
Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 23, Folder 1, Greek Orthodoxy, 1978, 1986.
STATEMENT BY NAASSI MARC H. TAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE, AT GREEN ORTHODOX DINNER HONORING ARCHBISHOP EKROUS AND COMMEMORATING 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF BIRTH OF ECCLESIAL PATRIARCH ATHANASIOS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1986, WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL, NYC

It is a rare and special privilege for me to be invited to address once again this distinguished audience of Greek Orthodox Christians who have assembled to honor your great Patriarch and my beloved friend of many years, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros. He embodies the noblest virtues of ecumenism and reconciliation that characterized the life and career of His Eminence Patriarch Athenagoras whose centennial birthday we have come to acknowledge this evening.

The friendship and mutual regard which have dominated the relationship between Archbishop Elpidophoros and myself over several decades are grounded in larger historic realities. Hellenism and Hellenism, in all their complexities, are the foundation stones of Western Civilization.

Western democratic societies are inconceivable without the fundamental contribution of the Greek and Jewish peoples across the past millennium. In innumerable ways, the fate and destiny of the great Greek and Jewish peoples are interdependent. In light of that historic reality, no person, no force can ultimately succeed in severing these profound bonds nor in alienating Greeks from Jews, or Jews from Greeks.

There are problems outstanding today between Greece and Israel, and between Greeks and Jews, both of whom cherish the centrality of their ancient homelands in their lives. But...
the paths we have chosen to deal with such
difficulties are those of dialogue, reconciliation,
and healing. Procreation and alienation are not
the modes that Greeks and Jews choose to resolve
their problems.

Whatever the differences, I know that responsible
Jewish leadership is convinced that the avenues of
dialogue are always open with Archbishop Iakovos
and Greece's ambassadors to the United States and
to the United Nations. And we plan to pursue
that dialogue with them in the days ahead.

I wish not only to recall the historic
context of the Greek-Jewish relationship, but also
to say a brief word about the importance of the
interrelationship of Greeks and Jews in America.

I have devoted the past 25 years of my
life to building bridges of understanding and mutual
knowledge and respect between Christians
and Jews, and particularly between Greek Orthodox
Christians and Jews. One of the critical turning
points in that relationship took place about 20
years ago when Archbishop Iakovos asked for
the support of the Jewish community in behalf
of a Congressional resolution that would recognize
Greek Orthodox Christianity as one of "the
Four Major Faiths of America."

Until that time, only Catholicism, Protestantism,
and Judaism were publicly acknowledged as "The
Three Major Faiths," as if Greek Orthodoxy did
not exist. My response to Archbishop Iakovos'
request was immediate. "Of course, we would
support that sense of Congressional resolution that

publicly established Greek Orthodoxy as a major faith of the American people, “I told the Archbishop, and so we issued a public statement supporting that resolution, and we urged members of the U.S. Congress, particularly those of the Jewish faith, to advocate the recognition of Greek Orthodoxy through this resolution.

The Jewish community was adopted unanimously, and Greek Orthodoxy has been from then recognized as one of “The Four Major Faiths of America.”

That experience symbolizes the true state of Greek-Jewish relations in America.
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH AND CANTERBURY SIGN DOCUMENT A VOWING WISH TO END 'OBSTACLES'

By Religious News Service (5-2-77)

ISTANBUL, Turkey (RNS) -- Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrius I, spiritual leader of world Orthodoxy, and Archbishop Donald Coggan, spiritual head of the worldwide Anglican Communion, signed a joint declaration expressing "the firm desire" to overcome the "obstacles" which stand in the way of dialogue between the Orthodox and Anglican Churches.

The declaration was signed here after a day of meetings, which included an eumenical service in St. George's Church, during which the two churchmen had expressed disagreement over the issue of women priests.

The document noted that the Ecumenical Patriarch had reaffirmed "that the Orthodox Church does not accept the priestly ordination of women." It also noted that the Archbishop of Canterbury had expressed the hope that the Orthodox Church would have "understanding" for the position of those Churches in the Anglican Communion (in the U.S., Canada, and Hong Kong), which allowed women to be ordained to the priesthood.

"The leaders of the two Churches," the declaration continued, "consider the continuation of theological dialogue ... a means of resolving the problems which separate the two Churches and of finding the points which unite them."

