

Monophysites? Miaphysites? Monothelites?

Some years ago, an editor of a new calendar periodical wrote to His Eminence, Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston, asking him what he thought about the "Agreement" between the Orthodox Churches and the "non-Chalcedonians" [those who do not accept the Fourth Ecumenical Council]. Metropolitan Ephraim responded with the letter published below. We believe His Eminence's letter addresses as well the issues raised in a fairly recent announcement of the Greek Patriarchate of Alexandria [see below].

It would appear that the ecumenically-minded representatives of "World Orthodoxy" are, as usual, skirting many issues and betraying the Orthodox Faith.

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A LETTER TO MICHAEL CHRISTOPULOS
A MEMBER OF THE NEW CALENDAR GREEK ARCHDIOCESE
AND EDITOR OF THE PERIODICAL
THE SWORD

Holy Prophets Moses and Aaron
September 4/17, 2002

Dear Michael,

I pray that this letter finds you well and with the peace of our Saviour. Amen.

In response to your request, I feel obliged to raise the following questions about the "Agreement" between the non-Chalcedoneans and the Orthodox, concerning which you wrote in the last issue of *The Sword*:

- 1) If it is only a matter of semantics and a misunderstanding between the two parties, as some maintain, then, I assume, there is no problem for the non-Chalcedoneans to accept the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Ecumenical Councils. Am I correct? Have they done this? I saw no mention of this in your report.
- 2) Likewise, if it is only a matter of semantics, have the non-Chalcedoneans accepted all the Orthodox Saints that have been glorified in the Church subsequent to the division that occurred between the two parties? Again, your report makes no mention of this.
- 3) If the non-Chalcedoneans finally acknowledge that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ had two natures—the divine and human—that is wonderful. However, Pope Shenouda, whom you quote extensively, insists with great emphasis that Christ has but one will. This is the heresy of Monothelitism, which was condemned at the 6th Ecumenical Council. St Maximus the Confessor had his hand cut off, his tongue ripped out by the Byzantine emperor, and he died in

exile in Georgia because he would not agree to this heresy. Does the Agreement which you reported have anything to say about this issue?

4) If, as reported, both parties condemn Eutyches as a heretic, then there is another problem that has to be addressed. At a Council which took place in Ephesus in August of 449 (this is known as the "Robber Council of Ephesus" among the Orthodox Christians) Dioscorus—who is considered a saint by the non-Chalcedoneans—presided. This false Council affirmed the Orthodoxy and sanctity of Eutyches! It also deposed and excommunicated Theodoret, St. Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople and Pope St. Leo of Rome. In addition, the above-mentioned St. Flavian was murdered at that Council. The 4th Ecumenical Council which gathered in Chalcedon in 451, on the other hand, deposed Dioscorus because he would not denounce the doctrine or the person of Eutyches. In a document to the Emperors Valentinian III and Marcian, the Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council sent a copy of the minutes of the 3rd session (Oct. 13, 451) with a letter, in which the reasons for the deposition of Dioscorus were briefly given: that he had suppressed the letter of St. Leo, the Pope of Rome; that he had received Eutyches into communion; that he had ill-treated Eusebius of Dorylaeum; that he had excommunicated Pope St. Leo; and that he had not obeyed the Council (See *History of the Councils of the Church*, Vol. 3, by Charles Joseph Hefele, Edinburgh, 1883, p. 329). Again, what does the Agreement have to say about this? Is all this, too, simply a matter of semantics?

If the "Agreement" does not deal with all these issues, then it appears to me, Michael, that, sad to say, your bishops have betrayed you once again. As the ecumenistic bishops have demonstrated time and again in their official declarations, they simply are not Orthodox any longer.

I think it is important to point out that many Coptic and Ethiopian bishops, clergy and people have visited our monastery over the years, and they have been warmly welcomed. I must say, in many ways, they have a piety and simplicity and reverence that, I fear, is missing in many visitors who belong to the various SCOBA jurisdictions. In addition, we are on extremely good terms and have a very warm friendship with the local Coptic priest, Father Musa and his presbytera. They are wonderful and warm people, and I certainly wish that we were in communion with them, because we see so much in them that is good. But, alas, because of the points I raised above, there can be no joint prayers or intercommunion with them until the doctrinal matters are resolved.

