

# THE VIENNA DIALOGUE

Five Pro Oriente Consultations  
with Oriental Orthodoxy

## SUMMARIES OF THE PAPERS

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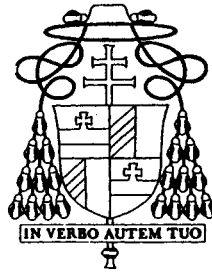
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*Hans Hermann Cardinal Groër*

## PREAMBLE

In my capacity as chairman of the board of the ecumenical foundation PRO ORIENTE, I take great pleasure at the release of this second publication of a series designed to propagate the results of the five Vienna Consultations of 1971, 1973, 1976, 1978 and 1988 in a readily accessible form.

Founded in 1964 during the Second Vatican Council by my predecessor as Archbishop of Vienna, Franciscus Cardinal König, and working under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Vienna, PRO ORIENTE set itself the task of "promoting academic research, publications and all kinds of contacts that may contribute to a better knowledge of the East, especially with a view to serving the cause of a better understanding between Christians of the East and of the West". This is a comprehensive and ambitious goal. But, I am happy to say, our efforts were crowned with success. For if it is true to say that all obstacles between our Churches have not yet been removed, over the past two and a half decades, we have been able to regain an enormous amount of common ground, first and foremost in the vitally important field of Christology. This has recreated an awareness of true Christian fellowship and an atmosphere of mutual confidence from which we may draw hope for a future of complete communion of our Sister Churches.

Moreover, these consultations derived a particular distinction from the participation of the present Patriarch of Alexandria, Pope Shenouda III, representing the Coptic Orthodox Church, the present Patriarch of Antioch, Zakka I Iwas, Head of the Syrian Orthodox Church, and of the present Metropolitan of New Delhi and the North, Paulos Mar Gregorios, vice-president of the World Council of Churches, speaking for the Syro-Indian orthodoxy.

Having said this, I am particularly delighted at the prospect of seeing this second booklet too published not only in English but also in Arabic, Armenian and Amharic, thus making its contents accessible to an overwhelming majority of Oriental Orthodox readers, allowing the ecumenical spirit eventually to trickle down from the theologians to the individual Christian on the parish level, making for a yet deeper mutual enrichment of our respective traditions.

Our thanks for the successful outcome of these consultations go to the members of the executive committee of PRO ORIENTE, who masterminded the organization of these events, to Mons. Otto Mauer († 1973), the animating spirit of the first years, and Fr. John F. Long from the Roman Catholic side and Vardapet, now Bishop Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian from the Oriental side, who presided over the discussions, as well as to all the participants who investigated the various issues and problems in their comprehensive preparatory studies.

Moreover, special mention ought to be made at this point of the two heads of state of the Republic of Austria, Dr. Rudolf Kirchschläger (1974–1986) and Dr. Kurt Waldheim (since 1986) for their interest in PRO ORIENTE's peace-promoting activity, as documented in this volume.

Finally, I would like to express my congratulations to the editors of this publication Dr. Rudolf Kirchschläger, the current President, and Alfred Stirnemann, the long-standing Secretary General, as well as my sincere hope that the texts it contains will lead us another step further down the road to full Unity of Faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ, of Oriental Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians worldwide.

Vienna, 1st August 1991

Archbishop of Vienna

# The Oriental Orthodox – Roman Catholic Ecumenical Dialogue

PRO ORIENTE Publications in English

- \* First Non-official Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 1 of the Periodical »Wort und Wahrheit« (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1972), 190 p.
- \* Second Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 2 of the Periodical »Wort und Wahrheit« (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1974), 208 p.
- \* Third Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 3 of the Periodical »Wort und Wahrheit« (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1976), 240 p.
- \* Fourth Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 4 of the Periodical »Wort und Wahrheit« (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1978), 256 p.
- \* Fifth Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 5 of the Periodical »Wort und Wahrheit« (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1979), 208 p.
- \* Selection of the Papers and Minutes of the Four Vienna Consultations between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Edited by Ökumenische Stiftung PRO ORIENTE in Vienna (1988), 286 p.
- \* The Vienna Dialogue, Five Pro Oriente Consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy, Booklet Nr. 1, Communiqués and Joint Documents; Pro Oriente, Vienna 1990; p. 136

*Rudolf Kirchschräger/Alfred Stirnemann*

## FOREWORD BY THE EDITORS

This ébooklet is to be the second in a series of documentations designed to spread among a wider public of interested Christians, be they theologians, members of the clergy or lay people, the good news of what has come to be termed the Vienna Dialogue, a series of hitherto five “non-official Ecumenical Consultations between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church” held in Vienna in the years 1971, 1973, 1976, 1978 and 1988.

Thanks to fortunate circumstances, it was possible to assemble eminent theologians from the Coptic Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic, Ethiopian Orthodox and Syro-Indian Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, for over a week each time, to discuss those problems which had led to the harmful split at the Council of Chalcedon and to consider ways of eliminating the factors dividing the two Church families ever since.

The most successful breakthrough happened at the very first consultation in 1971 which – due to the effective intervention of Amba Shenouda, who only a few weeks later was to become as Shenouda III the successor to St. Mark on the Throne of Alexandria – came up with the so-called “Vienna Christological formula”: “We believe that our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is God the Son Incarnate; perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity. His divinity was not separated from his humanity for a single moment, not for the twinkling of an eye. His humanity is one with his divinity without commixtion, without confusion, without division, without separation. We in our common faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, regard his mystery inexhaustible and ineffable and for the human mind never fully comprehensible or expressible.”

This formula later came to be officially accepted in the Common Declarations signed by Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II on the one hand and Pope Shenouda III, the Patriarchs Yacoub III and Zakka I Iwas and other Heads of the Oriental Churches on the other hand.

Over and above these Common Declarations officially signed by the Heads of the Churches, two bilateral processes of dialogue have emerged from the Vienna Dialogue: the Official Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church, which started in 1973, and the Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church of India, which began its work in 1989.

The complete English texts of the papers and discussions of the five Consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy are published in five volumes and a selection covering the first four events (see opposite page). The fifth volume also contains the communiqués of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches (pp. 171–175).

In order to facilitate the reception of the results of these five rounds of consultations of the Vienna Dialogue by as many of the theologians, clergymen and lay people of the Churches concerned, we felt it necessary to condense the more than 1500 pages of learned thought down to a more readily accessible form.

Hence, we are publishing this series of booklets as a short introduction to the most important results of the debates. Booklet Nr. 1 begins with two basic articles on the theological significance of the results of the five Consultations and the contemporary relationship between the Roman Catholic and the Oriental Orthodox Churches. It then goes on to give the programmes, participant lists, official communiqués and the main sermons held during the concluding liturgy at St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. Furthermore, you can find the texts of the official documents signed between the various Heads of Churches in the course of the Dialogue. The booklet closes with a short resumé of the relations PRO ORIENTE has maintained with the five Oriental Churches over a quarter of a century.

Booklet Nr. 2 represents a compilation of the summaries of the papers submitted at the Five Vienna Consultations, giving a resumé of the main papers and opinions of the speakers. This was done by famous scholars known to be among the foremost specialists on the subject, such as Fr. Alois Grillmeier SJ of the Higher Theological Institute in Frankfurt/Main and Fr. Wilhelm de Vries SJ of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. (The summaries of the first four Consultations were first published in German in: Piffli-Perčević/Stirnmann (Hrsg.), *Das Gemeinsame Credo, 1600 Jahre seit dem Konzil von Konstantinopel*, Tyrolia Innsbruck-Wien, 1983.) In addition you will find the texts of the addresses read by the respective President of the Republic of Austria on the occasion of receptions given for the participants at the last three consultations.

By way of conclusion we would like to express our thanks to the Standing Committee of PRO ORIENTE in which the five Oriental Churches are represented by Their Graces Metropolitan Amba Bishoy of Damiette and Kafr el Sheikh, Archbishop Mar Gregorios of Aleppo, Bishop Mesrob K. Krikorian, Patriarchal Delegate for Central Europe and Sweden, Archbishop Aram Keshishian of Lebanon, Archbishop Gharima of Illubabur and The Rev. Dr. George K. M. Kondotra. Their initiative and ideas paved the way to this series of publications. To His Eminence Hans Hermann Cardinal Groer we are most grateful for having had the kindness to write the preamble.



1st Vienna Consultation in 1971  
From left to right: Amba Shenouda, now Pope of Alexandria and Coptic Orthodox Patriarch; Archbishop Franciscus Cardinal König, founder and protector of PRO ORIENTE, chairman of the board from 1964 to 1986; Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan (former Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem)



3rd Vienna Consultation in 1976  
From left to right: Archbishop Markos of Gojam; Amba Gregorius, Bishop for Higher Theological Studies, Coptic Culture and Academic Research; Archbishop Franciscus Cardinal König; Archbishop Mar Severius Zakka Iwas of Baghdad and Basrah, now Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch; Bishop Basilios Tsiopanas of Aristi, Greek Orthodox observer



Reception given by the Federal President of the Republic of Austria Dr. Rudolf Kirchschläger on the occasion of the 3rd Vienna Consultation in 1976  
 From left to right: Archbishop Markos of Gojam; Abba Petros from Ethiopia; Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthatios, Vice-Rector of the Orthodox Seminary in Kottayam, India; Archbishop Mar Severius Zakka Iwas of Baghdad and Basrah, now Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch; Archbishop Mar Gregorius Saliba of Mosul; Secretary General Alfred Stirnemann; Vardapet, now Bishop Mesrob K. Krikorian, co-chairman; Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios of New Delhi, one of the presidents of the World Council of Churches, shaking hands with the Federal President of the Republic of Austria Dr. Rudolf Kirchschläger (1974–1986), president of PRO ORIENTE since 1989; at the far right: Dr. Wilhelm de Vries SJ, professor for church history at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome; Dr. Alois Grillmeier SJ, professor for dogmatic theology at the Philosophical and Theological College St. Georgen, Frankfurt/Main



Participants at the reception given by the Federal President of the Republic of Austria Dr. Kurt Waldheim on the occasion of the 5th Vienna Consultation in 1988  
 From left to right: Dr. Theodor Piffli-Perčević, president of PRO ORIENTE from 1969 to 1989; Dr. Adolf Bayer, president of the PRO ORIENTE finance committee; Secretary General Alfred Stirnemann; Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios of New Delhi; Archbishop Mar Theophilus George Saliba of Mount Lebanon; Archbishop Hans Hermann Cardinal Groër, chairman of the board of PRO ORIENTE since 1986

Otto Mauer †

## TODAY'S CHRISTOLOGICAL DEBATE

First Unofficial Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church<sup>1</sup>

From September 7th to 12th 1971, the first unofficial Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church took place in Vienna in the Jesuits' Formation Centre Lainz. It was organized by the ecumenical foundation PRO ORIENTE, whose founder is the Archbishop of Vienna, Franciscus Cardinal König. As an observer from the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity Father John F. Long SJ, Rome, the responsible for the Oriental Orthodox Churches within the Secretariat, took part. With the exception of the Syrian Orthodox theologians of the Patriarchate of Antioch, whose church leaders agreed on the convocation of the Consultation but for technical reasons were not able to send a representative, all Ancient Oriental (Oriental Orthodox) traditions were present.

From the Coptic Orthodox Church came Bishop Amba Shenouda, dean of the Coptic Orthodox Seminary, Cairo; Father Saleeb Sourial, professor for canon law at the Coptic Orthodox Seminary, St. George Cathedral, Cairo; – from the Armenian Apostolic Church: Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the United States, New York; Vardapet Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian, prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Austria and Germany, permanent representative of the Holy See of Etchmiadzin at the World Council of Churches, Vienna; – from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church: Liqe Siltanat Habte Mariam Workneh, chief of ecclesiastical affairs in His Imperial Majesty's Private Cabinet, dean of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, Addis Ababa; – from the Syrian Orthodox Church of India: Father Paul Verghese, rector of the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam (India); Father M. V. George, vice-rector of the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam (India); Dr. K. C. Joseph, secretary for scholarships at the World Council of Churches, Geneva; Father V. C. Samuel, dean of the Theological Faculty of Haile Selassie University, Addis Ababa; – from the Roman Catholic Church: Dr. A. J. van der Aalst A. A., professor for dogmatics at the University of Nimwegen (Netherlands); DDr. Johannes Emminghaus, professor for liturgical theology at the University of Vienna; Dr. Alois Grillmeier SJ, professor for dogmatics at the Philosophical Theological Academy of Sankt Georgen, Frankfurt/Main; Father John F. Long SJ, head of office at the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, professor for theology at the Roman section of the Loyola University, Rome (as observer from the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity); Mons. Otto Mauer, chairman of the theological advisory council of PRO ORIENTE, Vienna; Dr. Helmut Riedlinger, professor for dogmatics at the University of Freiburg i. Br., Federal Republic of

<sup>1</sup> The text of all papers and sermons delivered in the course of this First Vienna Consultation as well as the minutes of the discussions and the common final communiqué appeared in the PRO ORIENTE English language publication: *Wort und Wahrheit, Revue for Religion and Culture, Supplementary Issue No. 1, First Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Vienna-Lainz, 1971, Papers and Minutes*, Verlag Herder, Wien, Dec. 1972, pp. 190.

The Final Communiqué can also be found in: PRO ORIENTE, (ed.): *The Vienna Dialogue, Five PRO ORIENTE Consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy*, Booklet Nr. 1, Communiqués and Joint Documents, Vienna, 1990, p. 46.

Germany; Dr. theol. Lic. bibl. Franz Joseph Schierse, Hausen/Wied, Federal Republic of Germany; Dr. Piet J. A. M. Schoonenberg SJ, professor for dogmatics at the University of Nimwegen (Netherlands); Father Dr. Wilhelm de Vries SJ, dean of the Oriental Faculty and professor for church history at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome.

The participants of the consultations were not officially sent by their churches, but took part with the knowledge and the blessing of their church leaders. The event was under the protection of Cardinal König and presided over by the President of the ecumenical foundation PRO ORIENTE, Dr. Theodor Piffli-Perčević, the discussions were held under the common chairmanship of Mons. Otto Mauer and Vardapet Mesrob K. Krikorian. The Consultation had Christology, the reason for which the Oriental Orthodox Churches had separated from the other churches on the occasion of the Council of Chalcedon (451), as its only subject and was a free discussion among theologians led in a spirit of fraternity and ecumenism.

The chairman of the first session, *Otto Mauer*, stressed the change in atmosphere among Christians, the fact that the Second Vatican Council, as the first council in history, abstained from anathemata and excommunications, thus officially ushering in a new ecumenical era of Christian fraternity. However, Christians are not yet united in the interpretation of the one faith which they confess in the oldest symbola and have not yet reached eucharistic communion among themselves. Mauer stressed the importance of theological reflection of the common faith and of an intellectual interpretation of its formula, while pointing out at the same time the great significance for Christians of liturgy, agape and orthopraxis in their common action he underlined the inexhaustibility and ineffability of the mystery of Christ and placed the common christological witness at the beginning of the debate: the one Christ is fully God and fully Man. The task of the Consultation was the interpretation of this common conviction of faith and the removal of historical misunderstandings (probably also in terminology). Thus it might be possible to find, in complete freedom and yet committed to our respective traditions, a common theological formula.

Vardapet Mesrob K. Krikorian gave a survey of the *“The Results of the Bilateral Consultations between the Eastern Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches”* under the auspices of the ecumenical World Council of Churches: 1. in Aarhus (Denmark) from 11th to 15th August 1964, 2. in Bristol (England) from 25th to 29th July 1967, 3. in Geneva from 16th to 21st August 1970, and 4. on 22nd and 23rd January 1971 in Addis Ababa. These talks brought about a significant rapprochement of the Eastern Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches on the issue of Christology, came up with partly common declarations (reprinted in 5th Cons., pp. 171–175) and clarified the christological terminology of Chalcedon, thus preparing official talks and negotiations between the churches mentioned above.

Under the heading *“The Council of Chalcedon – Analysis of a Conflict”*, Alois Grillmeier gave a thorough description of the history leading up to the Council, from the viewpoint of dogmatic and theological developments. He referred to the de-hellenisation accomplished by Nicaea (325) against Arius and his middle-Platonic understanding of the Logos as an intermediate entity between divine Monas and Hyle, stressed the common ground in principle shared by all theological schools of thought, i. e. that Jesus Christ is one and the same. He also underlined the kerygmatic formulation of

Athanasius: “And man is called Christ / and God is called Christ / and God and man is Christ / and one is Christ” (1st Cons., p. 29), and gave his interpretation of the pre-Chalcedonian Logos-sarx-scheme as well as the christological Logos-anthroposcheme, both of which he declared to be only half-solutions. Giving an affirmative critical interpretation of the teaching of Cyril of Alexandria and of the letter Leo I sent to Patriarch Flavianus of Constantinople (Tomus Leonis) and pointing out that the setting of Chalcedon was overshadowed by emotions and political influence, he closed with the recommendation not to take the theological positions of around 451 as a basis for the discussions but to start from the great figure of Maximus Homolegetes.

V. C. Samuel, speaking from the standpoint of his Oriental Orthodox Church on *“The Council of Chalcedon – Analysis of a Conflict”* examined the theological situation prior to Chalcedon. He clearly differentiated between the Antiochian and the Alexandrian school in the christological question and described in detail the statements of Emperor Marcianus, the theological position of Theodoret of Cyrus, the message of the letter of Ibas to Maris as well as the Tomos Leonis. He made it clear that the Antiochians insisted on a union between the divine and human nature of Christ in the Prosopon, while the Alexandrians, by contrast, maintained the existence of a hypostatic union and the formula “the one incarnate nature of God the Word”. V. C. Samuel then stated that there was no unequivocal use of the expressions ‘hypostasis’ and ‘hypostatic union’ at the Council of Chalcedon, at any rate not necessarily in the sense of Cyril of Alexandria. The statement of the Council - according to which both natures of Christ concurred “into one Prosopon and one Hypostasis”, so that he is neither split nor divided into two Proposa, but one and the same Son and God incarnate, who is consubstantial with God the Father as well as with us - is interpreted by V. C. Samuel thus “that the one Hypostasis of Christ is not simply the Hypostasis of God the Word, but it is a composite Hypostasis formed by the concurrence of God the Word and the manhood which He united to Himself” (1st Cons., p. 50). On the other hand he points out, that the Antiochian element in the conciliar definition, that Christ is made known “in two natures” (en), whereas the formulation of the Alexandrians would have been “from two natures” (ek) (1st Cons., p. 51). Likewise, the formular “from two natures after the union” (1st Cons., p. 53) was not part of the Alexandrian formula. V. C. Samuel concluded by saying that the Council of Chalcedon “did serious violence to the faith which the Council of Ephesus in 431 had affirmed in condemning Nestorius” (1st Cons., p. 54). Moreover, he said that “sixth century Chalcedonian East realized this truth and sought to meet its challenge, not by admitting the flaw which was actually ascribable to the Council of Chalcedon, but by reading into the Council of 451 decisions which it never had made” (1st Cons., p. 54). The Council of Constantinople (553) had then gone on to defend the Council of Chalcedon.

W. de Vries then continued with a survey of *“The Reasons for the Rejections of the Council of Chalcedon by the Oriental Orthodox Churches”*. One of them was the undemocratic behaviour at Chalcedon of Emperor Marcianus and Pope Leo, who practically defined the results of the Council beforehand and restricted the freedom of discussion of the council fathers by the authorization of their legates thus that the theological problems could not be discussed in an exhaustive way and the opposition felt suppressed. De Vries then described the positions taken by the individual churches

against Chalcedon and summarized: “. . . the Council of Chalcedon did not fulfil the expectations placed in it. Not only did it fail to restore peace in the universal Church, it even caused a schism which was unfortunately continued to our day. It is a tragic fact that the attempt to express the unfathomable mystery of Christ in human terms resulted in an implacable struggle of Christians against Christians. And yet they all really wanted the same thing . . . The dispute arose from the basic inability of men at that time to believe that the same truth may be expressed in different words which may even be apparently contradictory” (1st Cons., p. 60).