Calling for "development" in the movement toward Christian unity, the two churchmen also called for "collaboration with all religions," to the end that "charity and peace among men will prevail in the world, "racial and religious discrimination disappear" and "full religious liberty be safeguarded in all nations."

WELCOMED AT ORTHODOX CENTER SERVICE

DR. COGGAN ARRIVES IN GENEVA FOR TALKS AT WORLD COUNCIL

By Religious News Service (5-2-77)

GENEVA (RNS) -- Shortly after his arrival here May 2 for a visit with leaders of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Archbishop Donald Coggan of Canterbury was welcomed at a service in the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The spiritual leader of the worldwide Anglican Communion came to Genova from Istanbul, Turkey, where he had not and prayed with Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrius I, spiritual leader of world Orthodoxy.

The visit of Archbishop Coggan with Patriarch Demetrius followed his two days of talks and prayers for Christian unity with Pope Paul. 

(more)
In a brief address at the service in the Orthodox Center, the Primate of the Church of England described his meeting with Patriarch Demetrios as "joyful and profitable."

Orthodox Metropolitan Damaskinos, welcoming the Archbishop, said it was "here (at the Orthodox Center) that the warm interest shown by your Church towards rapprochement with the Orthodox Church and the theological dialogue with her in mutual love was acknowledged and appreciated on a pan-Orthodox level."

The metropolitan addressed the Anglican Church leader "in the bond of peace and charity."
Dear Rabbi Jansenbaum,

Please see page 1 and page 16 items on harassment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Your support will be deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

James Churchill
Harassment of Patriarchate Is Reported By Archbishop
Heavy Taxes Imposed on Schools and Churches

NEW YORK — Millions of liras in taxes have been imposed by the Turkish authorities upon the schools and churches of the Greek Orthodox Minority in Constantinople. At the same time, by refusing to issue them passports, they do not allow certain hundreds of our Turkish citizens of Greek descent to travel abroad.

The above information was contained in a letter from a high-ranking bishop of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to Archbishop Iakovos. The letter indicated that the new initiatives Turkey seeks, on the one hand, to terrorize the Greek Orthodox faithful, and on the other, to oblige the Ecumenical Patriarchate "to cease its religious activities abroad," thus condemn ing it to obscurity.

The financial harassment, which would appear to be aimed primarily at closing the schools of the minorities, has been marked by the Turks with a change in the classification of the schools from "minority schools" to "private schools," of course, required to pay real estate taxes.

May His Memory Be Eternal!
Timoteos of Rodostolou Falls Asleep in the Lord

NEW YORK — With great sadness, Archbishop Iakovos announced that Bishop Timoteos (Halefios) of Rodostolou, die Auxiliary bishop and spiritual leader of the Second Archdiocese, died on New Year's Day in the Lord on December 31, 1977, in Chicago.

The announcement of the bishop's death was followed by heartfelt congratulations and spiritu al tributes in the Second District, as well as by the faithful throughout the Archdiocese. The Archbishop was notified of the death while in the chapel of the Archdiocese, serving a Supplication Service for the recovery of the bishop, who had been extremely ill for some time. His Eminence then tearfully served a Memorial Service for the soul of Bishop Timoteos. Praying with him was the entire staff of the Archdiocese. Just two days earlier the Archbishop had visited Bishop Timoteos in the Chicago hospital where he died.

CHICAGO FUNERAL
Chicago was the scene of the Second District funeral to farewell their spiritual leader, the late Bishop Timoteos of Rodostolou, at the Cathedral of the Annunciation. On Friday afternoon, Dec. 23, Archbishop Iakovos traveled to New York, accompanied by Bishop Silou and Archbishop Iakovos was present at the service, followed by a Memorial Service. Serving with the Archbishop were his aux iliary bishops and Archbishop Iakovos of Chicago (Rumanian Orthodox), who was accompanied by eight priests and a choir. On Christmas Day the Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Iakovos of Chicago, Archdiocese's and presented at the funeral. Also present were Bishops Athanasius of America, John Themisof of Melis, Sotirios of Constantinople and Anthimos of Patras.

BISHOP SILAS OF AMPHIPOLIS conveyed the condolences of the Church, and accepted those of the dignitaries present: Mayor Michael Bilandic of Chicago; Cardinal John Cody; and other religious and civic leaders.