I hope this has explained our concerns.

In Christ,

✠ Ephraim, Metropolitan

An explanatory letter from H.H. the Greek Pontiff of Alexandria concerning the faith of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

A report with the Greek Pontiff Thoedoros II was published in Al Ahram Weekly issue No 740 on 28 April 2005. H. H. talked about the Coptic Church and described it as a follower of the Monophysite heresy believing in one nature, namely, it omitted the flesh of the Christ as the heresy of Eutyches claimed.

Therefore, H.G. Metropolitan Bishoy, metropolitan of Damietta and Kafr El-Sheikh, the Holy Synod secretary and member of the dialogue committee between the two churches, went to H. H. to inquire about this speech. H. H. replied denouncing the mistakes mentioned in the speech against the Coptic Church. He explained that he never meant to accuse it with heresy. He said that this misunderstanding which was not intended may be due to the translator (H. H. spoke in Greek whereas the translator used English). H. H. wrote an official letter in English at the end of the meeting. He signed the letter and added the seal of the Greek Alexandrian Patriarchate. He expressed his great respect for the Coptic Orthodox Church. (A copy of this letter is enclosed) appendix 1

In the same way, H.G. metropolitan Pantelemion, Greek Orthodox metropolitan of Port-Said and its annexes, wrote a letter giving the same meaning. (A copy of this letter is enclosed) appendix 2

As Al Ahram Weekly refused to publish this explanatory letter from H.H. the Greek Pontiff, the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church has decided to send a copy of this letter to the Watani newspaper to be published in the English supplement. This was decided at the session of Saturday 10 June 2006.

(مرفعه ١)



بطريركية الروم الأرثوذكس بالاسكندرية وسائر أفريقيا

ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΣΗΣ ΑΦΡΙΚΗΣ

GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA AND ALL AFRICA

<http://www.greekorthodox-alexandria.org>

E-mail: patriarchate@greekorthodox-alexandria.org

Mailing Address : P.O.Box 2006 Alexandria - Egypt

Tel : 00203-4868595, 00203-4844876, Fax : 00203-4875684

Protocol No. 1222

To: His Eminence Bishop
Metropolitan of Damiette
Secretary of the Holy Synod
Coptic Orthodox Church

Alexandria, 9 March 2006

Your Eminence,

It is with great joy that I received your Eminence and Abuna Cherubim, the Vicar of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III in Alexandria, in my office today, the 9th day of March 2006.

We take this opportunity to correct and clarify some issues regarding an interview published on April 28, 2005 in the 'Al-Ahram Weekly' newspaper no. 740. It was stated that the Copts are monophysites and that they believe in one nature in the person of Christ and that nature is divine. The reality is that going back to the official theological dialogue between the two families and the second agreed statement & recommendations to the Churches published after the third meeting of the Joint Commission (Geneva, September 23-28, 1990), the Coptic Orthodox Church believe that Jesus Christ is fully Divine and fully Human in His nature and that in the union of His Divinity and Humanity the two natures continue to exist in the union without confusion, without change, without division and without separation. The term 'monophysite' is not likely used by the Oriental Orthodox Churches. It is more likely to use the term 'miaphysite' because they believe in a united one incarnate nature.

We appreciate too much the presence of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III in our enthronement (October 24, 2004) and also in the enthronement of the late Patriarch Petros VII (March 9, 1997) and We encourage and support the continuation of our warm and strong relationship and mutual respect since our Churches have worked sincerely in the efforts of the theological dialogue between the two families of the Orthodox Churches.

We are looking forward for our meeting with H.H. Pope Shenouda in the course of the exchange of our brotherly visits, we pray and beseech the blessings and protection of our Lord Jesus Christ and wish that He will grant you strength, hope, courage and a fruitful deaconate for the glory of His Name and the sake and benefit of the flock and duties entrusted to your Eminence.