Archbishop *Tiran Nersoyan* stated in his *“Problems of Consensus in Christology”* that Christology logically and chronologically precedes theology. He underlined the connection between the loss of the “way of Christ” and the contemporary “God-is-dead” theology and atheism. He embarked on a polemic attack of the political manipulations, at the ancient councils, by Emperors, who believed that church matters were a state affair, thus restricting the freedom of the mind and putting even the Holy Spirit in chains. Nersoyan made a sharp distinction between kerygma and theological interpretation (something which is not always easy); there is a legitimate pluralism of theological interpretation. Councils have to maintain unity, but they must also abstain from making condemnations and causing splits on the ground of theologoumena. Philosophy as an instrument of theology is as indispensable as it is relative. If dogmas of faith had not been transformed into church and state law, the theological disputes would have died down naturally – as all parties held the same basic views. The problem of authority of the ecumenical and of the other councils remains unsolved; at any rate their definitions can no longer be taken as a ready standard for orthodoxy. The Church alone is the supreme council. Nevertheless, conciliarism is fundamental to the structure of the Church. Unity of faith is part of the comprehensive unity of the life of the Church. Those who differ in their views are to be placed with tolerance under the guardianship of the Holy Spirit.

*H. Riedlinger* speaking about *“The Christological Problem – Dogmatical Approach”* started with the conviction that, as believers in Christ, we have “continuously to identify ourselves with the history of belief in Christ”, for “the identification with truth is only possible in the context of the entire history” (1st Cons., p. 64). He employed the terms of identity and difference, which he accurately distinguished from “likeness” and “unlikeness”. “Identity means that a being is truly one with itself, that it is truly itself and not another” (1st Cons., p. 65). Likeness, on the other hand, is of secondary importance compared to the question of identity. Difference does not exist, only by way of comparison, it is an integral part of the mystery of identification. And: the more loving, the more free, the more spiritual a being is in itself, the more the faculty to differ grows in it. Applied to Christology this means: “The mystery of the identity and difference of the God-Man is, in quality, of a completely different kind from that which can be affirmed or denied by the logic of comparison” (1st Cons., p. 67). In Christ the identity of God opens itself towards mankind and the world. “In the Life, Death, Resurrection and Coming of Jesus”, God who is Love, reaches the culmination point of His “Loving Effusion of Identity” (1st Cons., p. 67).

As long as the inclusion of mankind in the identity of God through Parusia has not come about, there can only be “an advancing Christology hopeful of its future” (1st Cons., p. 67).

*M. V. George*, under the title *“The Christological Problem – Some New Testament Aspects”*, developed a methodology, which met with some contradiction, as he assigned to the New Testament the sole function of bearing witness to the apostolic authenticity of the living tradition of the Church. The answer to the question “Who is Jesus Christ?” could not be derived directly from the New Testament . . . Long before the New Testament was compiled, the Church knew and was preaching, who Jesus Christ was . . . The New Testament brings us some examples but by no means the completeness of that knowledge . . . Nor does the church base its proclamation on the authority of the New Testament. *M. V. George* also warned against an uncritical adoption of “so-called scientific” methods of biblical criticism and entirely in keeping with the Cyrillian tradition of his Church, he went on to underline above all the doctrine of the incarnate Logos in the form of the kenosis. In giving an answer to the question of the significance for the contemporary world of the kerygma of the New Testament, he warned, not to adopt the onesided approach of the desiderata of men: “We have to let the word of God raise its own questions from within us and let the same word of God answer these questions” (1st Cons., p. 91).

*F. J. Schierse* in *“The Christological Problem – Biblical Aspects”* pleaded for an “anamnesis”, a purifying and salutary recourse of a critical nature to the personality and the work of the historical Jesus. The consciousness of the Church, expressing itself in dogmatic fixations, cannot go beyond the canon of the scriptures which lay down in a normative way the apostolic witness about Christ. Until modern times the church took its methods of interpretation unhesitatingly from the contemporary sciences; the secured results of modern exegesis, however, have not yet been dogmatically evaluated. The Scriptures, also with regard to Christology, show a theological pluralism; the different christological models of the Scriptures cannot, however, simply be understood in an evolutionistic manner as stages along the continuous way to a more perfect knowledge of the essence of Jesus. The New Testament is no attempt to define the essence of Jesus, but a description of his function, his way, his significance. Moreover, the christological models found in the New Testament are all conditioned by the circumstances. Systematic theology (as an academic pursuit) and a theological profession are phenomena of a later period. In the titles given to Christ in the New Testament we have to consider the entire scope of understanding as well as all the implications that go with the title. Schierse puts forward the following “models” or titles: first that of the Messiah, secondly the eschatological Son of Man (Two-Stage-Christology), thirdly pre-existence (Three-Stage-Christology). While “explicit” christological self-professions of the historical Jesus stem from the reflection of the community, the historical critical reduction of the message of Jesus, on the other hand, comes up with “implicit” and “indirect” Christology, i. e. the historically ascertainable words and deeds of Jesus contain a claim “that the post-easterly kerygma of the church is justified” (forgiveness of sins, correction of the law, casting out of devils, curing of the sick). All titles and models, relate to the concrete, historical, crucified Jesus of Nazareth (in an antignostic way). The divine character of the worldly



existence of Jesus, who reveals the Father as the loving fundament of all being, at the same time bears witness to the “consubstantiality” of Jesus with us humans (Chalcedon).

V. C. Samuel spoke about “*The Differences between Eastern (Byzantine) Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christology*” and described the development of the history of dogmas and of Councils, beginning with Chalcedon up to Constantinople (680/681): In the pre-Chalcedonian as well as in the post-Chalcedonian era he detected a readiness on the part of the Byzantine theologians to meet the Alexandrian position, even to understand Chalcedon in an “Alexandrian” way. Rome, on the other hand, had not undergone any evolution but held on to the formulations of the *Tomos Leonis* and its doctrine of two natures. V. C. Samuel, however, admits that the controversy between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians represents a “deeply deplorable lack of understanding of one position for the other” (1st Cons., p. 117). He sees the main difference between Byzantine Orthodox and Roman Catholic theology in the assimilation by the Byzantines of the Alexandrian interpretation of the person of Christ whereas Rome, while attesting orthodoxy to the Alexandrians, never received their christological formulae.

A. J. van der Aalst treated the parallel subject of “*Differences in Christological Conception between Orthodox and Roman Catholics*”. Taking liturgy as a starting point as well as styles of piety and sense of life he (following A. Jungmann) attributed to the Eastern Churches an image of Christ with a special emphasis on his Godhead. Following the “minimalistic” Christology of Aphraates (“pre-Nicaean”) the whole Orient shifts to a “maximalistic” line springing from the Greek mentality. The intercessory role of the man Jesus recedes, in an anti-Arian reaction Christ is raised to the rank of an “Emperor” and Pantocrator. In the Eucharist his mystery assumes a fearsome, even terrifying quality. This is reflected in art, in architecture. For Chrysostomos, the humanity of Christ becomes a mere tool, an organ of the Logos. The image of Christ becomes so majestic that its human characteristics vanish. The West, by contrast, tends to emphasize psychological qualities: Medieval piety soon turns the august image of Christ, as it had been offered to the Germanic barbarians, into sympathy for the humanity of Jesus. The development of modern scientific methods leads to anthropocentrism, to an emphasis of historicity, of de-mythologization as a consequence of rationality; existentialism, phenomenology, positivism lead to the dismantling of traditional metaphysics. Yet, modern man continues to be attracted by the “human fraternity” of Jesus. For the Western world and its Church there is no turnabout in the history of the mind: the dynamic conception of the world with its critical implications has come to stay. Even the East will hardly be able to steer clear of these developments and their consequences. Therein lies an ecumenical factor. The predominance of an ontoousiologic-metaphysical vision of Christ will retreat, since Christ is a person and not a “philosophical key” and orthodoxy means change of life, orthopraxis. After all Christianity is no gnosis. There has never been a council which would have made love, the first and foremost commandment, its subject matter, and drawn the conclusions for its time and age. But we have learnt: Outsiders no longer are called “children of Satan”, but “brethren in Christ”.

In a second lecture, A. Grillmeier gave a far-reaching survey of “*The Reception of the Council of Chalcedon in the Roman Catholic Church*”, considering reception not as a mere juridical process, but one within the scope of the history of thought. He examined

the reception of Chalcedon in forms of kerygmatics, spirituality and liturgy and finally theology. The result: the Roman Catholic Church and Latin theology were faithful advocates of the Chalcedonian heritage, even if the transmission of formulae by far outreaches the originality of a further theological development of these formulae. The modern theologian is faced with four schemata: 1. extreme emphasis on union (real Monophysitism), 2. moderate emphasis on union (the Alexandrians, Cyril), 3. moderate emphasis on duality (Antiochians, Theodoret), 4. extreme emphasis on duality (Nestorianism). Even today there still exists an interpretation of Christ with a predominantly Logos-hypostasis approach as well as the Homo-assumptus doctrine of the church fathers (“relative autonomy of the humanity of Christ”). Both theological tendencies have to be seen in tension with each other and no one of them is satisfactory by itself.

Piet Schoonenberg started with the advice to take up a recommendation of Ignatius of Loyola from the beginning of his book of exercises. This is what he says: “One should as long as possible be of the opinion that another one is saying the right thing; if one cannot go on with this, one should ask him for more explanations” (1st Cons., p. 154). Implementation of this principle would have been a safeguard against most splits in the Church. Schoonenberg explores *monophysitic and dyophysitic languages about Christ* and spells out clearly the benefits and drawbacks of each of these perceptions. The risks of speaking in monophysitic terms are:

1. Negation or disregard of Christ’s soul which is substituted for the Logos, Christ then is a compound of the Logos and a human body (Apollinarism).
2. Negation or disregard of Christ’s human individuality and personality. The human nature becomes absorbed by the divine hypostasis (enhypostatic) and is without a human hypostasis of its own (anhypostatic).

The risks of speaking in dyophysitic terms are:

1. Here the oneness of Christ is invariably a subsequent one (even if it does not develop into a onesided Christology of adoption). This subsequent need not necessarily be one in time, it can also be logical; and yet, if one seriously believes in the completeness of the human reality of Jesus, the result seems nonetheless to be a merely accidental moral oneness of Christ, a collective person.
2. When a complete human nature or even a human person is recognized in Christ, it becomes clear that Salvation comes about through the man, however, it remains unclear how the Logos in Christ works this salvation through his entry into our manhood and our history.

Consequently, both solutions are neither completely true nor completely untrue. Thus, the christological discourse is up against an aporia which must be accepted and cannot be done away with for the time being. Chalcedon was a solution in terminology, but failed to resolve this aporia. The received language of Chalcedon (consubstantial with the Father and at the same time consubstantial with us; *in* two natures that meet unconfused in one person) does not prevent the question of “how this nature can be perfect and individual without being a human person” from arising at a later date (1st Cons., p. 160). Holding out in the aporia, however distressful this may be and the mutual recognition of the orthodoxy of the other manner of speaking are first, provisional steps towards a solution which is still a long way down the road. Any attempt to produce a quick standard formula denies the fact of the existence of different theological schools of

thought, the pluriformity of cultures and last but not least our historicity as such. The God-Man relationship in Christ remains a mystery of faith, which neither the disciples of Christ nor Jesus himself in his human consciousness fully grasped. Yet, this aporia of the christological discourse must not lead to an absolute abandonment of a solution to the problem. The solution must start with the elimination of the underlying assumptions of this aporia.

Methodologically, Christology must begin with the temporal existence of Jesus and the expected parusia of the Son of Man, not the other way round, taking the pre-existent Logos as a starting point. (The way of the New Testament.) Moreover, it “is not legitimate to conclude from the pre-existent Logos either an anhypostatic human nature or only a subsequent unity of Christ” (1st Cons., p. 164). Christology must start from the fact that Jesus Christ is a person, a human person that is, since in “His creation and in His self-revelation God does not repress, exclude or replace any being created, or even man” (1st Cons., p. 164). God’s ultimate oneness with the man Jesus Christ does not in any way diminish his being a human person. Yet, the man Jesus is by no means a counterpart of the divine Logos, the latter rather forms a union with the human person thus, that Jesus Christ is and remains one person. The Logos and the Spirit are to be understood as two modes of presence, emanations of the Father, who is after all the source of divinity. Thus, the man Jesus Christ can become completely pervaded by his being a divine person as the Son, without having to relinquish anything of his being a human person. One can say, as the Second Council of Constantinople did, that the Son was born before all aeons from the Father and also that he is born in union with Jesus from the Father. Thus, the ultimate supreme case of the presence of God in the fully human and fully personal man Jesus Christ will be recognized.

In his paper entitled “*The Relevance of Christology – Today*”, Paul Verghese embarked on a polemic of the theologians of the God-is-dead theology (William Hamilton, John Vincent and Paul van Buren) on the one hand and a secularized christianity and the attempt by R. Kysar to create, as a critic of those mentioned above, an out-and-out secular Christology, which is not guilty of “Jesusolatry”. Kysar accuses the theologians mentioned to continue getting hints to the transcendental in the secular sphere, but is himself unable to give any reason as to why we are still moving along the lines of the Judeo-Christian culture, regarding the figure of Christ as an ideal, a sort of ethical model designed to call forth in man Christian values. Does the christological debate of the 4th and 5th centuries still have a bearing on the present time, Verghese asks and his answer is: yes, if the humanity of Jesus is a manifestation of the divine, because it is only then that the christological difficulties start. The renunciation of transcendence and the relaxation or disregard of the fact that Jesus is at the same time God and Man, prompts a Christology which is completely beside the point of Christianity, since the mysteries of the Trinity and of Incarnation are the foundations of Christianity. The debate with a secularist Christology is in reality a dialogue with non-Christians. The rationalistic attempt to catch God in the net by way of a theistic dispute is bound to end up in a theology “of the death of God”. But the rationalistic procedure reduces man to his temporal existence. The secularist theologians are monophysites in the opposite sense. Verghese goes on to explain the difference between the historical and the kerygmatic Christ: According to R. Bultmann the kerygmatic Christ is what we need and what we have got. Bultmann’s problem consisted in the fact that in the kerygma of the Church this

Christ is couched in an archaic, mythological form and language; hence, the necessity to de-mythologize the eschatological act of God in Christ. The historical Jesus and his words here still belong to Judaism, with Christianity only starting with the kerygmatic Christ announced by the Church after Easter. In the Scriptures, this doctrine of Jesus is at all times open to us. It was not the doctrine of Jesus which counted, but the doctrine about Jesus. Verghese then cites E. Käsemann’s criticism of Bultmann, that a kerygmatic Jesus totally unrelated to the historical Jesus would simply be a hoax. But Käsemann’s recourse to a pre-hellenistic Christ of Palestino-Jewish Christianity is no solution either. The difference between the historical discussion and the discussion in the 20th century consists in the fact that today it is the intellectual and ethical position of Christ that is at stake, whereas, in the early times, the person of Jesus was treated as a metaphysical being (ontologically). Verghese polemizes against the assumption that “only that which is ascertained as scientifically true can be proclaimed as truth by the Church” (1st Cons., p. 173), for: Where would that otherwise leave Christian faith? The historical discussion is relevant, for to this day the main object is the Salvation of the world (soteriology). Verghese rejects any complete insight into the mystery of Christ, advocates rather a “negative insight”, which protects the mystery. He attests that the definition of Chalcedon can be understood in a non-heretical sense, while maintaining that it is an unfortunate formulation, especially because of its all too “symmetric” Christology. Besides, the emphasis on the difference on the level of the nature and on the union on the level of the person, or the acting subject, sets off more distinctly the difference between the divine and the human. Nevertheless: in Christ there is union both on the level of the hypostasis and on the level of the nature, “that we prefer a theosis soteriology to a mere soteriology of personal encounter or of compensation is at the base of our one-nature-Christology” (1st Cons., p. 175). Verghese concludes: “The terminology of Chalcedon is not so obsolete as some people suggest. We have as yet no alternate philosophical terminology into which to translate the basic christological affirmations in current language” (1st Cons., p. 178).

The lectures of the Consultation concluded with a *summarizing thorough debate of the christological issue*. While treating the reasons for the historical split of Chalcedon and the following historical developments in both East and West and focusing on a systematic discussion on the basis of the Chalcedonian terminology, some new christological perspectives emerged, especially in the lectures of H. Riedlinger and P. Schoonenberg. Their pursuit must be left to another round of talks. It became apparent that it was not only the difference in philosophical-theological outlook, in national and cultural ways of thinking, that was responsible for the fact that unity has not yet come about. Besides there were also political and church policy implications as well as psychological barriers. There was the realization that the mystery of Christ and the Christ-event cannot be grasped in intellectual terms. Likewise it was acknowledged that while rational formulae are useful and necessary, they are of secondary importance to the mystery of faith, a recognition which allowed a side glance at the respective liturgies and developments of acts of worship and piety. The following subjects were held to be inextricably linked to the intellectual settlement of the theological differences: the problem of the recognition of councils, especially of those which came after Chalcedon (on this point there is also disagreement between the Latin and the Orthodox Churches), ecumenicity, authority and reception of councils and synods, the question of the

infallibility of the Church and of Church assemblies and finally the special function of the role of the papacy. Moreover the issue of the lifting of mutual anathemata and the mutual recognition of saints plays a role.

Prayer, meditation of the Scriptures and concluding services with general participation (if not with a *communicatio in sacris in sensu strictu*) gave a spiritual and confraternal character to this Consultation, which, by general request, should be continued on a similar basis. Bishop Shenouda, who was in the meantime elected, as Shenouda III, Coptic Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria and Pope of All Africa, in his sermon which he held during a liturgy celebrated by Cardinal König in St. Stephen's Cathedral pointed out to the assembled faithful the newly won fraternal relations, the awakened mutual understanding and the target of all Christians becoming united in the one and only Christ. The tangible result of the Consultation is expressed in a jointly composed Communiqué (1st Cons., p. 182; The Vienna Dialogue, Booklet Nr. 1, p. 46)

*Alois Grillmeiers SJ*

## CHRISTIANS FROM EAST AND WEST

Second Unofficial Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church<sup>1</sup>

When the "Second Unofficial Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church" ended on September 9th, 1973 in Vienna, nobody suspected that the work of the Ecumenical Foundation PRO ORIENTE, the initiator and organizer of these meetings, was in for a serious trial. Totally unexpectedly, on October 3rd, Mons. Otto Mauer the animating spirit of this work passed away. Besides, even the aftermath of renewed war in the Middle East goes on doing harm to ties with friends in the Orient. Regrettably, this renders it more difficult to benefit immediately from opportunities of closer contacts between Christians in East and West, which had multiplied appreciably since the last meeting.

At the opening session, on September 3rd, chaired by Franciscus Cardinal König, Otto Mauer was able to report on the results of the First Consultation held two years ago, which had begun bearing fruit. Obviously, when Pope Paul VI and the new Coptic Patriarch Amba Shenouda met – the latter (then still Bishop and Dean of the Coptic Orthodox Seminary in Cairo) had taken part in the First Vienna Consultation in 1971 – they had the Communiqué of the First Consultation at their disposal. It had become the basis of an important dialogue.

The president of the Ecumenical Foundation PRO ORIENTE, Theodor Piffl-Perčević (Vienna), was able to welcome renowned personalities from East and West as guests of the new meeting: Amba Gregorios, Bishop for Higher Theological Studies, Coptic Culture and Academic Research, Deacon George H. Bebawi, Secretary of the "Association for Theological Education in the Near East", both from Cairo. The Syrian Orthodox Church of the Patriarchate of Antioch was represented by Archbishop Severius Zakka Iwas (of Baghdad and Basrah); the Armenian Apostolic Church by Vardapet Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian (Vienna); Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan (New York) was regrettably unable to attend this time round. He had particularly impressed the participants of the First Consultation with his ecumenical broad-mindedness. Then there was the Ethiopian Orthodox theologian Abba Samuel M. Th. Sc., Bishop of Kembata, Haikotch and Butagira, Secretary General of the Holy Synod and Head of the Church's Foreign Office in Addis Abeba. This Bishop, who came to be very important for the Consultation, was accompanied by the Very Rev. Liqe Silttanat Habte Mariam Workneh, Head of the Department for Ecclesiastical Affairs in the Private Cabinet of Emperor Haile Selassie. From the Syrian Orthodox Church of India we saw Rev. M. V. George, Vice-Rector of the Orthodox Theological Seminary of Kottayam (Kerala, India), Rev. V.

