECC for four years, during the 10<sup>th</sup> assembly in Paphos, Cyprus (November 2011)<sup>48</sup>. He addressed a speech in this assembly. By this speech we can understand the importance of the Participation of the Patriarchate in the WECC:

As we move forward, we must also re-commit ourselves to the principle that the Council is not a vehicle for the agendas of individual member Churches of their leaders. As a Council, we respect the right of individual Churches and their leaders to speak and act as their circumstances dictate and we all have our own means for the discussion and publication of those matters that affect our own Churches and communities. Yet, at all times, with regard to the ongoing work of this Council, we are to keep our collective mission at the forefront of our work.

With respect to this mission, let us outline the way ahead as we see it ...

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ, the challenges before us are clear; the mission of this Council is paramount. It is our fervent prayer that this Assembly will propose and carry out to a successful completion a specific plan to accomplish all these goals. As we have emphasized, our work together and the strength of the Middle East Council of Churches are of life-saving significance, especially at a time of inevitable change and serious threat to the Christian presence here.<sup>49</sup>

### Epilogue

The Middle East is described as a mosaic of religions and confessions, and the Holy Land gives the same image.<sup>50</sup> The Ecumenical Movement, as Florovsky once said, is a road, but to continue to walk in this road, we need to make an effort in practical life; without effort, seriousness and responsibility, we cannot arrive at the end of this road. So in one area like the Holy Land, Christians must give a real image of dialogue, collaboration, unity and love. Taking in consideration what we had presented above, we can understand the importance of the Ecumenical Movement for the Christians of the Holy Land, and how important could be the role of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the whole issue.

### Bibliography

The discourses of Patriarch Theophilos III are quoted from :

1. <http://www.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/en/>
2. Bouwen Frans, "Belgrade 2006. IX<sup>e</sup> session plénière de la Commission mixte international pour le dialogue théologique entre l'Église catholique et l'Église orthodoxe" *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 56 (2006): 280-281
3. -, "Dimensions Ecuménique du pèlerinage du Pape Jean-Paul II en Terre Sainte" *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 50 (2000): 143-149.
4. -, "Emmitsburg-Baltimore 2000. VIII<sup>e</sup> session plénière de la Commission mixte international pour le dialogue théologique entre l'Église catholique et l'Église orthodoxe" *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 50 (2000).
5. -, "Paphos 2009. XI<sup>e</sup> session plénière de la Commission mixte international pour le dialogue théologique entre l'Église catholique et l'Église orthodoxe" *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 60 (2010): 91-92 .

<sup>48</sup> Cf. <http://www.jp-newsgate.net/en/2011/11/30/1780/> (last accessed 18.6.2012).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. <http://www.jp-newsgate.net/en/2011/11/29/1752/> (last accessed 18.6.2012).

<sup>50</sup> You can see the study of Anthony O'Mahony, *The Christian Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Studies in History, Religion and Politics*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003).

6. -, "Ravenne 2007. X<sup>e</sup> session plénière de la Commission mixte international pour le dialogue théologique entre l'Église catholique et l'Église orthodoxe" *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 58 (2008): 62-63.
7. -, "Vienne 2010. XII<sup>e</sup> session plénière de la Commission mixte international pour le dialogue théologique entre l'Église catholique et l'Église orthodoxe" *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 60 (2010): 345-346.
8. Clark Elizabeth A., *The Origenist Controversy. The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
9. Chitty Derwas J., *The Desert a City. An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell and Mott Ltd, 1966).
10. Egeria, *Itinerarium*, PLS 1, 1045-1092.
11. *Fī Taṭlīq al-Lāh al-Wāhid*, in: *An Arabic version of the Acts of the Apostles and the seven Catholic Epistles from an eighth or ninth century ms. In the Convent of St Katherine on Mount Sinai, with a treatise On the Triune nature of God with translation, from the same codex*, ed. Margaret Gibson, (London, 1899).
12. Frazee Charles A., *Catholics and Sultans. The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453-1923*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
13. Galitis Georgios, "An inner voice" *Anaplasia* 450 (2011).
14. Geffert Bryn, *Eastern Orthodox and Anglicans. Diplomacy, Theology, and Politics of Interwar Ecumenism*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).
15. Griffith Sidney, "From Aramaic to Arabic: The Languages of the Monasteries of Palestine in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods" in *The Beginnings of Christian Theology in Arabic. Muslim-Christian Encounter in the Early Islamic Period* (Variorum collected studies series 746), (Padstow 2002), X 16- X 24.
16. -, "The Arabic account of 'Abd al-Masīh an-Naḡrānī al-Ġassānī" in *Arabic Christianity in the Monasteries of Ninth Century Palestine* (Variorum collected studies series 380), (Padstow 1992), X 331- X 332.
17. -, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque. Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam*, (Princeton-Oxford, 2008).
18. Masters Bruce, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World. The Roots of Sectarianism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
19. O'Mahony Anthony, *The Christian Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Studies in History, Religion and Politics*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003).
20. Peri Oded, *Christianity under Islam in Jerusalem. The Question of the Holy Sites in Early Ottoman Times*, (Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 2001).
21. Perrone L., *La chiesa di Palestina e le controversie cristologiche. Dal concilio di Efeso (431) al secondo concilio di Costantinopoli (553)* (TRSR 18), (Brescia 1980).
22. Salachas Dimitri, *Il dialogo teologico ufficiale tra la chiesa cattolico-romana e la chiesa ortodossa. iter e documentazione*, (Bari: Quadernio di o Odigos, 1994).
23. Samir Samir K., *Abū Qurrah. Al-sīrah wa-l-marāḡi*, (Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 2000).