BUSSILIA IN GREECE
Immediately after the funeral, the body of Bishop Timoteos was transported by plane to Greece, to be entombed in his hometown, Megara, in Attica. Accom panying the body were Bishops Iakovos of America, John Themisof of Melis, Fr. Anastas and Karambos.

Overserving all the funeral services was Bishop Philippos of Melis, who has been appointed Ad ministrator of the Archdiocese until a new bishop is appointed here.

BIOGRAPHY
The late Bishop Timoteos of Rodostolou (whose given name was Athanasios Halefios) was born in 1917, in a small village, in the province of elementary and high school education. In 1934 he graduated from the Catholic School of the University of Athens, where he received his Doctorate in Law. He taught in several colleges in the United States at the University of Illinois, where he was a research professor before his death.

Patriarch's Encyclical Dedicated to Children

CONSTANTINOPLE — His All Holiness, Patriarch Demetrios I, indicates in his 1977 Christmas message to our Mother Church, that the holy night of Christmas, Angels beside the Mother of God, lovingly and worshipfully, and prays with them as they hover over the infant Jesus.

From the humble Phanar, the spiritual center of worldwide Orthodoxy, Patriarch Demetrios calls upon the Orthodoxy faithful and the entire world to see the unveiled reality that has been behind our beautiful, stilled icons of the birth of Christ.

"The true icon is broken," he says. "The Christ of Bethlehem is a newborn, the helpless, wrapped in whatever was handy. His only comfort is the sweetness of Mary, the tenderness of Joseph, the hay, the sympathy of the angels, the innocence of their shepherds."

"Beyond this, the icon is surrounded by a difference and a criminal lack of com formity. Around that child, the newborn infant, 14,000 children were slaughtered. Under such conditions, God became human and took upon Himself humanity with all its weaknesses, in order to save it."

"But this Child, Jesus. is not alone in being born under such conditions, even after the passage of nearly 2,000 years since His birth."

"The harshness of the icon of the first Jesus removes its frightening touch today from the tragic situation in which the millions of children, small brothers and sisters of Jesus, are born, exist and live without comfort and tenderness, in an unfeeling and indifferent environment, oppressed by the Hords of hunger, of sadness, of ignorance."

"This, then, is the reason our Christmas encyclical to the Church and to the world is dedicated to children."

Patriarch Demetrios goes on to say that Christ demonstrated to us the value and sacredness of children (Mark 7:26-27, Matt 18:2-5). Our relations with children have divine aspects, to the extent that when love and tenderness governs this relation then we are with Christ in His Kingdom: and when this relation is tainted by scandal, by abandonment, by in difference, by abuse, by sort of evil, then we should be prepared for self condemnation.

Regrettably the great value of children, the Church has always given special attention to the spiritual, physical and health and to their protection.

At the end of the last century many nations and organizations started to take more systematic protection for children. Nevertheless, despite all these

NY Times Reports On New Oppression

NEW YORK — "In an atmosphere of despair" the Greek Orthodox faithful in Constantinople celebrated Christmas. Archbishop Iakovos told George Dugan, a reporter for The New York Times.

The cause of the despair, he indicated in a recent interview, is the new efforts by Turkish authorities to close the schools, and churches of the Greek Orthodox minority. "The situation is very serious," he said. and "do nothing about the human rights of the Greek community in Constantinople. Greek Orthodox citizens of Turkey are being terrorized to such a degree that they abandon their homes and property and leave Turkey."

Patriarch Assures Pope of Desire for Unity

VATICAN CITY (RNS) — Relations between the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodoxy may never have been better.

This was the view of some observers when Pope Paul VI received this note from Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios I which said: "The Orthodox Church is ready to break down the barriers that separate Greek and Catholic and Orthodox Churches with the aim of being able to share the bread and the blood of the Lord together in the same Holy Eucharist."

Earlier, in a conversation with Metropolitan Meliton of Chalcidin, dean of the Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Pope Paul had said "judicious (there are) steps toward the Roman Church advancing toward complete union."

The views of the Pope were contained in a letter delivered to the Pope by Metropolitan Meliton.

The Patriarch expressed joy over a message sent to him by the Pope and emphasized his gratitude for the continuation of dialogue "conducted with fraternal sincerity in preparation for theological dialogue between the two Churches."

Metropolitan Meliton also brought with him to Rome a gift for Pope Paul sent to the Patriarch, a lamp from Demetrios' cathedral, it is suggested that the Pope use it in his own chapel in a sign of the light of Christ.

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