<sup>1</sup> The text of all papers and sermons delivered in the course of this Second Vienna Consultation as well as the minutes of the discussions and the common final communiqué appeared in the PRO ORIENTE English language publication: *Wort und Wahrheit, Revue for Religion and Culture, Supplementary Issue No. 2, Second Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Vienna-Lainz, 1973, Papers and Minutes, Verlag Herder, Wien, Dec. 1974, pp. 208.*

The Final Communiqué can also be found in: PRO ORIENTE (ed.): *The Vienna Dialogue, Five PRO ORIENTE Consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy, Booklet Nr. 1, Communiqués and Joint Documents, Vienna, 1990, p. 58.*

C. Samuel, professor and dean at the Theological College of the Haile Selassie University in Addis Ababa and the renowned ecumenist, Rev. Prof. Paul Verghese, Rector of the Orthodox Theological Seminary of Kottayam.

From the Roman Catholic side Father John F. Long SJ (Rome), Departmental Head at the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and professor for theology at the Loyola University, took part as an observer. Representatives of the teaching profession attending as speakers and participants in the discussions were Johannes B. Bauer, professor for dogmatic history (Graz), Alexander Dordett, professor for canon law (Vienna), Horst Herrmann, professor for canon law (Münster in Westphalia, Federal Republic of Germany), J. G. Remmers, director of the Catholic Ecumenical Institute at the same university, Wilhelm de Vries SJ, Dean of the Oriental Faculty and professor for church history at the Pontifical Oriental Institute (Rome), Alois Grillmeier SJ, professor for dogmatics and dogmatic history (St. Georgen, Frankfurt/Main, Federal Republic of Germany). As on the occasion of the First Consultation, Günter Stemberger, lecturer at the Vienna University Institute for Jewish Studies, acted as secretary of the meeting.

The Second Consultation, too, was of a purely unofficial nature, which was undoubtedly an advantage, allowing for more freedom and friendship in the discussions. Thus it was also possible to get a quicker grasp of participants' theological line of thought than is usually the case in official events. Since it was the First Consultation that had undertaken a thorough investigation of the christological issue – as is put forward by the history of Chalcedon and had turned into a point of contention between the churches – one day was sufficient for the treatment of this subject. During the morning of September 3rd, V. C. Samuel (Addis Ababa) and A. Grillmeier (Frankfurt/Main) speaking about *“The Understanding of the Christological Definitions of both (Oriental Orthodox and Roman Catholic) Traditions in the Light of the Post-Chalcedonian Theology (Analysis of Terminologies in a Conceptual Framework)”* once again dealt with the different outlook of non-Chalcedonian and Chalcedonian Christology. In the course of the discussion, it became even more apparent than two years ago that there existed basically no essential dissent, something which was also born out by the final Communiqué. As Otto Mauer has already given extensive coverage of those discussions in his report on 1971, there is no need to take them up again, especially since the papers will again be published.

One thing, however, should be stressed in particular: Immediately after the Council of Chalcedon and at the Council itself there was no awareness of its importance resting on an abstract “formula” – taken in isolation by itself. This “awareness of a formula” was a subsequent creation of the discussions, as they became increasingly dominated by theologians. The “kerygma” of Chalcedon was nothing new and in fact shared by supporters and opponents of the Council (A. Grillmeier).

Of both greater importance and greater controversy, at this meeting, were such fundamental questions as *“The Infallibility of the Church – The Significance of Ecumenical Councils”* (Paul Verghese – J. G. Remmers). Thus, a number of interrelated problems were brought up which figured prominently in both current theological discussions and research.

Obviously, this proved to be too heavy a task for such a brief encounter. Viewpoints differed hugely. According to Paul Verghese the ecumenical council is not the “locus of

manifestation of the Infallibility of the Church . . . The ecumenical council was not meant to be a permanent, recurrent form of expression of the authority of the Church. There is no category or criterion by which any council can be declared a priori to be ecumenical” (2nd Cons., p. 52).

J. G. Remmers started from the fact that the Oriental Orthodox Churches were after all being considered as “churches” – and that before and, even more explicitly so, after the Second Vatican Council. This leads us to the question of what that means for the ecumenicity of those councils which were held without the participation or consent of these Churches as time went on. Having in mind the concrete history of a typically church-policy-dominated council, i. e. the Second Council of Constantinople held in 553 under Emperor Justinian I, W. de Vries (Rome) too in his paper on *“The Three Chapter Controversy”* stressed “the relativity of any human attempt to formulate divine mysteries. We must never commit ourselves to a formula in such a way as to consider it the only possible, the optimum expression of a truth of the faith” (2nd Cons., p. 81). This was said with the intention of broadening the basis of ecumenical dialogue and ridding the discussion of too concrete, outdated historical problems.

Being closely linked to the authority of councils, the related issues of *“Anathema, Schism and Heresy”* were also treated in Vienna with Vardapet Mesrob K. Krikorian (Vienna) speaking for the Oriental Orthodox side and professor Horst Herrmann (Münster) for the Roman Catholic side. According to the former, it should be possible for Church leaders to carry out two measures without any hesitation or delay: firstly, the lifting of mutual anathemata pronounced against patriarchs or theologians in connection with the Christological controversies of the 5th and 6th centuries, and this in a public ceremony; secondly, anathemata in liturgical books should be dropped accordingly. There should be mutual avoidance of unnecessary claims (such as the mutual recognition as “saints” of theologians who had been considered “heretical” for 1500 years, to give only one example). The creation of new books on church history, written in a spirit of ecumenical understanding was an important task.

Horst Herrmann approached the same subject from a different angle. He put forward two contrasting concepts of what church might be: the “Church of total absorption” (finding its expression in the strictness of narrowly defined formulae of faith as well as in the insistence on Canon law, particularly on Penal law), on the one hand, and the principle of “partial identification” on the other hand. Applied to the overall topic, this means: “If this idea contains some truth, then it follows – for us, at least – that also the juridical formulation of the intentions of the Church can never result in something hermetically closed and self-contained. On the contrary: Canon Law, being a transitory *emergency law*, has the indispensable task to remind man in his search for his own nature that he can permanently change and he is obliged to do so. It is in the nature of the law of the right Church to point out the principally preliminary and reformable nature of all created beings and, as a consequence of it, their permanent re-shaping which continuously goes on” (2nd Cons., p. 124). Here Herrmann pointed to the fact, “that the revival movement, especially among young people, is based on a ‘craving for a home’ (a home also in the structures of a religious law!). It is a craving for credible values, for spiritual orientation and commitment” (2nd Cons., p. 124).

These thoughts were complemented by the paper read by *A. Dordett* (Vienna) on “*Canon Law, Faith and Sacramentality*”. Following *H. Dombois*, his way of setting canon law in an overall perspective is this: “There are the coming together of God and man, the relation of religious action, the connections of the limbs in the Body of Christ, so that we refer to canon law as a *professing* and a *liturgical law*” (2nd Cons., p. 170). “The essence of the Church is its unity in the faith, in the sacraments and in the communion of prayers. The outer system is on the periphery, not in the centre. It is this centre which provides the basis for the law, determines and modifies it” (2nd Cons., p. 171).

Under the heading of “*The Reception of Councils*” yet another set of issues was tackled which would have been sufficient for more than one meeting. *Mar Severius Zakka Iwas*, Archbishop of Baghdad and Basrah, in his paper advocated a significantly more positive attitude towards the idea of councils than for instance *Paul Verghese* did in “Infallibility of the Church and the Ecumenic of Councils” *Zakka Iwas* declared his readiness to go beyond the recognition of the first three councils, exclusively accepted by the Oriental Orthodox Churches: “So the Christian Churches today should together study all the councils, which should be examined according to the traditions of the apostles and the decisions of the three Ecumenical Councils which all the Churches recognize, and the teaching of the forefathers which is the true testimony” (2nd Cons., p. 92). More fundamental ideas about that most difficult issue of the reception of councils, a process which has already gone underway in Western research but is still far from being completed, were voiced by *Johannes B. Bauer* (Graz, Austria).

Another topic for a whole meeting in its own right was that of “*The Ecumenical Council and the Ministry of Peter*”. This subject was treated by *Amba Gregorios* (Kairo) and *W. de Vries* (Rome). These papers and the discussions which followed revealed the amount of patience that was still needed for this kind of intercommunication. The Alexandrian representatives vigorously denied any special role of Peter in the New Testament or of the Roman Bishop at a council. *Johannes B. Bauer*, however, pointed out in the discussion that it did make sense to show that those indications which we find in the New Testament were being carried on at the beginning of the second century. When dissident Judeo-Christians wanted to put the Lord’s brother Jacob in Peter’s place, they coined a saying of the Lord such as logion 12 of the Gospel according to Thomas: “The disciples said to Jesus: ‘We know that you will go away from us; who will be the greatest over us?’ Jesus told them: ‘From the place to which you have come, you will go to Jacob the Just, for his sake Heaven and Earth have been created!’” (ed. J. Leipolt, TU 101, 28). The Hebrew Gospel, which originated in the same circles, proves Jacob’s claim to primacy by characterizing him, contrary to the historical facts, as a participant in Jesus’ Last Supper and as the first witness and thus as the most important witness of the resurrection. (Ph. Vilehauer in: Hennecke-Schneemelcher, Ntl. Apokr. I (1968) 105 text loc. cit. 108.) If the “first appearance” of the Resurrected, in 1, Cor 15,5 decidedly attributed to Peter, is being implicitly denied to him and explicitly attributed to Jacob instead, this can only be bound up with the fact that, at that time already, Petrine pre-eminence was being vindicated with this passage. Another proof of Peter’s authority as early as at the end of the first century is the flood of pseudo-epigraphic writings in his name, starting with the so-called First Letter of Peter. This letter was apparently written

under Domitian and addressed to a large number of communities in Asia Minor, which had largely been evangelized by Paul, whose name, however, is not mentioned. The real author of this letter obviously pretended to be Peter, because, by using his name, he could claim to have a right to write even to those communities which he had not founded himself. The same is true of the Second Letter of Peter. (I am grateful to *Johannes B. Bauer* for letting me have this summary of his contribution to the discussion.) Moreover, one might just refer to the relations of St Cyril of Alexandria to Rome and his collaboration with the Roman Bishop in the case of Nestorius. At this point the “larger problem” of ecumenical dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox Churches become evident which was also expressed in *Paul Verghese’s* words: “The Oriental Orthodox Churches do not feel as split twigs, but as the original stem from which the Chalcedonian Church has departed.”

Considering the differences which had surfaced at this point it was all the more astonishing when the Ethiopian Bishop *Abba Samuel* proposed to move from unofficial talks to official negotiations on the reunification of the divided Churches. This was generally received with great approval, but one must not forget that this motion primarily sprang from the agreement on the Christological issue and includes ideas of a *koinonia* for which there is no straight correspondence in Roman canon law. Nevertheless, Rome should enter this dialogue with the greatest broadness and openness of mind possible. For the strength of faith and the sense of tradition which these Churches bring in, can be an example to all of us - especially in the present crisis! On the other hand though, the Churches of the East will not be spared the task of tackling the problems of adapting what was handed down to the requirements of our time, as was recognized by the participants in this Consultation. After all they include in their ranks such ecumenists with an intimate knowledge of Western problems and Western literature, as the commonly revered Bishop *Amba Gregorius* from Cairo, or *Paul Verghese*. It is also the latter who can take the credit for the basic wording of the final Communiqué, which is an open statement of both our common ground and our points of divergence.

## CHRIST-CHURCH-COUNCIL

Third Non-Official Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church<sup>1</sup>

The *Third Ecumenical Consultation* between theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church took place in Vienna, at the Bildungshaus Lainz from Monday, 30th August to Saturday, 5th September 1976. We begin with a presentation of the participants and a description of the course of events of this consultation. Following that we shall look at the issues presented in the papers.

### 1. Participants

The absence of previously encountered renowned personalities and the emergence of new names was an indication of the changes which have occurred since the Second Vienna Consultation. Back in September 1973 it was the unforgotten champion of the ecumenical cause Otto Mauer who was able to report on the results of the 1971 meeting. But already on October 3rd 1973 he suddenly deceased. Now the President of the PRO ORIENTE Foundation, the former Austrian Federal Minister Dr. Theodor Piffli-Perčević, as well as Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian, Vardapet of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Austria, and Prof. Dr. Father John F. Long SJ, professor for theology at the Loyola University, Chicago-Rome, as co-chairmen, took over the direction of the consultation. The largest group of Oriental Orthodox participants came from the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria. The President of PRO ORIENTE was able to welcome: Amba Gregorios, Bishop for Higher Theological Studies, Coptic Culture and Academic Research, Cairo, Egypt; Amba Samuel, Bishop in Cairo for Public, Ecumenical and Social Affairs; Bishop Amba Youannis of Gharbia; Deacon Dr. George H. Bebawi, Secretary of the Association of Theological Education in the Near East, Cairo; Dr. Maurice Tadros of the Coptic Orthodox Theological University College, Cairo; and finally Father Antonios Ragheb, Cairo.

The Syrian Orthodox Church of the Patriarchate of Antioch was represented by the Archbishops Mar Gregorios Saliba of Mosul, Iraq, and Mar Severius Zakka Iwas of Baghdad and Basra, Iraq; Father Superior Ishak Saka of St. Mathew's Monastery in Mosul, Iraq. For the Armenian Apostolic Church the following theologians had entered their names for participation: Bishop Arsen Berberian, Director of the Department for Interchurch Relations of the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin, USSR; Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan of New York; Archbishop Karekin Sarkissian, Prelate of the Armenian

<sup>1</sup> The text of all papers and sermons delivered in the course of this Third Vienna Consultation as well as the minutes of the discussions and the common final communiqué appeared in the PRO ORIENTE English language publication: *Wort und Wahrheit, Revue for Religion and Culture, Supplementary Issue No. 3, Third Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Vienna-Lainz, 1976, Papers and Minutes, Verlag Herder, Wien, Dec. 1976, pp. 240.*

The Final Communiqué can also be found in: PRO ORIENTE (ed.), *The Vienna Dialogue, Five PRO ORIENTE Consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy, Booklet Nr. 1, Communiqués and Joint Documents, Vienna, 1990, p. 71.*

Apostolic Church in America, New York; Archbishop Ardavazt Terterian, General Vicar of the Armenian Apostolic Catholicosate of Cilicia, Antelias, Lebanon. However, eventually Vardapet Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian was the only one from that Church to be able to attend. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church too met with special difficulties. Bishop Abba Paulus, General Secretary of the Holy Synod and Director of the Foreign Office of the Church in Addis Ababa, and Lique Silttanat Habte Marian Workneh from Addis Ababa, were prevented. Instead, and in spite of the fact that the Consultation took place at the very time of the enthronement of the new Patriarch, Abuna Tekle Haimanot, Archbishop Markos of Gojam; Father Petros, as well as the Vice-President and the Secretary of the newly formed provisional Council of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Ato Fikere Dengele Beyone, and Ato Abebaw Yegzaw from Addis Ababa had arrived.

The Syrian Orthodox Church of India was represented by Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Ostahios, Pro-Rector of the Orthodox Theological Seminary in Kottayam, Kerala, India; Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gegorios, Rector of the Orthodox Seminary of Kottayam and Secretary of the Synodal Commission for Interchurch Relations of the Syro-Indian Church, Kottayam, India; and Father K. M. George, Paris. From the Roman Catholic Church took part: Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Beinert, Bochum; Prof. Dr. Walter Brandmüller, Augsburg; Prof. Dr. Alois Grillmeier SJ, Frankfurt/Main; assistant university professor Dr. Walter Kirchschräger, Vienna; Prof. DDr. Karl Lehmann, Freiburg im Breisgau; Prof. Dr. Georg Schwaiger, Munich; Prof. Dr. Hermann Josef Vogt, Tübingen; Prof. Dr. Wilhelm de Vries SJ, Rome; Prof. Dr. H. M. Biedermann, Würzburg; Prof. DDr. Johannes Emminghaus, Vienna; Prof. Dr. André de Halleux; Fr. Dr. Father Daniel Gelsi OSB, Graz; Prof. Dr. Raphael Schulte, Vienna; Prof. Dr. Ernst Christoph Suttner, Vienna; Father Dr. Gerhard Voss OSB, the Director of the Ecumenical Institute of the Abbey Niederaltaich and of the Ecumenical Commission of the Catholic Dioceses in Bavaria, Niederaltaich. As observers to the Consultation there were Mons. Charles Moeller, Secretary of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, Rome, and Bishop Vassilios of Aristis, Greek Metropolis in Germany, Bonn. The minutes were taken by Fr. Gerhart Habison, Vienna.

### 2. Course of Events

The meeting started with a Pontifical Liturgy at the Parish Church of the Most Holy Trinity belonging to the Syrian Orthodox Church Community of St. Ephrem the Syriac. The service was conducted by Archbishop Mar Severius Zakka Iwas from Baghdad and Basra, with Franciscus Cardinal König holding the sermon. At 10 o'clock a. m. in his capacity of chairman of the board of PRO ORIENTE, the Cardinal inaugurated the sessions with opening prayers. Following that the President of the Foundation welcomed the participants; Mons. Charles Moeller conveyed words of greeting from the Roman Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. Bishop Amba Gregorios, Cairo spoke the opening words on behalf of the representatives of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. Under the chairmanship of Prof. Dr. Father John F. Long SJ and Vardapet Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian, followed the reading of the first papers. They will be covered in detail later on.

The working sessions on the first day, August 30th, were at 10 a. m., 4 p. m. and 8 p. m.; on August 31st at 9, 11 a. m., 4 p. m. and 8 p. m.; on September 1st at 9, 12 a. m.

(scheduled time for the lecture of Bishop Arsen Berberian, Etchmiadzin, who was unfortunately kept from attending). The sixth working session took place at 4 p. m. Thursday, September 2nd offered a typically Viennese and Austrian interlude which had as usual a very cordial and warm and at the same time rather instructive touch. At 9 a. m. participants set out on an excursion, with a first stop at the grave at the cemetery of Brunn am Gebirge of the late co-chairman of the first two PRO ORIENTE consultations, Mons. Prof. Otto Mauer. At 11 a. m. the party was received by the representative of the Abbot of the Cistercian Monastery of Lilienfeld. There followed a visit to the highly interesting exhibition dedicated to the topic of “1000 years of Babenberg dynasty in Austria” in the same monastery. Afterwards we went to a meeting with the General Vicar of the Diocesan Bishop of St. Pölten, His Excellency Franz Žak. At 4 p. m. we continued our way to Göttweig, visiting the famous Benedictine Monastery there. Following a welcome by the Abbot, His Grace Prelate Father Clemens Lashofer OSB, we were shown round the Abbey. The day ended with solemn vespers at the Monastery and a common supper. Friday, September 3rd, started with a Syro-Indian Pontifical Liturgy at the Roman Catholic Counciliar Church of Lainz, celebrated by Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios; the sermon was given by Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios. At 9 a. m. commenced the eighth working session which was then interrupted by a reception given by His Excellency the Federal President of the Republic of Austria, Dr. Rudolf Kirchschläger, in the former Imperial Palace. At 4 p. m. the ninth working session opened, with papers on “Binding Dogmatic Decisions and the Historicity of the Life of the Church” by Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, Kottayam, and by Prof. DDr. Karl Lehmann, Freiburg. The last working day, Saturday September 4th, began with a Coptic Pontifical Liturgy at the Counciliar Church, celebrated by Bishop Amba Gregorios, and with a sermon by Bishop Amba Samuel. During the tenth working session at 9 p. m. three speakers reported on the subjects of “Practical Consequences of the three Vienna Consultations”: first Bishop Amba Samuel, then Vardapet Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian, and finally university assistant professor Dr. Walter Kirchschläger. The final session at 3 p. m. was a discussion of the wording of the joint Communiqué of the Third Vienna Consultation with a debate of eventual further initiatives by the Ecumenical Foundation PRO ORIENTE. The day closed with a reception given for the participants by His Eminence Franciscus Cardinal König at the Archbishopal Palace. Sunday, September 5th, assembled the participants for a solemn service at the Armenian Church of St. Hripsime, celebrated by Vardapet Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian, with a sermon by the Ethiopian Archbishop Markos of Gojam. Then the Armenian Apostolic Church Community with its usual hospitality, gave a buffet lunch in honour of the participants of the Consultation. In the evening at 6 p. m. a solemn Pontifical Liturgy was celebrated by the Archbishop of Vienna, Franciscus Cardinal König, where the Indian Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios held the sermon. The PRO ORIENTE invited for a final common meal at the Sacher Hotel.