In Christ and with Patriarchal blessings,



THEODOROS II

Pope & Patriarch of Alexandria & All Africa

Handwritten signature in Greek script, followed by the letter 'B'.



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GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA AND ALL AFRICA.

مطرانية الروم الأرثوذكس ببور سعيد

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΠΗΛΟΥΣΙΟΥ

(ΠΟΡΤ ΣΑΪΣ, ΣΑΜΙΕΤΤΗ, ΜΑΝΣΟΥΡΑ & ΚΑΝΤΑΡΑ)

HOLY METROPOLIS OF PELUSIUM

(PORT SAID, DAMIETTA, MANSOURA & KANTARA)

Postal Address: P.O. Box 251, PORT SAID – EGYPT.

Tel. & Fax in Port Said: +20 (066) 3224534.

Mobile in Egypt: +20-12-1718768. Mobile in Greece: +30 (693) 7430045.

To
His Beatitude
THEODOROS II
Pope and Patriarch of
Alexandria and All Africa.
In Alexandria.

Your Beatitude,

On Saturday, the 7th May 2005, I welcomed at the Metropolis the visit of His Eminence Bishoy, Metropolitan of Damiette, Kafr el Sheik and Bararee, Abbot of St. Demianna Monastery, General Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Copt Orthodox Church, Abbot of St. Demianna Monastery and responsible for the Theological Dialogue between the Oriental Orthodox Churches, and I wish to inform Your Divine Beatitude about the complains expressed by the Sister Orthodox Coptic Church because of the publication of the article by Mr. Gamal Nkrumah in the «AL-AHRAM» n. 740, 28 April-4 May 2005.

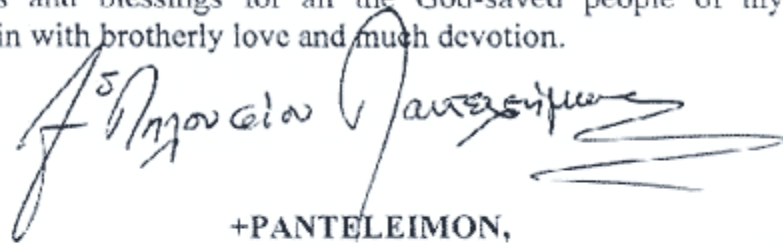
His Eminence Bishoy, first congratulated me on the occasion of my election and enthronement on the historic Metropolis of Pelusium (Port Said), he handed to me a book containing the agreement between the Greek Orthodox Church and the Copt Orthodox Church on the subject of the Christological Doctrine. His Eminence Bishoy complained for the use by Your Beatitude of the expressions: “**The Copts, on the other hand are monophysites**”, “**Yet arguments about the precise nature of Christ continue to this day**”, and finally, that “**The Copts adhere to the**

monophysite doctrine, that is they believe in one nature in the person of Christ and that nature is divine”. According to the agreements, which took place at the Alpha Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, between the 20th till the 24th June 1989, the Copt

monophysite doctrine, that is they believe in one nature in the person of Christ and that nature is divine". According to the agreements, which took place at the Anba Bishoy Monastery, Egypt, between the 20th till the 24th June 1989, the Copt Orthodox Church accepted fully the natures of the God-Man Jesus Christ (See Second Agreement, §§ 1-5, pp. 167-168) and condemn the heresies of Monophysitism, Eutychian, Nestorian and that of Theodoret of Cyrus (See Second Agreement, §§ 2 and 7. pp. 167 and 168).

His Eminence Bishoy requested a meeting with Your Beatitude in order to inform You about the history and progress of the Dialogue between the Orthodox Churches.

Finally, kissing Your Beatitude's right hand and asking for Your Paternal and Patriarchal prayers and blessings for all the God-saved people of my humble Metropolis, I remain with brotherly love and much devotion.



**+PANTELEIMON,
Metropolitan of Port Said, Damiette, Mansoura and Qantara.**

Port Said, the 8th May 2005.

ΚΟΙΝΟΠΟΙΗΣΙΣ: H.E. Metropolitan Bishoy, Metropolitan of Damietta, Coptic Bishopric, ET-Damietta.