

C. Inter-Orthodox Pre-Assembly Consultation for the 10th Assembly in Busan, Korea, 2013

„God of life, lead us to justice and peace“
(Kos, Greece, 11-17 October 2012)

COMMUNIQUÉ

1. At the initiative of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and under invitation of H.A.H. the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and with the gracious auspices of H. E. Metropolitan Nathanael of Kos and Nisyros, representatives of Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches met on the island of Kos, Greece to reflect on the theme of the 10th WCC Assembly, to prepare themselves for the Assembly in Busan, and to provide their theological contribution to the next WCC Assembly in 2013. The co-moderation of the consultation was ensured by H. E. Metropolitan Prof Dr. Gennadios of Sassima on behalf of the Eastern Orthodox Church and H. E. Metropolitan Mor Eustathius Matta Roham on behalf of the Oriental Orthodox Church.

2. It has been a custom for the last thirty years in the World Council of Churches to convene an Inter-Orthodox consultation prior to its Assemblies. The main purpose of the meeting was to study, discuss, and reflect on the main theme and the sub-themes of the next Assembly from an Orthodox perspective in order to serve as a preparation for all participants in Busan and to express their expectations of the next WCC Assembly and beyond. Thirty-seven hierarchs, priests, university professors, lay men and women and youth were warmly welcomed by H. E. Metropolitan Nathanael of Kos and Nisyros at the opening session with the inauguration of a new chapel in which all delegates participated, as well as local clergy, lay and local authorities. After an introduction about the aim of the consultation and the presentation of activity reports reflecting Orthodox contributions to the WCC and the WCC responses to the Orthodox, the consultation concentrated on theological reflection about the Assembly theme. Keynote speeches by participants developed the theme from various perspectives.

3. In Orthodox theology, the “God of Life” is understood in a Trinitarian way. The Triune God is the God of Life for all creation because He created the world, and maintains and protects it as an expression of His love. The supreme act of God’s love is the economy of salvation, which is understood as the re-creation and restoration of humanity. The call for unity, justice and peace remains our calling today, as our incarnate Lord prayed for these before His passion (Jn. 17). As Orthodox, we are committed to cooperate with all Christians for the sake of justice, peace and unity on the basis of Christ’s message and God’s love for humanity and for all creation. While working together for justice and peace in this world, however, we are aware that complete justice and peace will be reached only in the eschaton where Christ will “fill all in all” (Eph. 1:22).

4. The consultation included also study of the Unity Statement that resulted in proposals for improving the document, as well as a detailed presentation of the Assembly venue and an introduction to the program, structure, and expected outcomes of the Assembly. Each day started with a prayer in the newly inaugurated chapel. Biblical reflections focusing on the Assembly theme were offered every morning. H. G. Bishop Hovakim Manoogian

(Armenian Apostolic Church, Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) led a special moment of prayer on Saturday, October 13, at the announcement of the passing away of the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Archbishop Torgom Manoogian.

5. The fact that the meeting took place in Greece gave participants the opportunity to have direct contact with the Greek people who are facing a deep economic crisis. The participants prayed for Greece and expressed their hope that the economic crisis will soon be overcome. The consultation in Kos offered the occasion for the delegates to visit several local parishes, to worship with them, and to be informed about daily life in Kos.

6. Members of the consultation coming from the Middle East informed the group about new developments in the region. The participants, expressing their deep concern for the escalation of violence in the region, especially in Syria, prayed for peace in the Middle East, expressing their hope that God of life will lead the region and the entire world to peace and justice.

7. The participants in the consultation approved a report of the consultation that will be shared with all participants in the Assembly as an Orthodox contribution on behalf of all Orthodox member churches.

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