### 3. The Issues

The meeting started with a reconsideration of the results of the first and the second Vienna Consultations. This was done under the title of “*The Christological Consensus Reached in Vienna*”, in papers read by Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios (Prof. P.

Vergheze) (Syro-Indian), and Prof. Dr. *Wilhelm de Vries*, Rome (Roman Catholic ). It was an interpretation of the former Vienna Communiqués of 1971 and 1973.

Once more, the extent of consensus and dissent in respect of the Council of Chalcedon was outlined. Paulos Mar Gregorios said: “There is no doubt that the area of christological agreement between the Roman Catholic Church and the Ancient Oriental Orthodox Churches is vast and substantially complete” (3rd Cons., p. 18). Nevertheless, he stressed, that there was a lack of consensus in terminology and in what the Master of Oriental Orthodox theology, Cyril of Alexandria, understood by the two main terms of *physis* and *hypostasis*. But is the difference only in terminology?, he went on asking. As a matters of fact, debate of this question is coming back to life – away from the meeting in Vienna. Its particular point of focus will have to be the concept of the “composite nature of Jesus Christ”, put forward several times in the course of the Consultation. At the same time, the theology of the foremost teacher of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, Severus of Antioch, would have to be discussed anew, as shown by J.-M. Garrigues, *La Personne composée du Christ d’après saint Maxime le Confesseur*, in: *Revue Thomiste* 74 (1974) pp. 181–204. When Severus is criticised in this context, this does certainly not refer to the Patriarch’s substance of faith but to his theological terminology and his speculative aids. For it is questionable whether they really come up to the objective faith for which Severus stands. In this connection it may also be pointed out that one of the participants in this Consultation, who is a member of the Commission for the Dialogue on Church Unity in Cairo, A. de Halleux, in an updated article, meanwhile made a precious contribution towards an agreement on this point: *La définition christologique à Chalcédoine*, in: *Revue Théologique de Louvain* 7 (1976), pp. 3–23, 155–170. There he shows how the basic formula of Chalcedon is more deeply nourished by the spirit of Cyril of Alexandria than usually assumed. (See A. Grillmeier, *Jesus Christus im Glauben der Kirche*, 1st volume. *Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis Chalcedon*, Herder, Freiburg–Basel–Wien 1979, pp. 751–775.) Paulos Mar Gregorios and Father de Vries also addressed the problem of modern hermeneutics and exegesis as well as the development of Christology in the West, with especially Paulos Mar Gregorios showing some reserve. W. de Vries once again underscored that while some of the criticism which can be brought against the history of the theological controversy around Chalcedon may be valid, ultimate judgement of the Council had to be positive, particularly with a view to modern problems. Indeed, especially Chalcedon had the potential to build a bridge between ancient christology and modern man in the West in search of himself (cf. A. Grillmeier loc. cit.). At the same time, however, one must not disregard the warning of the East that some Western theologians run the risk of dissipating the common substance of faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.

After this recapitulation of the two previous Consultations a fresh step forward was made by studying each other’s concepts of Church, i. e. ecclesiology in the East and the West, with a special emphasis on the notion of Councils. First Bishop *Amba Gregorios*, Cairo, and Prof. Dr. *Wolfgang Beinert*, (Bochum, now Regensburg) spoke about “*The Church of Christ as Local Church*”. The notion of “Church” may be approached either from its universality or from the local church. Whereas Amba Gregorius put the first aspect at the center of his analysis, moving towards the second from this standpoint, W. Beinert started from the “rediscovery of the local Church” and went on to put the question of the realization of the Church according to the New Testament (“*The church exists only in and from the local churches*” (3rd Cons., p. 44). From that point he traced

the development of New Testament ecclesiology, by considering the chief indicators of the local-church-character of the *Una Catholica*, i. e. faith, sacramental communion and service, especially in ministry. As the Commission of Cairo which met after Vienna in 1977 showed, there was as yet no common understanding of the relationship between “universal” and “local”. However, the third set of issues, “*Necessity and Signs of ‘communio’ between the Local Churches*” (Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, Prof. Dr. H. J. Vogt, Tübingen; Archbishop Mar Severius Zakka Iwas) was rather useful in clarifying each other’s perceptions. “Particularly the early synodal activity, which at first hardly crossed the borders of the imperial provinces, shows that the correspondence among the communities was not based on a groundless urge for communication or on only a postulated general right for information. Rather did the communities, at least those which had entered the light of history, experience and exercise, through their bishops, but also through other members of the clergy, the *sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum*” (the concern of all churches; 3rd Cons., p. 80) (H. J. Vogt, who stressed that the necessity of *communio*, i. e. of a give-and-take between the individual Churches, can be documented both in the early Church and in subsequent periods of church history. Without any doubt a useful ecumenical subject.)

This brought us on to the subject of “councils”. The multitude of open questions in this respect is a natural consequence of the fact that the Oriental Orthodox Churches recognize only three councils as being ecumenical. Hence, it is clear that attitudes towards “councils” or treatment of the “councilar idea” were not the same in all representatives of the different Churches. First of all “*The Origins of the Councilar Idea*” was explored in three papers, i. e. from an Armenian (Vardapet Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian), Coptic (Bishop Amba Youannis) and Roman Catholic perspective (A. Grillmeier).

Following that, the attention turned to the “*Importance of Councils for the Life of the Universal Church*”, viewed in a Syro-Indian (Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios) and Western perspective (Prof. Dr. W. Brandmüller). Brandmüller stressed that by virtue of the Codex Iuris Canonici (cc. 222–229) the General Council of the Church represents a highly important constitutional element within the Church, and this not least because the General Council represents the *Ecclesia universalis* (universal Church). Brandmüller, citing writers of the 15th century, traced the history of the importance and the development of the concept of *repraesentatio universalis ecclesiae* (representation of the Universal Church). However, these highly interesting explanations led the Oriental participants on to what was hitherto uncharted territory for them. Participants were taken on a tour of the whole of predominantly Western Church history by the topic of “*The Authority of Councils and the Unity of the Church*”, and in particular by Prof. Dr. G. Schwaiger’s paper (Munich); the Oriental speaker, Archbishop Mar Gregorios Saliba of Mosul treated the same subject in a more systematic perspective. Schwaiger ventured on the difficult question of the relationship between ecumenical councils and papal primacy, and showed the dramatic transformations of this relationship in the different stages of church history. The Oriental speaker, on the other hand, emphasized the ecumenical council as “highest authority of the Church”. Its main task was to maintain the unity of the Church and to guard against anything that might upset the foundations of the Church; it had to decree all the necessary regulations and moral laws appropriate to create a bond between all those who are affiliated to the Church; dogmas had to be

formulated, defined, unified and made public in canonic form to enable the faithful to understand and accept them.

The 7th topic, “*Binding Magisterial Statements and the Historical Nature of the Life of the Church*”, represented the highlight of the issues raised and discussed. Unfortunately, the Armenian Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan from New York had not been able to come to the meeting. Surely, he would have contributed crucial points on the matter, as previous Consultations showed. But the two papers actually read by Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, Kottayam, and Prof. DDr. Karl Lehman, Freiburg, entirely made up for his absence, in spite of their differences in detail. Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios stressed that what was needed in this time and age, was the renunciation of any pyramid-shaped hierarchic setup and a transformation in terms of the Trinitarian structure of the Church; to his mind the Sobornost concept of Orthodoxy represents a combination of hierarchic and democratic principles. He particularly expanded on Khomjakov, and his idea of the Church as an organic society and gave special emphasis to reception as a test for the authenticity of a dogma. Since Khomjakov, however, only wants to recognize the first seven Councils and excludes the later ones, he introduces a totally anti-ecumenical principle. But the speaker himself did not insist on Khomjakov. His opinion was made clear above all in point 6 of his guidelines for the future: “Though we cannot go back to the faith and structure of the undivided Church in toto, the future should be in the line of the patristic tradition (Basilios was given special prominence by the speaker!). Hence the joint search for the faith of our common Fathers which has to be done by the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions, to arrive at an ecumenical theology which is acceptable to all and binding on all under the Holy Spirit” (3rd Cons., p. 209). Prof. Lehmann started by explaining the document “*Mysterium Ecclesiae*” issued by the Roman Congregation of Faith in 1973, which in its Nr. 6 acknowledges that dogmatic formulations are determined by history, something which was unprecedented in any official statement. (Lehmann refers to his commentary in “*Nachkonziliare Dokumentation*”, volume 43, Trier 1975.) First of all, he called for dogmas to be placed in the whole context of ecclesiastical tradition of faith and showed the way “unhistorical isolation” was determined by history. This would make for the preservation of an equilibrium and a correspondence with the rest of religious truths. Nor was it proper to conceive the history of tradition along the lines of a purely intellectual process or merely in the sense of holding dogmatic tenets to be true. With M. Blondel he underlined that “dogmas are far less the result of a dialectical reflection on the texts, than an expression of the constant reality proved in life” (3rd Cons., p. 12) (referring to “*Geschichte und Dogma*”, Mainz 1963, p. 86). Any dogma has not so much a protective function, it rather stands in the service of faith to the Church. In point 2 Lehmann then spoke about the reasons for the emergence of dogmas from the life of the Church. The origins of theology and dogma must not be seen exclusively in the negative fact of (opposition to) heresy. He also felt that the definition of dogma offered by P. Schoonenberg. (*Die Interpretation des Dogmas*, Düsseldorf 1969, p. 62) was too narrow: “Dogma is, so to speak, the line of defence of the faith. It does not immediately give us the source and the current of the tradition of faith; it is rather the riverbed in which the current moves” (3rd Cons., p. 213). Lehmann explored the strains in the relationship between formula and substance or purpose of dogmas. The formula character must not be overstretched (exaggerated), because any dogma does not primarily spring from an authoritarian act of swearing everybody in on a concept that must now be



adhered to but rather from the creation, by virtue of the jointly found wording, of a community of communication in faith. Thus, the dogma would move much closer to the life of the Church in all its aspects. Finally, Lehmann examined the relationship of *sensus fidei* and responsible teaching authority, something which was after all given a new basis just by the Second Vatican Council. This led him on to a “new understanding of the development of dogmas”, which must not become intellectually lopsided. The history of dogmas is a true and authentic history of faith (and not a mere history of theology or “history of dogmas” in an academic sense). Here, Lehmann was largely speaking *pro domo*, i. e. with a view to the current situation within the Roman Catholic Church. The speech of his Oriental counterpart, however, demonstrated that the same kind of problems were a reality of life there too.

By way of conclusion, thinking focused on any *practical consequences* that might emerge from the three Vienna Consultations held so far, with papers presented by Bishop *Amba Samuel*, Cairo, Vardapet Dr. *Mesrob K. Krikorian* and Dr. *W. Kirchschräger*. Naturally, the first speaker, being the representative of the biggest community among the Oriental Orthodox Churches, the Coptic Church, was able to offer a number of experiences, particularly since official talks with that Church had been taken up by Pope Paul, not least as a consequence of the First Vienna Consultation of 1971. In Egypt, we shall see something like a test case for an actual realization of unity. The speaker suggested to stipulate in the Communiqué of the Third Non-Official Consultation the following points: 1. “We will work out during a time limit of *no more than five years* a scheme of the practical steps needed to reach the real unity and full community which we envisage” – 2. “These five years should be planned together in a detailed time-table for each step which should be announced also in this meeting”. – 3. “A small permanent committee (of five Oriental Orthodox members and five Roman Catholic members) has to correspond with one another and meet at least twice a year for the practical implementation of these steps and its follow-up. They should report to the churches concerned” (3rd Cons., p. 181). This framework of a five-year plan should include the discussion and clarification of theological issues according to a pre-established order of priorities:

1. final agreement on the remaining open questions in Christology,
2. ecumenical councils,
3. recognition of saints,
4. lifting of anathemata,
5. other minor dogmas, which could be regarded as accepted local traditions rather than as universal doctrine of the whole united Church,
6. the form of the unity we envisage.

Thus, only a small part of the tasks enumerated by Bishop *Amba Samuel* is mentioned. The entire range of practical pastoral and social church institutions must be added. What will be eventually crucial, is not just the persuasion of bishops and leading theologians, but of the clergy and the faithful at large. Thus, advocates of ecumenical thinking and dialogue are faced with an enormous task. In the concrete talks for unity in the framework of the official Coptic-Roman Commission, there is at least one thing to be retained with gratitude: The Vienna Consultations of PRO ORIENTE have become an indispensable factor of that process.

#### 4. *The Final Communiqué*

It was unanimously that the official Final Communiqué was carried in the concluding session (3rd Cons., p. 223; The Vienna Dialogue, Booklet Nr. 1, p. 71). It does not only spell out the individual points in which agreement on differences was reached, it also contains proposals for church leaders to set up official joint commissions and the request that PRO ORIENTE might convene, at an appropriate time, a fourth Vienna Consultation, dedicated to the issues of primacy, jurisdiction of the Pope and the Patriarchs as well as the status of the Catholic Churches of Oriental rite. From among the Oriental Orthodox group came the proposal to invite theologians of the tradition of the uniate Churches to participate in the talks as well.

ADDRESS OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE FEDERAL PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA DR. RUDOLF KIRCHSCHLÄGER AT THE  
RECEPTION GIVEN FOR THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE THIRD VIENNA  
CONSULTATION ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1976

Eminence, Excellencies, distinguished participants in the Vienna Dialogue.

It is a real privilege for me to extend to you my respectful and heartfelt welcome-greetings. May I add my sincere thanks for paying this courtesy-call which offers me the honour and pleasure of receiving you here at this former Imperial Palace. Let me interpret your presence as a friendly gesture towards the Austrian people. This people for its part is very open-minded to the great endeavours you undertook and undertake to prepare the ground on this world for the realization of the precious prayer of our Lord Christ, the prayer "that they may all be one".

And indeed, the worldwide importance of your dialogue can't be overestimated. If you, the bishops and shepherds, the professors, scholars and other engaged Christians don't succeed in coming closer to the mandate of unity within Christianity, how could the world hope to make a substantial approach to the unity of mankind? Your example – forgive me saying this so frankly – is indispensable for all of us bearing political and state responsibility.

The Consultation of the second Vaticanum concerning the Church in the world of today "Gaudium et spes" invites us, the so called politicians, to proceed towards the unity of mankind and to build up a true peace. And we are admonished in chapter 82 of "Gaudium et spes"

to extend our thoughts and our spirits beyond the content of our own nations,  
to put aside national selfishness and ambitions to dominate other nations and  
to perceive a profound reverence for the whole humanity which is already making its way so laboriously towards greater unity.

I think, these words addressed to all politicians could be also a guideline for the talks and the dialogue among those responsible for Christian churches.

The spiritual situation of the world of today is more complicated, more sensitive and maybe also more dangerous than ever in the past. There is a worldwide confusion throughout mankind. Words have different meaning and people lose trust in state – and also church authorities. In such a time the example becomes an eminent constructive element for individual life and for living together in countries and churches.

This is the reason, why I feel obliged to convey to you my sincere thanks for the example you give in your present talks. But let me also express additional gratitude that you offer your example to proceed towards unity here in Vienna, the capital of the Republic of Austria. After a painful history Austria found her role as a meeting place and feels proud having such distinguished guests as you are within her borders.

May the Lord bless your work.

Wilhelm de Vries SJ

PRIMACY AS AN ECUMENICAL PROBLEM

Fourth Non-Official Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church<sup>1</sup>)

The main topic of the fourth non-official Vienna Consultation between theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church held between 11–17 September 1978 was the nature and scope of primacy in the exercise of church authority. Hence, it was not only universal primacy in the Roman Catholic Church that was discussed but also primacy as practised by the patriarchs in the individual Oriental Orthodox Churches, i. e. those churches who rejected the Council of Chalcedon (451): the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Ethiopian and Syro-Indian (Malankara) Churches. The following representatives of these Churches and of the Roman Catholic Church actually attended:

*Coptic Orthodox Church:* Bishop Amba Gregorius, Bishop Amba Youannis of Gharbia, Bishop Amba Samuel, Deacon Prof. Dr. George H. Bebawi.

*Syrian Orthodox Church:* Archbishop Mar Gregorius Saliba, Rabban Hanna Ibrahim.

*Armenian-Apostolic Church:* Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, Vardapet Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian, Vardapet Aram Keshishian.

*Ethiopian Orthodox Church:* Melake Teshome Zerihun, Dr. Girma Wolde Kirkos, Ato Aberra Bekele, Ato Gebre Michael Difere.

*Syro-Orthodox Church of India:* Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, Prof. Dr. V. C. Samuel, Prof. K. M. George.

*Coptic Catholic Church:* Bishop Athanasios Abadir.

*Armenian Catholic Church:* Abbot Gregoris Joseph Manian.

*Syro-Malankara Church:* Dr. John Melampampil.

*Roman Catholic Church:* Prof. Dr. H. M. Biedermann, Prof. DDr. Johannes H. Emminghaus, Prof. Dr. Daniel Gelsi OSB, Prof. Dr. Gisbert Greshake, Prof. Dr. André de Halleux OFM, Dr. Walter Kirchschräger, Prof. Dr. Ferdinand Klostermann, Dom Emmanuel Lanne OSB, Prof. Dr. John F. Long SJ, Prof. Dr. Hermann Josef Pottmeyer, Auxiliary Bishop Prof. Dr. Paul-Werner Scheele, Prof. Dr. Jakob Speigl, Prof. Dr. Ernst-Christoph Suttner, Dr. Gerhard Voss OSB, Prof. Dr. Wilhelm de Vries SJ; observer from the Roman Secretariat for Christian Unity: Mons. Dr. Nikolaus Wyrwoll.

The role of the Catholic Oriental Churches featured as a minor topic and was also brought up briefly. Two papers on this subject dealt briefly with the question of whether the "Paper of the International Anglican – Roman Catholic Commission on Church authority" (Venice 1976) could serve as a basis for discussion.

<sup>1</sup> The text of all papers and sermons delivered in the course of this Fourth Vienna Consultation as well as the minutes of the discussions and the common final communiqué appeared in the PRO ORIENTE English language publication: Wort und Wahrheit, Revue for Religion and Culture, Supplementary Issue No. 4, Fourth Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Vienna-Lainz, 1978, Papers and Minutes, Verlag Herder, Wien, Dec. 1978, pp. 256.

The Final Communiqué can also be found in: PRO ORIENTE (ed.), The Vienna Dialogue, Five PRO ORIENTE Consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy, Booklet Nr. 1, Communiqués and Joint Documents, Vienna, 1990, p. 86.

Again it must be stressed that this was an entirely unofficial consultation attended by sixteen representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches respectively. Every participant spoke in his own name and not on behalf of his church although the church leaders concerned were informed about the event and participation and in many cases had even given their express consent.

Talking about the cordial and religious atmosphere of this consultation, the social events as well as the common pilgrimage to Mariazell, which gave the participants an opportunity to enjoy Austrian hospitality, the friendly receptions given by the Federal President Dr. Rudolf Kirchschläger and the Archbishop of Vienna Francis Cardinal Franz König ought to be given special mention.

We will try to provide a short summary of the seventeen scholarly talks held, considering to what an extent agreement could be reached and to what an extent differences remained insurmountable. As the official minutes are not yet available the only material I had for this purpose were the papers themselves and my personal rather incomplete notes about the discussion. But however that may be, a number of things can be said at this stage already. Particularly in the papers themselves quite a few answers to the question of agreement or disagreement can be found. It ought to be pointed out straight away that among the different Oriental groups too, sometimes even among members of the same church, there proved to be opposing views, particularly on the issue of the authority as exercised by their own patriarchs.

Without any intention to downgrade the rest, I am now going to pick out nine papers. Starting with the papers dedicated to Roman universal primacy, I then proceed to those – less numerous – concerned with primacy within the individual Oriental Orthodox Churches. That is to say papers do not appear in the chronological order in which they were presented but as I thought it best to regroup them according to the two main topics.

– Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, New Delhi: “The development of a pre-eminence of some Churches over others and the reasons for this.”

– Dr. George Bebawi, Cairo: Same topic.

– Prof. Jakob Speigl, Würzburg: Same topic.

– Prof. J. H. Emminghaus, Vienna: “Rome as a ‘Pietätszentrum’ of the early Church”.

– Prof. André de Halleux, Louvain: “Autonomy and centralization in the ancient Syrian Churches Edessa and Seleucia-Ctesiphon.”

– Prof. Wilhelm de Vries SJ, Rome: “Changes in Rome’s exercise of its primacy and the primacy as exercised by the Ancient Oriental Patriarchs.”

– Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian, Vienna: “The development of primacy of the head of the Armenian Church.”

– Dom Emmanuel Lanne OSB, Chevetogne: “The connection between the post-Tridentine concept of primacy and the emerging of the Uniate Churches.”

– Prof. Dr. Hermann J. Pottmeyer, Bochum: “From a primacy of jurisdiction to a jurisdictional primacy. The historical background of the First Vatican Council.”

– Prof. V. C. Samuel, Bangalore: “The First Vatican Council reviewed by the Oriental Orthodox Churches.”

– Prelate Aram Keshishian, New York/Antelias: Same topic.

– Prof. Dr. Gisbert Greshake: “The bearings of the decisions of the First Vatican Council on papal primacy.”

– Bishop Amba Gregorius, Cairo: “The tensions between theoretical statements on the primacy and the effective exercise of the primacy in the ecclesiastical life of the Oriental Orthodox Churches.”

– Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, New York: “Problems and exercise of primacy in the Armenian Church.”

– Auxiliary Bishop Prof. Paul-Werner Scheele, Paderborn: “The tensions between theoretical statements on primacy and the effective exercise of the primacy in the ecclesiastical life of the Roman Catholic Church.”

– Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios, New Delhi: “Could the paper of the International Anglican – Roman Catholic Commission on Authority in the Church form a basis for discussion between Ancient Orientals and Catholics?”

– F. John F. Long SJ, Rome: Same topic.

Finally an attempt is made to draw a conclusion from the agreements and differences in the papers themselves and the discussion as far as it is available to me. Thus the papers not summed up are also taken into account to a certain extent. The non-Catholic papers on universal Roman primacy do in fact say quite a few things on the other primacies as well.

The two papers by Prof. H. J. Pottmeyer and Prof. G. Greshake on the First Vatican Council showed the basic conception of primacy as advocated by many Catholic theologians nowadays. And it were these two papers that were appreciated by the non-Catholic side in quite a few aspects.

*Prof. Dr. Hermann Pottmeyer, Full Professor of Fundamental Theology at the University of Bochum: “From a primacy of jurisdiction to a jurisdictional primacy. The background to Vatican I.” (4th Cons., p. 110-117)*

Vatican I was shaped by the situation characterizing Europe in the 19th century and the result of a typically Roman theology. The Council replaced primacy of faith with primacy of law, the community of the Pope and the college of bishops with jurisdictional primacy.

For a hermeneutic evaluation of this council it is essential to note that while conciliar decisions may be determined by a particular intention and theology, this historical and theological framework of reference itself is not subject to definition.

Subsequent interpretations of the Council were one-sided because these things were not sufficiently taken into account. Much of what was later attributed to the Council had never been defined by it and much of what it did not say explicitly should not be rejected for this reason.

The qualities given to Roman primacy by Vatican I were conditioned by the historical background and had pragmatic motives. Behind the definition were fears of the Church being threatened by the mood of the time. The French Revolution, anti-clerical liberalism, socialism and communism along with national church tendencies had given rise to this fear. The response was an exaggeration of the ideas of sovereignty and anti-revolutionary restoration. This mentality explains why the majority of the Council Fathers refused to introduce any objective criteria for the exercise of papal jurisdictional primacy and the ministry of teaching.

As we know from more recent studies, the rationale furnished by the Council for its definition derived from the Scriptures and Tradition was not satisfactory. Evidence from the Scriptures and Tradition cannot be narrowed down to the interpretation given to them by Vatican I. While the Council did not deny the theological legitimacy of a broader and more original Tradition it did not allow for it.

The Council wanted to serve the unity of faith and the *communio*. Should a different order and a different practice of authority, not less legitimate in their foundation on the Scriptures and Tradition, prove to be more effective to serve the unity of faith and the community of the Church against a changed historical background, its very faithfulness to Vatican I would oblige the Church to abandon the church order demanded and backed by this Council.

*Prof. Dr. Gisbert Greshake*, Full Professor at the Institute for Dogmatic Theology and History of Doctrine at the Faculty for Catholic Theology, University of Vienna: “*The bearings of the decisions of the First Vatican Council*” (4th Cons., p. 136–154).

Every conciliar decision is a response to a challenge posed by a particular historical situation and must therefore be seen in relation to it. There is the danger of neglecting other dimensions. The pronouncement of a council must rest within the overall context of faith. Otherwise the actual meaning of a religious truth would not become clear.

Conciliar pronouncements are couched in the terminology and thinking of their time. Formulae and ideas thus conceived are themselves not subject to definition.

The dogma cannot contain any conception fundamentally different from what has always been believed in the Church.

Every conciliar decision reveals its true portent only in the course of its history of reception following the council, which will reject any imbalance. This does not mean that it is only by their reception that conciliar decisions become binding.

It is a misunderstanding to believe, like Hans Kueng for instance, that the Pope can do anything he wants. It is true that the majority of the Council did not want to see any legal stipulations restricting the full authority of the Pope, especially as far as infallibility is concerned. On the other hand though, it accepted in principle the minority’s objection against an absolute and personal infallibility of the Pope unrelated to the Church as whole.

Papal infallibility is confined by revealed faith and inseparable from the infallibility of the Church. The Pope is not the source of church infallibility. He must be in consensus with the church as a whole. Only a retroactive or anticipative consent as a juridical condition of validity of the papal decision was excluded by the famous “*non autem ex consensu ecclesiae*” (but not *out* of the consent of the Church).

The full jurisdictional authority of the Pope is confined by the existence of an episcopate of divine right. The bishops are not officials of the Pope but possess full authority by virtue of divine right. The Pope is tied to the community of the Church as a whole. In order to avoid one-sided emphases of that Vatican Council the Catholic understanding of the dogma must be placed in the wider perspective of the Scriptures and Tradition in general.

The speaker then went on to give a detailed explanation of the misleading formulation: “*ordinaria, immediata potestas, quae vere episcopalis est*” (ordinary, immediate authority, which is really episcopal). The principal shortcoming of Vatican I is the fact that its entire way of thinking and expression does not primarily look for orientation to the biblical authority of the shepherd but rather to the “wordly” model of the “*suprema auctoritas*” (supreme authority). An additional misunderstanding is due to the fact that today’s effective exercise of the papal ministry is not only a manifestation of Petrine office but also an expression of a variety of other functions such as that of the bishop of Rome, the metropolitan of the bishoprics surrounding Rome, the primate of Italy and the patriarch of the West. The ministry of the successor to Peter as such ought to be dissociated again from all the rest. Then it would become clear that the recognition of this ministry does not amount to an incorporation into a centralized administrative machinery but must be seen as an enrollment into the unity of faith and the *communio*, the highest guarantor of which is the successor to Peter. The Pope is not a universal bishop with the whole world as his diocese. In this connection the speaker quoted Ratzinger “Unification with the Eastern Churches need not change anything at all in their concrete forms of life” (*Das neue Volk Gottes*, Düsseldorf 1970, p. 142).

In the event of unity of the churches at some point in future the councils of the churches hitherto not united would have to be subjected to mutual reception. While the decisions taken in the second millennium by a Church essentially restricted to the Latin West are infallible and irrevocable, the fact that they were taken in the absence of a considerable part of the episcopate permits later amendments which would have been unnecessary had there been an ecumenical council in the sense of the first millennium. This is why the process of reception is likely to entail amendments and modifications leading to an integration of the decisions into the faith of the Church as a whole. – These two Catholic papers dealing with primacy as defined by the First Vatican Council were followed by two non-Catholic ones dedicated to the Oriental Orthodox view of this Vatican Council. The speakers were Prof. V. C. Samuel, a representative of the Syro-Indian Church and Vardapet Keshishian from the Armenian Church. Both obviously had not had a chance to read the Catholic papers before drawing up their own. In this way the polemic was partly directed against opinions not held by their Catholic counterparts present at the consultation.

Besides discussing the topic proper, both non-Catholic papers also spoke about the authority of the patriarchs in the Oriental Orthodox Churches and about hierarchy as such.

*Prof. Dr. V. C. Samuel*, Bangalore, former Dean of the Holy Trinity Theological High School in Addis Ababa: “*The First Vatican Council reviewed by the Oriental Orthodox Churches*” (4th Cons., p. 117–124).

The Oriental Orthodox have never come up with any official comment on this council; but an assessment in the light of their history is well possible. The speaker then started by outlining the Council’s development and contents of its decrees. Talking about Tradition as an argument he pointed out that it would be unhistorical to maintain that the bishops of the entire planet had invariably turned to Rome whenever faith was threatened.

The speaker attributed the disapproving attitude towards the First Vatican Council on the part of the Oriental Orthodox to their rejection of the Council of Chalcedon. It was

through this attitude already that they came to oppose papal claims as well as conciliar authority, if this went beyond its proper limits. In Chalcedon it actually went beyond its proper limits by deviating from the truth. According to the speaker neither an individual hierarch nor the hierarchy sitting in council are entitled to pass a judgement on this issue, only the Church as a whole itself. In matters of teaching the monks, the lower clergy as well as the laity have a major say. It is therefore not possible for a patriarch to take a decision alone or together with the bishops. The Church in its entirety takes precedence. The hierarchy directs services and administers the sacraments. This is their only function. The language and intellectual world of Vatican I are totally alien to the Oriental Orthodox Churches. They have no room for a centralized church structure covering the whole world. Neither the role conferred on Peter nor the service the Apostles were entrusted with can find their expression in institutional patterns. It is the totality of the Church alone that matters. Vatican I has only widened the existing gap. In the Oriental Orthodox' view the Church does not need a unity defined in legal terms.

The Oriental Orthodox have yet to discover their true nature in order to be able to make a genuine contribution to the issues raised here. –

It ought to be mentioned straight away that this radical statement on hierarchical authority in the church by an Oriental Orthodox representative was by no means shared by all theologians of this church present.

Vardapet *Aram Keshishian*, Antelias (Lebanon/New York), General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, member of the Commission for Faith and Church Constitution of the World Council of Churches: *“The First Vatican Council reviewed by the Oriental Orthodox Churches”* (4th Cons., p. 124–134).

This paper consists of three parts:

1. Why was primacy defined at this particular point in time?
2. Criticism of the definition.
3. Some reflections for the future.
  1. The definition was a triumphalistic reaction to the anti-clerical liberal mood of the time designed to offset waning papal power in the world with increased authority within the Church.
  2. The language of “Pastor Aeterus” is at variance with that of the New Testament. While Peter to a certain extent does have a distinguished position in the New Testament he was not vested with any lasting authority that could be conferred on to successors. The bishops are not the successors to individual Apostles but to the college of Apostles. No patriarch is the successor to one Apostle nor to the disciple of one Apostle. Although the See of Alexandria is the See of St. Mark the Coptic patriarch is not St. Mark’s successor. Roman primacy developed on account of the political position of the city of Rome. The original pre-eminence of honour gradually turned into a primacy of jurisdiction. But this must not be understood as power over the Church. Any administrative centralism is inadmissible.

Infallibility is devoid of any foundation in the New Testament and can in no way be deduced from Tradition, at least as far as the first millennium goes. Vatican I does not provide any jurisdictional safeguards against possible abuse of infallibility. Hence, the consensus ecclesiae is of no avail. This is unacceptable to the Oriental Orthodox.

According to their teaching even a council is not infallible in itself. It is only the Church in its entirety that possesses infallibility, a council only in so far as it is the mouthpiece of the Church.

The speaker then goes on to discuss the question of how papal jurisdiction relates to primacy. He gives a correct explanation of the “ordinaria potestas” (ordinary authority). Even if the Pope cannot simply abolish the episcopate his power over it is completely unlimited. The universal Church is simply the sum-total of the local churches. The full authority of the Pope as defined by the Council is incompatible with the authority of the local bishops.

3. The Catholic model of church organization cannot be traced back to historical or theological foundations. According to the eucharistic ecclesiology of the Oriental Orthodox the local bishop has his authority by virtue of the community. The idea of a world-wide primacy must be rejected. The position of the catholicos or the patriarch is only that of a primus inter pares, that of the bishop of the first see. He has no jurisdiction over the college of bishops.

Contemporary Catholic theology ought to see as its main task to re-think Roman primacy and to determine its limits in a clear-cut way. Primacy can only be conceived as a primacy of service and not as one of authority. It is a factor within the Church and does not stand above it. All bishops have equal jurisdiction. There is no power above that of the bishops.

The Catholic Church ought to return to conciliar authority.

The ecumenically decisive question is whether the acceptance of papal power and his infallibility are an absolutely essential precondition for unity with the Roman Catholic Church. This claim is still being made and should be subjected to a critical review by Catholic theologians. There is the need to develop an ecumenical theology of the local churches. Vatican I represents a small step forward down the road to a rapprochement of the churches.

*Prof. P. Dr. Wilhelm de Vries SJ*: Professor at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, scientific advisor to PRO ORIENTE: *“Changes in Rome’s exercise of its primacy between the 5th and 19th centuries and primacy as exercised by the Ancient Oriental patriarchs”* (4th Cons., p. 68–82).

In terms of subject matter this paper occupies a central position between the two main topics of this consultation: Rome’s primacy and the primacy of the patriarchs, hence leading on to the second topic.

The Catholic papers dealing with Vatican I sought to come up with a new interpretation of primacy by reviewing the understanding of this Council. This paper takes a different line: looking at the changes undergone by papacy in the course of history it seeks to prove that some claims were made at certain points in time only and abandoned later on and that bounds on full papal authority which had been respected for a long time were broken down as time went on. Hence, it must be asked to what an extent papacy in its present concrete form is still based on divine law. In the discussion which followed this possibility to get closer to a solution of the problem was hardly seized upon at all.

The scope of the second part of the paper permitted only a few references to findings by more recent publications and editions of sources on the subject which are of potential

use for a settlement of the problem. It was impossible to give an exhaustive and fully satisfactory presentation, one of the reasons being the fact that there are differing opinions on patriarchal authority among the Oriental Orthodox themselves. Each has its own traditional ideas about the ministry of the patriarch. What is needed in order to achieve a balanced judgement is a thorough and factual evaluation of the existing sources, critical also of one's own tradition. There is still a lot to be done in this respect. This part of the paper prompted a lively discussion.

*Bishop Amba Gregorius*, Cairo, Bishop of Cairo for Higher Studies, Coptic Culture and Academic Research, honorary member of PRO ORIENTE: "The tensions between theoretical statements on the primacy and the effective exercise of the primacy in the ecclesiastical life of the Oriental Orthodox Churches" (4th Cons., p. 154–165).

This paper too stands roughly in between the two main topics of the consultation. It represents a thorough and critical exploration of the basis in the New Testament of a potential primacy of St. Peter as well as of Roman primacy tradition in the first centuries and goes on to consider primacy as exercised primarily by the Alexandrian patriarch, the special position of whom the speaker attributed to the single fact of the political importance of the city of Alexandria.

He decidedly rejects the Catholic doctrine of a universal primacy of the bishop of Rome based on the latter's succession to Peter. The Scriptures do not know any pre-eminence of St. Peter. Christ conferred the same full authority on all Apostles. There is not the slightest hint of Peter having a special position. Referring to the Fathers, the classical texts quoted by the Catholic side in support of such a special position receive a different interpretation. The Acts of the Apostles do not attribute a leading role to Peter. The clash with Paul, reported in Gal 2: 2–14, proves that Peter did not have any position of pre-eminence.

The history of the first Christian centuries does not point to any pre-eminence of the bishop of Rome. The speaker goes through the individual facts usually put forward by Catholic apologists in support of their thesis and denies their conclusiveness. In the first centuries the bishops were all equal in rank.

Firmilian of Caesarea's polemic against Stephan of Rome in the controversy over the baptism of heretics, however, shows that Rome at the time did make certain claims to leadership. The primates of the Oriental Orthodox Churches on the other hand, unlike the bishop of Rome, never claimed authority for themselves within the Church as a whole. And it was for political reasons that Rome finally exaggerated its demands ad infinitum.

As far as the Church of Alexandria and the other Oriental Churches go, the bishop of the respective capital city gradually came to be recognized as archbishop or first leading bishop of the region. Thus he was only "first among equals". However, the powers attributed by the speaker to the archbishop of Alexandria – entirely in accordance with tradition – actually exceed this modest qualification. The archbishop of the capital is "Father of Fathers, Pastor of Pastors, the chief of our chief priests . . . the successor of St. Mark . . . judge of the oikoumene, the thirteenth of the Apostles of Christ" (4th Cons., p. 163). Since the speaker squarely rejects any primacy of St. Peter, the succession to Mark cannot possibly be of particular significance. Hence, he explains the mounting

influence of the bishop of Alexandria exclusively by the city's political importance. The speaker's conclusion: "All bishops are of equal dignity. The Primate among his bishops enjoys a primacy of honour according to the grandeur of his city and its historical importance. The primate, whether called bishop, archbishop, pope, patriarch or catholicos, is also on the same footing of honour among all primates in the whole Christendom" (4th Cons., p. 164).

In the event of the emergence of difficulties concerning the Church as a whole, jurisdiction falls invariably to the ecumenical council whose chairman is to be elected "from among the ranks of the primates equal in honour, as brother in Christ" (op. cit. as above).

*Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios*, New Delhi, Metropolitan of Delhi, Secretary of the Synodal Commission for Inter-Church Relations of the Syro-Indian Church, honorary member of PRO ORIENTE: "The development of a pre-eminence of some Churches over others and the reasons for this" (4th Cons., p. 15–22).

The metropolitan provided a historical survey up to the time of Justinian, including Rome and with special attention to the sees of the Eastern patriarchs. His key statement maintains that the pre-eminence of individual bishops over others has nothing to do with a possible apostolic origin of the sees and is entirely due to political factors.

He describes the emergence of the primatial sees, the quality of their authority and their mutual relations.

## 1. Church structure

The Apostles set up colleges of presbyters with one member, the episcopos, taking the chair. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this pattern of church structure was adopted almost everywhere. The idea of an overall supremacy over a "universal Church" did not occur to anybody.

The local church fully embodied the Catholic Church. Within a short period of time local churches sprang up even outside the Empire, i. e. in Persia, Georgia, Armenia, Nubia, India and Ethiopia.

## 2. Did any of the Apostles or bishops have universal authority?

It is extremely doubtful whether the Apostles themselves at any time exercised supremacy over the Church as a whole. The last surviving Apostle, John, did not exercise any such authority.

Later on, Eusebius tried to draw up lists of bishops down to one of the Apostles for certain pre-eminent episcopal sees. But he does not attribute universal jurisdiction to any one of the bishops.

Doctrinal disputes were settled through consultations among the bishops. This gave rise in some provinces to episcopal councils meeting on a more or less regular basis. Occasionally, there were calls on Rome to act as an instance of appeal, particularly in the West. But no universal full authority can be deduced from this fact.

### 3. The rise of the metropolitan sees

The speaker outlines the powers the metropolitan (the bishop of the provincial capital) has according to the apostolic canons, which he believes to have come into being prior to Nicaea, as well as according to the Canons of Nicaea and those of the Synod of Antioch (341). The synod is the supreme authority chaired by the metropolitan who, however, cannot act without all the others agreeing.

Although he may claim a primacy of honour and rank as well as a certain supremacy over the whole province he is not supposed to meddle in the day-to-day administrative affairs of the local churches. In the election of the bishops he has the final say. Still, the metropolitans' rights have nothing to do with any apostolic succession.

### 4. The rise of the patriarchs

In Nicaea (Canon 6) the powers of three metropolitans, namely those of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, were extended beyond the boundaries of their own provinces, i. e. long-standing existing customs were recognized. The First Council of Constantinople (381) in Canon 2 characterizes the political dioceses of Egypt, Asia and Pontus as being important for church administration as well. The only bishop mentioned in this context is that of Alexandria who is in charge of administrative affairs in Egypt. About the Church of Antioch it is said, that the privileges recognized in Nicaea should be preserved.

Canon 3 of Constantinople deals with the pre-eminence of honour of the bishops of the Ancient and New Rome. In Chalcedon (451) the patriarchs' authority was consolidated unlike previously. The bishop of Constantinople was given the right to appoint the metropolitans of the civic dioceses of Pontus, Asia and Thracia. Constantinople became the universal instance of appeal for the whole East. Chalcedon recognized Jerusalem's independence from Antioch.

The Codex Justinianus gave the patriarchates their final legal form.

The formation of primatial sees outside the Empire was not discussed by the speaker.

*Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, New York, honorary member of PRO ORIENTE: "Problems and exercise of primacy in the Armenian Church" (4th Cons., p. 165–180).*

### 1. The principle underlying primacy and the exercise of primacy

The Church is no amorphous collectivity of like-minded believers lacking an organic pattern of authority. Jesus Christ conferred authority on his Apostles in order to secure the future organic unity of his Church once and for all. He empowered the Apostles and their successors to teach, to bind and to loose and to establish a code of conduct for the faithful.

It is the hierarchic nature of this authority which calls for a magisterium. Christ intended the relationship between Peter and his fellow Apostles to be a model for the relationship between the primate and his college of bishops. The authority of the college of bishops exists *ex jure divino* (by divine right). But in order to maintain unity what is also needed is the primacy of one bishop.

This primacy is exercised on three levels: on the local, the national and the universal or ecumenical levels.

Eucharistic ecclesiology, widely advocated among today's Orthodox, does not eliminate the need of primatial authority either. The existence of such an authority within the Church is in accordance with the Lord's will and with apostolic tradition. There is the possibility of adjustments to suit the changing circumstances of the time. The East, unlike the West, developed several primacies. But as far as the principle of primacy is concerned West and East were in agreement. The church of the Reformation on the other hand rejected any hierarchic pattern of authority out of hand.

Pre-eminence of the bishop of Rome was generally recognized as long as Rome dominated the world. When this ceased to be the case regional and national primacies came to be more important.

All churches have seen tensions between the theory and the exercise of the primacy leading to abuse. For the Roman Catholic Church especially the absolutistic misinterpretation of primacy by Vatican I must be mentioned. It was from Peter's position among the Apostles that the Roman ecclesiastical theory of primacy was developed. Peter, the head of the Apostles, went to Rome and the bishop of Rome became his successor. The Roman interpretation of Peter's position and that of his successors is primarily based on the reading of Mt 16: 18: It was on Peter personally – and hence on his successors as well – that the Church was built. According to Oriental Orthodox Church teaching, however, it is Peter's faith that is decisive and not his person.

Historically seen, the apostolic origin of the primatial see is not essential for primacy. It is the political rank of the city that matters, as the Canons of Nicaea and those of the First Council of Constantinople and of Chalcedon state.

According to the Eastern Churches all bishops embracing the faith of St. Peter are successors to Peter and the other Apostles. No single bishop may be regarded as the sole guardian of Christian Tradition. In the Armenian Church Peter and Paul are venerated in the same manner.

### 2. Primacy in Armenian history

At the time of the conversion of King Trdat (313) Armenia was under Roman influence. The Apostle of Armenia, St. Gregory the Illuminator, was ordained by Metropolitan Leontius in Caesarea, Cappadocia. Caesarean influence in Armenia did not go much beyond the prerogative of confirming and ordaining the candidate for the primateship of the Church of Armenia.

The Armenian Church had to defend its independence against two major powers: against the Byzantine Empire and against that of the Persians. In 387 Armenia was divided between these two empires. The bigger part fell to Persia. As a result of the political circumstances the link with Caesarea was severed. In 388 the new senior bishop Sakak I was no longer ordained in Caesarea.

The Council of Shahapivan (444) proclaimed the full independence of the Armenian Church. It was also there that the decision was taken that no bishop might be ordained without senior bishop consent. In the 5th century the designation "catholicos" (= general head) came to be commonly used for the senior bishop. His authority was especially strong when the country was under foreign rule.

Between the 5th and 11th centuries the bishops of the Byzantine part of Armenia remained outside the direct jurisdiction of the catholicos. After the break in relations with the metropolis of Caesarea, the Armenian Church maintained ties of friendship with

Constantinople and this continued until quite some time after the Council of Chalcedon. In 589 the bishops of Western Armenia even entered into a formal union with Constantinople. At that time the Byzantine part of Armenia had its own catholicos alongside the principal catholicos in the Persian part. The political opposition on account of Persian rule over the largest part of Armenia led to a final break in relations with Constantinople in 607 and to the definitive rejection of the Council of Chalcedon.

The Armenians never explicitly developed a theory of the ministry of the catholicos and primatial authority of the catholicos was not traced back to a possible apostolic origin. The catholicos received his authority by virtue of his election by the college of bishops. In the 5th century the attempt was first made to consolidate primatial authority by maintaining it going back to the Apostle Thaddaeus. The catholicos' powers were extensive. In compliance with canonical provisions he ordained the bishops, convoked episcopal conferences and presided them. The catholicos was an instance of appeal against episcopal judgements. He alone had the right to ordain the myron.

The speaker also touched on the relations between the Armenian Church and Rome as well as on the attempts of union in the Middle Ages. Throughout the first millennium there were no contacts whatsoever between Rome and the Armenian Church. When Catholicos Gregory III participated in the Latin synod held in Antioch in 1141 this was the first contact with the Western Church. At that time negotiations with a view to union were initiated, which through mediation of the Pope finally led to the installment as king of Prince Leo of Cilicia in Tarsus in 1199 and thus to a partial union. This carried with it strong tendencies of latinization which, however, were met with strong opposition in Ancient Armenia.

The Union of Florence (1439) did not find acceptance. In 1441 a decided opponent of the Union was elected catholicos in Etchmiadzin. The catholicossate of Sis, however, remained in existence. A separate community of uniate Armenians was recognized by the Turkish government in 1830.

*Vardapet Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian, Vienna, prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Austria, member of the PRO ORIENTE Theological Advisory Council, co-president of the ecumenical consultation: "The development of primacy of the head of the Armenian Church" (4th Cons., p. 82-97).*

Initially the speaker had been asked to discuss: "The development of primacy in the Oriental Orthodox Churches." He had felt that this was too wide a topic not yet sufficiently explored. Hence, he confined himself to a presentation of the development of primacy of the Armenian catholicos. The term "primacy" is typically Catholic. The catholicos is the "first bishop" in the church. In Nicaea already the bishop of a provincial capital, the metropolitan, was recognized as the head of all bishops in a province. As early as in the 4th century Armenia developed a national church. The metropolitan of Valarshapat (today's Etchmiadzin) became the head and leader of the Church and had primacy over all the other bishops in the country. Today he is also the head of all Armenians living in global diaspora.

The speaker began by giving a short survey of Armenian political history, ranging from the Kingdom of the Arsacids, which existed up until 428, and that of the Bagratids, founded in 885 and coming to an end in the 11th century, to the Principality (from 1080

onwards) and then Kingdom (1199) of Cilicia, conquered by the Mameluks in 1375. It was at this point that the Armenians lost their political independence.

The election and ordination of the catholicos

The mode of election was subject to change as time went on. At first the catholicos were appointed by the king in consultation with the great of the realm. In the beginning ordination took place in Caesarea, Cappadocia (a practice which ceased in 388). For a few decades sons inherited the catholical see from their father. There were also cases of succession through designation by the predecessor. Starting in the 6th century and particularly from the 7th century onwards it became a common practice for all bishops to participate in the election. Participation of laymen (notables and princes) began after 1441, when the church centre was moved from Sis back to Etchmiadzin. But it was as late as in the 19th century that representatives of the common people were first allowed to take part in the election. A separate ordination of a patriarch can only be traced back to the 9th century: to the time of the foundation of the Kingdom of the Bagratids (885). In the 12th century anointment came into use, as a result of Latin influence. Ordination and anointment strengthened the status of the catholicos.

Appointment and ordination of bishops

Bishops had to be confirmed by the catholicos. With Nicaea serving as a reference, the word "metropolitan" was replaced with that of "catholicos" in the appropriate canons. Ancient Armenia had twenty bishops.

The catholicos usually had the right to appoint bishops. There was no such thing as election by a synod of bishops. The catholicos had the final say in matters of faith but acted in accordance with the other bishops. As time went on the ordination of bishops too came to be reserved to the catholicos, probably in the 14th century. Ordination of the myron could only be carried out by a catholicos.

The emergence of different primatial sees

As early as in 1113/1114 there existed an independent catholicossate of Aghtamar. It was only at the end of the 18th century that Aghtamar again recognized the catholicos of Etchmiadzin as its head. Aghtamar again disappeared in 1895. The catholicossate of Cilicia: The catholicos used to have his see at the place of the royal residence. The foundation of the Kingdom of Cilicia caused the catholicos to move to Sis (1293). A general assembly meeting in Etchmiadzin in 1441 decided its return to this city. But Sis continued to have a catholicos of its own.

The patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople: In 1311, at the time of the Kingdom of Cilicia, the bishop of Jerusalem adopted the title of a "patriarch". This was directed against contemporary attempts made to latinize Cilicia. For the bishop of Constantinople the title of "patriarch" first appeared as late as in 1537 (the traditional date is 1461).

Development in the 19th century

In 1836 a constitution for the Armenian Church in Russia was worked out. Participation of laymen in the election of the catholicos was laid down in detail. The



elective assembly proposed two candidates, with the tsar choosing the one to be catholicos. The Russian state which interfered strongly in church affairs limited the influence of laymen.

In Turkey a new statute for the Armenian Church was created in 1839 which increased lay influence curtailing the full authority of the patriarch. In this way the "General Assembly" became the highest authority in the Church.

In 1920 Armenia became part of the Soviet Union. Overriding authority is exercised by the "Supreme Spiritual Council". Since 1945 some of its members are laymen. The catholicos is elected by the "General Church Assembly" three quarters of which are laymen.

#### The conciliar structure of the Armenian Church

Right from the beginning a tendency in this direction can be observed. As early as at the time of Gregory the Illuminator distinguished laymen also participated in the election of the catholicos. In 354 Nerses convened a council in Ashtishat with strong lay participation which passed a number of social and ecclesial reforms. At the time, however, "lay representatives" were princes. This had its parallel in the social pattern of the period. Today the catholicos remains only the chairman of the democratic governing bodies and cannot take any important decision on his own. He has to respect tradition under all circumstances, particularly as far as teaching is concerned. Throughout history the vardapets or teachers have exercised strong influence.

#### Concluding remarks

All this does not mean that the catholicos has lost all importance in the Church. In matters of administration and discipline he has the highest executive authority. There are about seven million Armenians world-wide. At the congress held in Addis Ababa in 1965 the Armenian Church made an effort to strengthen ties with the other Oriental Orthodox Churches.

#### *Preliminary Resumé of the Fourth Consultation 1978*

In the following an attempt is made to draw preliminary conclusions from the talks briefly outlined here as well as from my – admittedly somewhat incomplete – notes about the discussion.

The first impression might well be that we are up against an impenetrable wall of outright rejection on the part of the Oriental Orthodox of any overall authority over the church as a whole. Nevertheless, these impressions are probably erroneous.

Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios' words of conclusion were quite reassuring. He said in essence: We are grateful for the openness shown by the Catholic theologians. We must be patient and become one in the Holy Trinity against all odds. An indispensable precondition for this happening is a revision of certain forms of the Roman principle. The question is: What form of primacy can we accept as Orientals? We reject any universal jurisdiction. We feel that the Pope cannot be the only spokesman of Christianity. Nor does a universal council represent an alternative to primacy for us. Nor could the Pope be the chairman of such a council. After all the Metropolitan does think it possible for certain revisions of primacy to come about. – This points to the fact that the

declarations given by Catholic theologians about potential concessions did make an impression on the Oriental Orthodox. We shall try to elaborate on this later on. However, there remains one hard question: Is the recognition of a papal primacy of jurisdiction and infallibility an indispensable precondition for unity with the Catholic Church? (thus Keshishian) The Orientals were relentless in the demand they addressed to the Catholics: We want the Catholic Church to regard itself as *one* of the local Churches and not as *the* universal Church (Mar Gregorios).

The Oriental Orthodox remain basically committed to their anti-primatial stance. The New Testament does not contain the slightest indication whatsoever for St. Peter ranking in any way higher than the other Apostles (thus Amba Gregorius). Keshishian put it in less harsh terms: While Peter does have a certain position of distinction there is no such thing as Petrine succession. The tradition of the first centuries does not show any trace of a primacy of the bishop of Rome (Amba Gregorius). Later on Rome's position as imperial capital gave rise to a certain pre-eminence of honour for Rome. Archbishop Nersoyan seems to make even bigger concessions: According to Christ's will the relationship between Peter and his Apostles was designed to serve as a model for the later primates and their fellow bishops. Pre-eminence of one bishop over the others is a necessity with a view to the maintenance of unity. For as long as Rome was the capital city, primacy on a universal or ecumenical level was a reality and found recognition. Nersoyan basically accepts the possibility of an ecumenical primacy. But even to his mind the absolutistic conception of primacy laid down by Vatican I must be met with unconditional rejection. Oriental Orthodox criticism of primacy as defined by Vatican I is directed at the lack of any juridical safeguards against potential abuse of the enormous powers conceded to the bishop of Rome. Church consent is completely irrelevant to the infallibility of papal teachings (thus Keshishian). That such assertions were the result of a misunderstanding, this is what Catholic theologians tried to bring home to the Oriental Orthodox. Such misunderstandings are comprehensible since the Second Vatican Council left unchanged those formulae of the First which had called themselves forth. The expression "ordinaria potestas" is correctly understood (by Keshishian for instance). At any rate there is outright rejection of universal church authority embodied by a single person. Only Archbishop Nersoyan seems to recognize such a possibility as has been mentioned.

Particularly the two papers submitted by Pottmeyer and Greshake on the subject of the First Vatican Council sought to dissipate misunderstandings and to pave the way for a new interpretation of the Council's definition without infringing on the essence of the dogma itself. These efforts were given due credit by quite a few Oriental Orthodox participants.

It is an absolute necessity to "disentangle" (as Scheele put it) the different, hardly any longer distinguished functions today effectively exercised by the bishop of Rome and to point out what of all this alone is acceptable to the Orientals. They are not dealing with the bishop of the city of Rome, nor with the metropolitan of the Roman church province, nor with the primate of Italy or the patriarch of the West. To them the Pope is merely the holder of the Petrine office. Recognition of Petrine succession does not mean integration into a centrally governed administrative machinery but into the unity of faith and the *communio*, the highest guarantor of which is the successor to Peter. In this connection Greshake quoted Ratzinger whose conception is apt to dispell unjustified fears on the part of the Orientals.

It is of major significance that according to Vatican II the Pope is essentially head of the college of bishops and therefore presides the Church not as a mere individual but as head

of a church collective. Nor is the Pope simply above the council. If a Pope were to oppose a unanimous council decision in matters of faith he would – according to Greshake – make himself a heretic and thus cease to be Pope. Consequently, an infallible doctrinal decision of the Pope cannot lack the consensus ecclesiae. As everybody knows, the issue of the possibility of the Pope becoming a heretic was intensively discussed in the Middle Ages – particularly at the time of the Western schisma.

But the most important statement made by the two Catholic theologians on Vatican I certainly was that the decisions taken by this Council were to a certain extent conditioned by the spirit of the age and must be placed into the wider and more fundamental perspective of the Scriptures and Tradition. If unity with the Oriental Orthodox came about there would be the need for a new reception of Vatican I since a large number of bishops of churches today recognized as “sister churches” did not attend the Council at the time. While preserving the essence, such a reception could bring about important amendments (Greshake).

It is also significant, as Lanne emphasized, that the Catholic Church has already come to recognize the Eastern Churches as sister churches. Hence, restoration of unity cannot be regarded as the return of wayward children to the abandoned parental home.

What the non-Catholic side welcomed most of all were the clarifying words by Catholic theologians on the right conception of primacy. Mar Gregorius for instance termed it to be of paramount importance what Greshake said on the necessity of the mutual reception of councils. Krikorian expressed himself in the same sense. According to Prof. V. C. Samuel the statement by Catholic theologians that the decisions of Vatican I belong into a specific historical context gives hope for agreement. Amba Gregorius expressed his joy over the Catholic side having stressed that papal infallibility was Church infallibility. The only guarantee for this, however, was Christ, which we as Catholics may well admit.

The second topic of the consultation deals with the Oriental Orthodox primacies. In this connection both the Catholic side (de Vries) and the non-Catholic side pointed to the impossibility of a complete presentation of this comprehensive issue in the absence of appropriate preliminary work. Only part of the sources are available in print. In addition they would have to be the subject of a critical assessment first. Only to give one example, there is a big question-mark over whether certain collections of canons give a genuine picture of the state of affairs or not. All too often they are contradictory.

Likewise, the collection of synodal acts must be critically reviewed. De Halleux, in his paper on “Autonomy and centralization in the ancient Syrian Churches Edessa and Seleucia-Ctesiphon”, expressed serious doubts about the historicity of the presentation of the Synod of Markabta (424) proclaiming full independence of the Persian church. Particularly epistolary literature remains to be exploited to a greater degree. So there is for instance a very useful as yet unpublished presentation of the patriarchs’ rights according to the letters of Severus of Antioch (512–518), submitted to the Oriental Institute in Rome by Hanna Ibrahim (now Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Aleppo) as a licentiate work. De Vries exploited this work for his paper as well as a number of more recent studies on the Oriental Orthodox patriarchs’ rights. The picture remained fragmentary – and the author is fully aware of this fact. Given the difficulties suggested, Krikorian refrained from giving a complete presentation of the topic put to him and confined himself to the development of primacy regarding the Armenian catholicoi. The parallel paper of Archbishop Nersoyan tied happily in with what Krikorian had to say.

The other Oriental Orthodox offered only a short exploration of the origins of the pre-eminence of individual churches over others, thus Mar Gregorios and Professor Bebawi.

As to the patriarchs’ authority, the Oriental Orthodox (even members of the same church) held widely differing views. There is only one thing they are agreed upon, i. e. on the rejection of the apostolic origin of patriarchal authority. Nersoyan and Krikorian assumed the Armenian catholicos having high authority over the other bishops. A democratization of the system occurred as late as in the 19th century. They seek to establish that traces of movement in this direction can be found in early history. Nersoyan emphasized the fact that the Armenians have never produced a theory of the rights of the patriarchs. Vardapet Keshishian, however, while belonging to the same church categorically denies any jurisdiction of one bishop over others: “Regarding the sacraments and jurisdiction there can be no power exceeding that of the bishops.”

Prof. V. C. Samuel of Bangalore denounces any hierarchical authority in the Church. Only the Church in its entirety holds authority. The patriarch can neither take any decision on his own nor together with the bishops.

Nevertheless, the speakers generally do attribute genuinely supradiocesan rights to the patriarch. Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios for instance acknowledges that Canon 6 of Nicaea and even more so the Canons of Chalcedon allow for such rights. But there is a general tendency to play down the authority of the patriarchs. Prof. Bebawi even began his paper with the following proposition: “The East has never recognized the pre-eminence of one church over another.” However, talking about the old canons, which he recognizes, he inevitably ends up making qualifications after all. When Canon 6 of Nicaea for instance speaks about the authority of the bishop of Alexandria over certain territories what is meant is only a certain right of supervision over the true faith. There is no evidence of powers in excess of this.

Occasionally, Oriental Orthodox participants in the consultation did admit the *de facto* high – though probably abusive – authority of the patriarchs. Mar Gregorios said at one point in the discussion that Eastern patriarchs had sometimes acted more authoritarian than even the Popes. He also reminded the fact that they had comprehensive civic functions when living under Islamic domination since they then were ethnarchs at the same time.

The whole discussion of this matter proved the relative lack of agreement among the Oriental Orthodox on this issue and the great need there still is of an unbiased in-depth study of the sources in order to come up with a balanced judgment. Cherished traditional conception must be subjected to a critical investigation against the background of these sources.

In addition, the consultation dealt with two other questions: with the problem of the Uniate Churches and the “Paper of the International Anglican – Roman Catholic Commission on Authority in the Church” as a possible basis for discussion. The question of such a possibility was answered in the negative by Mar Gregorios and in the affirmative by F. John F. Long SJ.

Dom Emmanuel Lanne OSB, in his paper entitled “The connection between the post-Tridentine concept of primacy and the emerging of the Uniate Churches” put his finger on the actual cause of this problem, i. e. the fact that the Uniate Churches were formed on the basis of an ecclesiology which is no longer valid today. The known resentment of the non-Catholic Orientals against the Uniate Churches was borne out by the discussion. This time round, however, representatives of these churches also had a chance to take the floor.

## AN ECUMENICAL MEETING

### Fourth Oriental Orthodox – Roman Catholic Consultation in Vienna <sup>1)</sup>

From September 11–17th 1978 theologians representing the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church got together at the Bildungshaus Lainz for their Fourth Consultation in the framework of the Vienna based foundation PRO ORIENTE. Participants were given a warm welcome not only by their Austrian hosts at the venue itself but also on the occasion of various receptions given by the Austrian Federal President Dr. Rudolf Kirchschläger and Franciscus Cardinal König in Vienna as well as by the Communities of the Benedictines at Mariazell and the Augustinian Canons at Herzogenburg. They were received with equal cordiality by the Armenian Apostolic Community in Vienna after Sunday Service.

In order to avoid any misunderstandings, let me start by explaining the term and concept of what is meant by “Oriental Orthodox Churches” in this paper. They are those churches which our Western ecclesiastical history commonly called and still erroneously calls the “Monophysitic” Churches, i. e. the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Ethiopian and Syro-Indian Churches to be more precise. Today they are referred to as “Oriental Orthodoxy”, especially by the World Council of Churches and associate circles, a term increasingly adopted by the ecumenical dialogue in general to distinguish them from the “Eastern Orthodoxy” of Byzantine tradition. This terminology may seem arbitrary but it does have its merits. If applied consistently it can help to provide a clear-cut distinction between the various churchdoms of the Christian East. Although it does have a snag: it excludes the so-called Nestorians, the “Church of the East”, as they call themselves. The suspicion arises that by doing so they are (to be) denounced as the real “heretics” of the East. And indeed, as far as I know, they have not taken part in any talks between the Churches so far. It is true that they have pursued their own course in the past and live under particularly difficult circumstances nowadays. But does this allow us to keep them out? However, it must be admitted that their inclusion would once again create new problems.

The preceding Consultations were primarily concerned with christological dogma. As the Oriental Orthodox reject the Fourth Ecumenical Council, held in Chalcedon in 451, on the grounds of the christological decisions taken there, this immediately raised the question of faith. This is also why talks with the Orthodoxy of Byzantine tradition right from the first unofficial meeting at Aarhus (1964) primarily centered on the same topic. Their result was the same which had meanwhile emerged from the dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church: On the subject of dogma of Christ the Churches concerned can certify one another true faith, no essential difference or even opposition separates them. This is at least the relieving result proclaimed in the final declarations or statements. However, yet another question is whether this verbal mutual attestation of true faith has broken down and removed all emotional reservations at the same time; a closer look seems to suggest that a simple answer in the affirmative is probably wishful thinking.

<sup>1)</sup> See footnote page 33.

The Fourth Consultation focused on the question of primacy within the Church. Papers and discussions tried different approaches to grasp or at least determine more accurately its nature. Apparently the intention was to give a chance to the different traditions, to put forward their understanding of this institution in order to be able to pinpoint underlying agreements and disagreements. From among the Oriental Orthodox only the Armenians fully took up the challenge by producing two detailed contributions: “*The Development of the Primacy of the Head of the Armenian Church*” (Vardapet Krikorian) and “*Problems and Exercise of Primacy in the Armenian Church*” (Archbishop Nersoyan), 4th Cons., pp. 82 and pp. 165. Apart from that there were occasional references in papers submitted by representatives of the Syro-Indian and Coptic Churches but no formal description of primacy in their own Churches. Quite understandably, they did not want to give a theology of primacy in their own Churches. Indeed, such an undertaking must seem unnecessary and impracticable to them; for primacy as held and practised by their patriarchs and catholicoi is no theological but a purely historical church institution. Nevertheless, even in these Churches primacy is an undeniable reality which did have a certain effect on their course in history and continues to do so to this day. It may therefore be assumed that they reflected on the issue at different points in time, that they considered its justification and jurisdiction. The Roman Catholic participants would probably have been sincerely interested in getting to know such theoretical considerations as well as experiences of primacy as it is practised today. Moreover, this could have served as an inspiration for the discussion of Roman Catholic theology of primacy.

There may be a feeling that the different approaches to an understanding of primacy will have been pointed out clearly by the three introductory papers all devoted to the same topic of “*The Emergence of a Pre-Eminence of Individual Churches over Others and the Reason for this Development*”. But this is true only to a limited extent. On the one hand, the Oriental Orthodox explored the Canons of the 4th and 5th centuries, repeatedly interpreted in our context, more closely in the light of their own tradition (Metropolitan Mar Gregorios, New Delhi; 4th Cons., pp. 15), a procedure which undoubtedly has its justification. However, as Sardica (today Sofia, Bulgaria) and the synod named after this town in the process was shifted to Spain this geographical “translatio” almost inevitably had to have its influence on the interpretation of the Canons mentioned. The negation of jurisdictional “prerogatives” for Rome as well as for Constantinople based on Canon 3 of 381 seems to be preconditioned by the line of argumentation at this point already and it is too narrow a historical view which says of Justinian that he gave “the patriarchates their final legal form” in his Codex. Besides it is understandable that overall the decisive weight is placed on the synods. – On the other hand, the same school of thought strongly emphasized the difference between faith and practice, dogma and custom and referred primacy to the sphere of practice and custom alone (G. H. Bebarwi, Cairo; 4th Cons., pp. 33). This fundamental attribution quite naturally also determined the interpretation of the historical course of the church and the canon drawn upon. – For one more time the same period was run through from a Catholic point of view (J. Speigl, Würzburg; 4th Cons., pp. 22), this time taking in Western sources to a greater extent. The importance of the veneration of the Apostles and the related question of the principle of the succession of the Apostles in Rome as well as the weight for the origins and subsequent evolution of Roman Catholic primacy of the interrelations between the imperial church system of the East Roman-Byzantine

emperors and the concept of Church as advocated by the bishops in Rome came under review.

It is a good question to ask at this point whether the subsequent discussion led to a mutual rapprochement of positions on the subject of pre-eminence, its origins and the reasons or factors by which it was prompted. The minutes are not yet available and I hesitate to give a reliable answer on the basis of my own notes. My impression, however, tended to the conclusion that this was not the case, an impression which was then reinforced by the discussion of another paper submitted by *W. de Vries* (Rome) entitled "*The Changes in Rome's Exercise of its Primacy between the 5th and 19th Centuries and the Primacy as Exercised by the Ancient Orthodox Patriarchs*" (4th Cons., pp. 68). Obviously this was meant as a follow-up to the periods treated in the contributions just mentioned. It may be doubted whether such a broad topic as the initiators of this Consultation obviously had in mind can be fitted into a single paper. And it was the author himself who was most aware of this fact. Taking great pains he set out to cover in big steps the evolution of Roman Catholic primacy in theory and practice through the centuries up to the threshold of the First Vatican Council. The decidedly juridical view of primacy, clearly laid down as early as in the 5th century and carried on by the reform of Gregory VII (*Dictatus Papae*) in the direction of a "legalization and thus secularization of the papacy", was plain to see. The second part of the paper, however, the attempt to include a description of primacy as practised by the Oriental patriarchs proved to be an impossible task for the simple reason of the absence, so far, of any specialist preliminary work. This is why he could only make a few, certainly valuable, comments and the two papers on primacy in the Armenian Church which were to follow confirmed him in this reserve. For they too did not manage to throw sufficient light on the open questions for their Church at least, despite the multitude of highlights they produced and the importance of the individual traits of the Armenian catholicosate they portrayed. The representatives of the other Oriental Churches had certain reservations about the presentation furnished by Father de Vries SJ. But their comments were essentially adjustments in the evaluation of individual historical dates which they felt obliged to interpret differently in the light of their own tradition. It is of course at any time inadmissible for them to ignore this Oriental interpretation of their own ecclesiastical history and church life but it also requires in each case an impartial review in the context of history as a whole as well as the relationship the churches have among one another.

Primacy, its preconditions, development and description were investigated by two exhaustive and in the substance well balanced papers put forward by the Catholic side:

"*From the primacy of jurisdiction to the jurisdictional primacy. The historical background to the First Vatican Council*" (*H. J. Pottmeyer*, Bochum) and "*The bearings of the decisions of the First Vatican Council on papal primacy*" (*G. Greshake*, Vienna; 4th Cons., pp. 110 and pp. 136). In substance they had to be closely related, had to form a unity to a certain extent. Both authors kept as closely as possible to the topic they had set themselves. Characteristically both set out with a justification of their procedure. Pottmeyer questioned the "function of the historical checkback", Greshake made "preliminary hermeneutic reflections". By doing so, they gave a certain introduction to Western methodology used in exploring historical events and documents, which at the same time amounted to an elucidation of Western thinking in general and corresponding theological methods of working. After all, many misunderstandings result from the fact that we have different approaches to our own past and that of others. This became

apparent more than once in the course of this Consultation, starting with the understanding of the first Christian centuries right up to the interpretation of recent history. In this sense, these introductions may go on to bear fruit beyond the context of this meeting.

Pottmeyer proceeded to point out with remarkable conciseness "the one-sided emphases of the Council's decisions" and added a more detailed look at the historical decisions both political and sociological as well as theological of this Council. The 19th century was of course of overriding significance but occasional flashbacks on long-bgone events even further accentuated the development of the Roman Catholic conception of primacy. – Greshake primarily attempted to deal with the "interpretation of the most important statements" on infallibility as well as on the universal jurisdictional primacy of the Pope. The precision of the formulations on the one hand and their openness to a more profound and more comprehensive ecclesiology of the *communio* on the other hand were pointed out and balanced against each other. Furthermore the complex situation of the Pope with his multitude of functions acquired as a fruit of history and the wish for their disentanglement in favour of "the bishop of Rome" within the framework of the episcopate as a whole were subject to discussion. And Greshake concluded by some albeit short comments on the question of the reception of the Council by the Eastern Churches; he did so, in view of the mutual reception by the divided Churches of each other's Councils in the process of the restoration of unity and said: "This process of reception will probably lead to amendments and modifications exceeding those which occurred in the process of the reception of the ancient Councils."

In between these two papers featured two contributions by Oriental participants; they were devoted to one and the same topic: "*The First Vatican Council reviewed by the Oriental Orthodox Churches*" (*V. C. Samuel*, Syro-Indian, and *Aram Keshishian*, Armenian Apostolic Church; 4th Cons., pp. 117 and pp. 124). Their insertion, to my regret, interrupted the comprehensive description of the Catholic conception of this Council which is of such great importance in the ecumenical dialogue. To V. C. Samuel the rejection by the Oriental Orthodox of the Vaticanum is clearly the logical and inevitable result of their rejection of the Chalcedonian: They decided against it "in the name of Christian truth" and this was prompted not by the bishops but by the community that is to say by monks, the parish clergy and the Christian congregations. For "the Oriental Orthodox place more weight on the action of the Holy Spirit than on the practice of authority through hierarchy". The harsh conclusion: Vatican I did not contribute anything essential to the Christian cause regarding the Oriental Orthodox and when there had occurred divisions since the time of the early Christians "Rome's claim to jurisdiction over the Eastern Churches was one reason among others". – Equally fundamental was the wholesale rejection by Keshishian of the dogma of the Pope: To begin with, the conception of the Apostle Peter and his position among the other Apostles was questionable, all the more so the privilege given to him personally could not be conferred on any other person. Hence, there is no theological justification for the claim by Rome to be the centre of the universal Church. However, he considers a thorough reflection of Roman Catholic primacy, its significance and functions to be one of the chief tasks of Catholic theology. He also indicated its direction: towards a *primatus pastoralis et servitii* (primacy of pastoral work and service). – In this we whole-heartedly agree with him and we even suspect that such reflection had found its first promoters in the last popes. However, especially in the light of the arguments put forward by

V. C. Samuel, we believe it to be doubtful whether the return to “conciliar authority” he demanded – which we also advocate – will by itself be the end of the tunnel.

For a start, the discussion of these four papers which to my mind formed the core of this Consultation could not yet contribute a great deal to a rapprochement or even reconciliation of the different positions. The call repeatedly addressed to the Oriental Orthodox to produce an alternative to papal primacy as a ministry of unity for the universal Church met with no response. And it was impossible for them to come up with any answer because Oriental Orthodox theological thinking is unable to pose the question in such a way. A ministry of unity as authority will invariably sound juridical to them, that is to say beneath the true nature of the Church which is exclusively founded on the triune God, and it is from this fact only that unity as a characteristic of the nature of the Church is to be derived. At this point it became clear that even when the same or similar words are used each statement on primacy within the Church and within the Churches must be questioned afresh for its true substance and actual meaning against the background of the tradition it originated in.

We have to omit some topics not because we have little regard for them but because we cannot fit them into the framework of this report. Nevertheless, two more ought to be mentioned. *Amba Gregorius* (Cairo) spoke on “*The Tensions between Theoretical Statements on the Primacy and the Effective Exercise of the Primacy in the Ecclesiological Life of the Oriental Orthodox Churches*”, auxiliary bishop *P.-W. Scheele* (Paderborn) held a talk on the same issue in the Roman Catholic Church (4th Cons., pp. 154 and pp. 191). Surprisingly though, the first paper then did not focus on the relationship of the Oriental Orthodox Churches among themselves but once again started out on the tensions between Rome and the Eastern Churches in the first centuries and went on to prove that Rome’s increasing influence in church affairs – and the same goes for Alexandria – was closely linked to the city’s political standing, even depended on it. In this way, nothing could be heard on the subject of tensions between the theory and practice of primacy within the Oriental Orthodox Churches although they were repeatedly touched on in the subsequent discussion. – That “tensions” do not only have a negative effect but may be a sign of alertness within the Church emerged from the second paper read by Scheele. He began by stating the “fact of the tensions”, ranging from Peter to the “Petrine office of the Popes”, and went on to study in greater detail this issue as well as the forms and degenerations of these tensions. To his mind, it is obvious that they must be seen in the twofold perspective of intra-Catholic and – especially today – ecumenical affairs. The pragmatic approach to the Petrine office as debated today by many ecumenical discussion groups in the West would prove to be too narrow if relied on alone. Progress might be achieved by considering whether it would not be possible to derive this office from the Gospel as a service to unity. Peter also was the starting point for Scheele’s conception of the “forms” as well as the possible “degenerations” encountered time and again in connection with the Apostolic mission, qualified brotherly assistance in faith, the pervasive fundamental function, the power of the keys, and the power to bind and to loose and finally pastoral service. In the process he corrected the frequently reappearing false interpretation of the Catholic perception of the Pope according to which the Pope stands outside or above the college of bishops: “His place is right at its centre and at its top.” On the other hand, he is committed to an apparent “degeneration” of the effective exercise of primacy which was not prepared, indeed unable, to face the necessary tension between unity and freedom, unity and

diversity. Nevertheless, the conclusion remains that the very tensions in the world and the Church necessitate a service of unity within the Church of Jesus Christ.

Coverage of the papers must come to an end at this point, the remainder ought to be mentioned at least: “*Rome as ‘Pietätszentrum’\* of the Early Church*” (*J. H. Emminghaus*, Vienna), “*Autonomy and centralization in the ancient Syrian Churches of Edessa and Seleucia-Ctesiphon*” (*A. de Halleux*, Louvain), “*The connection between the post-Tridentine concept of primacy and the emerging of the Uniate Churches*” (*E. Lanne*, Chevetogne), “*Could the paper of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission on Authority in the Church form a basis for discussion between Oriental Orthodox and Catholics?*” (*Paulus Mar Gregorios*, Delhi, and *Father J. F. Long*, Rome). – These papers had also been prepared with the same attention to detail as the ones discussed here. But with coverage it is the same trouble as with the Consultation itself: The organizers had loaded the agenda with too many items. The participants had neither sufficient time nor stamina to get through with it. This can only be regretted. It must have been clear beforehand that a presentation and exhaustive discussion of this topic in one single Consultation would be quite impracticable. It was a pity that the attempt to achieve the impossible was made and carried through against all odds, for this was the unredeemable mortgage inherent in this otherwise well and generously organized Consultation. Besides, this carried with it the undesired but unfortunately unavoidable side-effect of limited opportunities for personal exchange. They were not altogether absent, if one thinks of the one-day excursion to Mariazell and Herzogenburg, which turned out a wonderful common experience. But the theological exchange properly speaking following the presentation of the papers hardly came about. According to my opinion however, there is a real need in this respect.

### *Results of the Consultation*

Naturally, the question as to the result of this Consultation arises. The text of the final communiqué was drawn up by a committee in English and approved by the participants (Vienna Dialogue, Booklet Nr. 1 p. 86–88). Where deemed necessary or appropriate we are adding short comments to the individual items, partly of an explanatory partly of a critical nature (numbers correspond to those in the Communiqué).

The communiqué comprises five separate statements: A 1–4 Introduction: topic, participants and organization; B 5–9 primacy and infallibility – agreement and disagreement; C 10–15 the target – unity: faith and life, structures and responsibilities; D 16–19 recommendations for future work; E 20 move onto uncharted territory relying on the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

A.1. Only Dom Emmanuel Lanne’s paper was directly concerned with the role the Oriental Catholic Churches. At the beginning of modern times Byzantine “oikoumene” in a way came to be superseded by the Catholic one. This leads with the parallel struggle of the Tridentine reform against Protestantism to a reinforced centralization in Rome. The concrete consequences for the East: In its relationship with Rome the “Church” came to be replaced by the “rite”. The nature and existence of Uniate Churches were

\* “Centre of piety”, designating the Latin pietas in the objective sense (pia reverentia, Greek: timē), not in the subjective sense (pia veneratio).

downgraded to variations of liturgical life! Correction of this at least rather “oblique” view of the Eastern Churches was initiated and carried forward to a considerable extent by Vatican II.

2. The Oriental Catholic Churches were represented by a member of the Coptic, Armenian and South-Indian Malankara Churches each. Only the representative of the Church last mentioned took the floor in the discussion.

3. The opening of the Consultation coincided with the New Year’s Day of the Coptic Church. Thus, it began with a solemn pontifical service celebrated by the three Coptic bishops. As on the occasion of the previous Consultations the Syrian Orthodox Community played host to the event in their church just next to the Bildungshaus. – The “day of pilgrimage” proved to be a special blessing for all participants. For the Oriental Orthodox this was at the same time an opportunity to get to know the other side of Catholicism, the faithful crowding around the altar of the Basilica of our Lady to join in the prayer and songs; a thriving community of nuns which also included younger members, and the joy they radiated when singing the makarisms in church; finally richly deployed, liturgically celebrated choral prayer in the church of the Monastery of Herzogenburg.

4. As far as the papers are concerned it must be said that they were submitted in written form and only partly read out. This was of course due to the lack of time but as a result there was too narrow a basis for the discussion of the topic. Moreover, the interpreters had some difficulty coping with the theological terminology: “jurisdiction” invariably became “administration of law” (Rechtssprechung) and even worse, “subjects of infallibility” in the sense of “bearers” or “organs” turned into “objects of infallibility” (Gegenstände der Unfehlbarkeit). The texts in their original language would have rendered better service. For Western participants many a misunderstanding would have been avoided. For the Orientals however, a translation of the German texts was required. – As to the recognition of the principle of historicity of all statements relevant in this context, I am rather sceptical as far as the Orientals are concerned. For this is precisely the plight of the dialogue that they hardly accept the historical conditionality for formulations before 451. Be it Councils or St. Cyril – up to this point in time everything is unequivocal and cannot be revised. They have their difficulties with a historical view of the Church, sometimes even in matters of fact, and entirely when it involves the development of doctrine and the deployment of church life therefrom, which such consequences as may be necessary or meaningful. What the Early Church does not know or does not seem to know (in her environment) is often rejected too hastily. One speaker for instance wanted to relegate all doctrines derived from the Scripture by reason “only” to the sphere of “natural theology”, and as such unrelated to supernatural faith. By saying this I do not want to throw doubt on the sincerity of this declaration, although I do want to exclude a too hasty identification of understanding.

B.6. It is not by chance that the national aspects come up for debate when one looks at the Oriental Orthodox Churches; they are and want to remain what they have been right from the beginning, i. e. national churches. Hence, we are confronted here with an essential characteristic of the East in general, with the all-important feature of their church-being as opposed to the Catholic Church and their concept of universality and catholicity of the Church of Jesus Christ. Even a planetary but national jurisdiction in our opinion does not mean universality, rather stands in sharp contrast to it. This is the

very reason of the Orientals’ alert suspicion of universal primacy of Roman Catholic coinage. It seems to jeopardize their national identity at their most tender spot. Conversely, this is not a minor source of difficulties for Roman administration, i. e. Roman exercise of primacy when dealing with the Uniate Eastern Churches as soon as they want to set up their own church tradition in the “Western diaspora”, against the background of a Latin environment.

7. When talking about the confirmation of historical and ecclesiological primacy by Councils, what the Oriental Orthodox primarily have in mind, as the discussion repeatedly showed, is Canon 6 of the First Ecumenical Council, furthermore Canon 3 of Constantinople and Canon 8 of Ephesos, since these two Synods also have ecumenical validity for them. It is not unimportant to point to the fact that the term used is merely “confirmation” and not “conferment”. In this respect the Oriental Orthodox’ view differs from that of say the Greek Orthodox theologians. Concerning Constantinople’s primacy however, it is in fact possible to speak of a “conferment” by the quoted Canon 3 of the Second General Synod (and by Canon 28 of Chalcedon). – Talk, at this point, about continuous guidance by the Holy Spirit must be received with great caution, for this has no slight implications. Occurred guidance, as we recognize seriously on each side, *in spite of* separate orientations and developments or *within* these developments? Besides, this is also a question to be asked in connection with the ecumenical decree of Vatican II (No. 3 there).

8. As reported, Pottmeyer and Greshake, in their papers, had tried with great devotion to place the decisions of the First Vatican Council in the right perspective of comprehension and to make them more easily accessible. However, they had had to work out their contributions without knowledge of the corresponding statements submitted by the Oriental participants, and those did not have a chance to look at the Catholics’ papers in time. Thus, both conceptions stood side by side and even against each other without mutual reference. Surely, there was a lack of time, but maybe there was also a lack of commitment and patience, later on in Vienna, for thorough debate and mutual check-up. My own impression at this point was the almost distressing feeling that too many preconceived judgements had been brought along in a ready-made fashion, thus hampering receptive listening. And Oriental participants at times made demands on the Catholic side where they ought to have inquired about the others’ comprehension in the first place.

9. It is difficult to imagine the assignment of *teaching* authority – and an inerrant at that – to the Church as a whole. While “Eastern Orthodoxy” (see above) does know the infallible “guardian ministry” of the *pleroma*, it does not concede it any teaching authority. Vatican II distinguishes clearly between the “supernatural sense of faith” of the faithful as a whole, emanating from the Holy Spirit and preventing the entire people of God from error, and the infallible teaching authority exercised by the shepherds appointed by God (Dogm. Const. on the Church Nr. 12 and 25): Hence, it is the Church as a whole that is infallible in *faith*, and it is the church teaching authority that is infallible in *proclamation*, subject to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. – This is why I do not quite understand this statement. At this point it could have been an unconclusively discussed concession to the Oriental Orthodox who had earlier referred back to the community as a reason for their rejecting Chalcedon, and repeatedly tended to assign teaching to the *vadapets*, i. e. the theologians rather than the bishops.

C.10. Maybe it should not be ignored that the expression “union of sister Churches” avoids any article. Surely, this is to be understood in the sense of “union as sister Churches”. The Church’s set-up as a community of sister Churches ought to be maintained by all means. No absorption, no centralization, no subjection! This is precisely what the Orientals fear for their Churches from Rome and they believe to be confirmed in this fear by the experiences made by the Uniate Churches. Are they really entirely wrong in doing so? – After all, this might be a statement of the foundations and preconditions of future unity. But the question remains: “all Churches together” – on a “world-wide” scale – is this really possible in the final analysis without a universal jurisdictional primacy? Its exercise, however, would not and should not be identical with Roman practice in the history of Western Christianity. I hold the view that, since Vatican II at least, there have been visible signs of change.

11. Of course it is theologically true that all unity and community within the Church has its sole origin in the triune God and can only be lived in this light (compare Jo 17!). A different question, particularly in view of God’s Work of Salvation, is that of which function the “secondary causes” appointed and called by Him ought to or may take on in this respect. Besides, not only the Oriental Orthodox but the East in general likes to make a particular point of the action of the Holy Spirit in the Church, and rightly so. Curiously enough therefore, the distrust with which they view a “primacy of divine law”, a primacy that is wholly based on divine order and hence wholly left to the discretion of the Holy Spirit. And it was precisely in this matter that – even during this Consultation – they demanded canonical, i. e. juridical, in other words, human safeguards against any abuse of the infallible teaching authority for instance. – The necessity of a special (service) ministry of unity was recognized. Now even according to Oriental tradition there exists no ministry within the Church that is not rooted in a local church and remains an integral part of it. In the event of the existence of such a special “ministry of unity” its holder will invariably be identified with his church. It is an open question whether in this way that church would not hold a special place in her own right and within the community after all.

12. The “means of expression” mentioned here are somewhat disappointing. They have all been known for a long time, are common practice and experience. But as history proved they could not preserve the unity of the Churches. Hence, it may be asked whether they will be able to do so in future if relied on alone. And it may be asked more specifically how it was then possible in our days for the separation of the Syrian Orthodox and the Syro-Indian Churches to come about after all.

13. This text raises a whole range of questions. What, mind you, is the idea behind “collaborating” in “the restoration of eucharistic communion” of those Churches that are united with Rome? “Intercommunion” more appropriately: mutual admission to the communion, as a rule, is seen by the Orientals as “camouflaged proselytism” on the part of the Uniates; if this came about, what one can imagine is a one-way street at best: the admission of uniate Catholics by the non-uniate Orientals. But would the latter really be prepared to make such a concession? – And what exactly is meant by sister churches in this context: non-uniate and uniate Churches of the same tradition? or non-uniate Oriental Churches and the Catholic Church as a whole? The question becomes especially pressing when one thinks of the working out of “local solutions” and even more so when it involves the realization of the former principle of one-town-one-bishop; after all, it is a “unified episcopate” that is under discussion! As of when should one

strive for this true ideal of church government? And in doing so should the different “traditions” continue to be allowed for? One door, however, has been left open: the latter is to be done “as far as possible”. – At any rate, it must be made plain without any reservations: the Oriental Orthodox cannot be regarded as a “field of mission”, which in the past unfortunately used to be the case not only on the part of the Catholics but also on the part of the Anglicans and the Protestants. On the other hand though, it is a genuine ecumenical progress that the existence and the service of the Catholic Oriental Churches were judged positively in this context.

14. The dilemma of the dialogue starts with the exegesis of the passages in the New Testament relating to Peter. Oriental theologians tend to see them in an at least partly foreshortened perspective without consideration of the whole context. Conversely, Catholics have often interpreted their dogmatic definitions into the texts without justification. It is certainly true that the evolution of Roman primacy would have developed along less juridical lines, had it taken place in contact with the Oriental Churches. Likewise, the Church would never have been set alongside the State as a *societas perfecta* (perfect society), on a level with worldly, i. e. “profane” realities. Ecclesiastical law would never have reached this degree of perfection and the universal jurisdiction of the Pope would never have been pronounced and secured canonically and probably also dogmatically in such an absolute way. Possibly many a dogmatic definition would not have come about at all, for the entire East is much less “fond of definitions”.

This is also why many a “rigidity” could be tempered or dissipated by renewed contacts between the Catholic and the Oriental Churches. This is reason for hope. Unfortunately, it is diminished by the reference to the basis of the “Nicene Canons”. What exactly is meant? Only the 6th Canon? This would not be a very abundant source. Or the Canons 4 and 5 dealing with the appointment and ordination of bishops as well as the regular convention of Synods? Or did the Oriental side also have in mind the “pseudo-Nicene” Canons? To what an extent are those possibly in force with them? This is what ought to have been explored, but time was pressing.

17. The rather comprehensive programme developed there cannot be documented here; there is also no necessity for doing so since it is at least partly included in the communiqué.

Allow me to make just one more remark by way of conclusion: The objective but alert reader of the text of the communiqué will realize the considerable imbalance there is between “agreement” and “disagreement”. Added to this there is a sense of almost bitter disappointment of the authors – and many others – about the meagre response in their Churches. Over and above all human effort remains in reality only the hope for the unifying force of the Holy Spirit.

ADDRESS OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE FEDERAL PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA DR. RUDOLF KIRCHSCHLÄGER AT THE  
RECEPTION GIVEN FOR THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE FOURTH  
VIENNA CONSULTATION ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1978

Dear President of the Foundation PRO ORIENTE,  
Excellencies, distinguished participants in the Vienna Dialogue!

In this historical place of the former Imperial Palace, may I – on behalf of the Austrian people – extend to you all a very cordial welcome to Austria and to the City of Vienna. As a believer in Christ may I add the expression of my sincere thanks for continuing your theological engagement in this way for the fourth time now.

It seems to me that the effort of these consultations reflects the faithful attitude of all those participating, relying on the promise of the Lord that He be with us when we meet in His name.

The general topic of this consultation is – as I was told – focused on the notion and understanding of primacy and its relation to the office of Saint Peter. This thematical selection certainly does not promise results to be easily reached, but rather the desire to carry on the ecumenical work from essential approaches already achieved and the confidence in possible agreements even on difficult matters.

Although it is neither my possibility nor my task to evaluate this dialogue theologically, may I state that I am deeply impressed by the initiative taken in treating this difficult subject which constitutes itself an interpretation of your attitude and beliefs.

In this connection, let me relate to you a personal experience passed on to me during the inaugural celebration of His Holiness Pope John Paul I, which I had the privilege to attend. The personality of His Holiness spreads in a very convincing way an impressive spirit of optimistic approach. It was and is for me a great experience to see how thankful the peoples round the world accept this optimism and discover that this optimism is a fundamental Christian virtue. Our Lord is a Lord of joy!

Certainly, more than ever before we appreciate the earnest sincerity of His Holiness Pope Paul VI and the testimony of the cross he has left with us. But the world of today urgently requests some sign of hope, based on solid ground, which the Christian Churches very well should furnish: in the representation of their highest Church authorities as well as in the faithful life and witnessing of their members. The responsibility in this matter in your capacity as theologians and shepherds requires – so it seems to me – to be very distinctly considered. In your personal engagement for ecumenical work I too see the same hopeful optimism which I met in Rome; and this imposes a profound impression on me.

May you forgive me, that I have been tempted to touch a little bit a subject which is more or less purely yours. But I do not estimate your Vienna meetings as pure periodical arrangements and a matter of administrative activities, neither do I consider this visit you kindly paid to me as a sole affair of politeness. Both, this short occasion as well as the strenuous hours of discussion, do have their significant sincerity which reaches far beyond those actually participating.

I therefore do extend my very cordial and personal wishes to you and to your work: May the Lord bless this your ecumenical endeavour.

*Hans Joachim Schulz*

THE FIFTH VIENNA CONSULTATION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF  
THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES<sup>1</sup>

A report on its theological work

The Fifth Ecumenical Consultation between theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church which took place from September 18th to 25th 1988 at the Bildungshaus Lainz in Vienna was, like the previous four Consultations of 1971–78, more than a meeting of theological experts. One of the most renowned representatives of the Oriental Orthodox Churches saw this Consultation as a spiritual process of fundamental ecclesial conciliarity which through participants' love and openness for each other gave a sense of the action of the Holy Spirit and instilled hope for a real council of all Churches in the future.

Although this Consultation was a gathering of theologians and not of officially nominated members of the hierarchy of the different churches, some participants could be regarded as important representatives of their ecclesiastical traditions by virtue of their ministry or theological reputation. Each Oriental Orthodox Church was represented by a senior member of its hierarchy and a priest, some of whom hold key positions in their Church.

They were, to be more precise:

From the Coptic Orthodox Church: Amba Bishoy, Secretary General of the Holy Synod, and Father Bishoy Aziz;

from the Syrian Orthodox Church: Archbishop Mar Theophilos George Saliba of Mount Lebanon and Father M. K. Thomas;

from the Armenian Apostolic Church: Bishop Prof. Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian, Patriarchal Delegate for Central Europe and Sweden, Vienna;

from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church: Archbishop Dr. Timotheos Habte Selassie Tesfa of Kefa and the Rev. Melake Tabore Teshome Zerihun;

from the Syro-Indian Orthodox Church: Metropolitan Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios of New Delhi and Father Dr. Kondothra Mathew George.

From the Roman Catholic Church: the Cardinals Franciscus König and Hans Hermann Groër, Archbishop Dr. Franc Perko of Belgrade, Metropolitan Mar Joseph Powathil from the Church of Malabar, Prof. André de Halleux OFM, Louvain; Mons. Prof. Dr. Philipp Harnoncourt, Graz; Father Edward Kilmartin SJ, Rome and Father John F. Long SJ, Vice-rector of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome; Prof. Dr. Hans J. Schulz, Würzburg.

There were observers from the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, the Russian Orthodox Church, the Anglican Communion, the Coptic Catholic Church and the

The text of all papers and sermons delivered in the course of this Fifth Vienna Consultation as well as the minutes of the discussions and the common final communiqué appeared in the PRO ORIENTE English language publication: Wort und Wahrheit, Revue for Religion and Culture, Supplementary Issue No. 5, Fifth Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Vienna-Lainz, 1988, Papers and Minutes, Verlag Herder, Wien, Dec. 1988, pp. 224.

The Final Communiqué can also be found in the: PRO ORIENTE (ed.), Vienna Dialogue, Five PRO ORIENTE Consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy, Booklet Nr. 1, Communiqués and Joint Documents, Vienna, 1990, p. 101.



Armenian Catholic Church as well as from PRO ORIENTE Salzburg. Consequently, Johannes Cardinal Willebrands and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, sent a special word of greeting to the participants in the Consultation.

The Consultation's character of a spiritual event was decisively enhanced by daily celebrations of the Eucharist in alternating rites, where participants went beyond any denominational or jurisdictional boundaries in their animated attendance of the respective liturgies and exchanged the kiss of peace as a sign of Christian fraternity.

Besides the usual lucky hand of the President, the Secretary General and the Chairman of the Theological Advisory Council of PRO ORIENTE, the excursions to places of religious and historical interest in Austria, the hospitality of senior Church and State representatives with its receptions pervaded by the feeling of Austria's history of bringing together different peoples and cultures – all of which are mentioned individually in the Communiqué of the Consultation, greatly contributed to this event of human and spiritual encounter. However, all these aspects of the whole event can only be touched upon in this report of the Consultation's theological work which is designed to trace the main lines of thought of the papers and their most important crystallizations and reinforcements in the various discussions.

### 1. *The Issues of the Fifth Consultation*

The work schedule included the following items: a review of the previous Consultations of 1971, 1973, 1976 and 1978 according to their theological outcome, realization of insights and decisions that have come about in the meantime as well as further implications; but above all the specific theological task set to the Fifth Consultation, a set of three topics that may be characterized by the following key words: the relevance of liturgical witness of faith, possible forms of future church unity, primacy and Petrine ministry.

The organization of the topics was by no means arbitrary or chosen at random. Recourse to the witness of faith in liturgical tradition had proved to be useful back at the First Consultation when the Christological consensus was achieved. For liturgical witness of faith may, by nature and historically, take on many forms according to any given tradition of rite and knows no absolute rule of a particular dogmatic formula. Hence the hope for an approach from this side, of those ecclesiological problems in which the previous Consultations failed to reach a breakthrough. From the viewpoint of liturgy and its history, any model of uniformity as a form of future unity is out of the question. Only the structure of church unity known in the ancient Church could be an example of what we hope to have in future: One Church as *koinonia* (community) of the Churches.

This insight was also most likely to produce a reevaluation of the issue of primacy and Petrine ministry – by refraining from any association with centralist church discipline and by turning to the ideas of conciliarity and collegiality inherent in the model of *koinonia* of churches.

The two co-chairmen of the Consultation, Bishop Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian, Vienna, and Prof. John F. Long SJ, Vicerector of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, speaking about "*The Purpose of the Fifth Non-official Ecumenical Consultation*" gave a subtle introduction into the entire work.

a) Bishop *Krikorian* put forward future unity of the Churches as the main theme of the Fifth Consultation. He explained that this was not expected as a unity in uniformity, but as one in diversity: "Surely, it is not easy to determinate clearly the boundaries or limits of diversity, however, I myself plead and argue for the most possible far-reaching and wide plurality in various traditions of rites, customs, canons, spirituality and theology" (5th Cons., p. 18).

Must future church unity be based on jurisdictional unity and the absolute necessity of mutual acceptance of dogmatic definitions considered to be essential? The latter vision of unity is maintained by the Eastern (Byzantine) Orthodox Church. The Oriental Orthodox Churches, for their part, consider only the first three Ecumenical Councils as fundamental and binding. If the role of the Bishop of Rome is defined, as Pope John Paul II did when receiving a delegation of the Coptic Orthodox Church in June 1979, as "ministry for the preservation of the community of faith and of the spiritual life", no objections can be raised against that. Classical Roman doctrine on primacy and infallibility, however, goes by far beyond such a function. The Orthodox Churches need not necessarily contrast this with a mere "primacy of honour" or the role of a "*primus inter pares*" (first among equals). The right to convoke Ecumenical Councils and to make doctrinal decisions within a concrete conciliar framework, would mean more and be at the same time more closely in line with the historical role of the Bishop of Rome which, according to what Patriarch Shenouda III said in Rome in 1973, cannot exclusively be grasped through the civic importance of ancient Rome but represents a "spiritual pre-eminence". Bishop Dr. Krikorian thinks that a reception of certain results of the Anglican-Catholic dialogue was worth considering: primacy as an expression of "episcopate" (episcopal authority) within a *koinonia* of local churches and as a subsidiary service to their bishops. As in previous Consultations, this assessment of the issue of primacy again showed the undogmatic, future-oriented attitude of the Armenian Apostolic Church. In another Oriental Orthodox opinion, however, the transferability of results of the Anglican-Catholic dialogue was denied.

b) *Father Long* in his capacity as co-chairman, emphasized in his introduction the particular view that the Fifth Consultation had its own independent topics. Since, in the field of Christology, compatibility of the different Christological traditions and of the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Christological terminology was settled and the results of the First Vienna Consultation were included in the Common Declarations of Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Zakka I Iwas of Antioch of June 21st 1984, as well as in the conclusion of the first stage of the official Catholic-Coptic dialogue, there was no need for further definitions of this question in terms of dogmatic history or terminology at the Fifth Consultation. At this point, it was vital to work out criteria derived from liturgical history of tradition for the open questions of this Consultation.

### 2. *Statement of Achievements and their Implications*

Bishop Dr. *Mesrob Krikorian* and Prof. *André de Halleux* OFM, in their papers dealing with "*The Theological Significance of the Results of the Four Vienna Consultations*" (5th Cons., pp. 40–53 and pp. 23–39) went beyond the evaluation of the results achieved

and pointed out how these results might be used as a springboard as well as how the methodical insights gained might be applied to the questions in hand.

a) Bishop Dr. *Krikorian* recalled the Christological consensus reached at the First Consultation, which was incorporated in the Common Declarations of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Shenouda III (1973; *The Vienna Dialogue*, Booklet Nr. 1, p. 109) and of Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Zakka I Iwas of Antioch (1984; *op. cit.* p. 117) and put the question of further reception of these insights. He did not think that this required any formal decision of a future ecumenical council, as we are dealing here in the final analysis with the manifestation of a theological tradition deep down shared by the two Churches and since the reception process is not limited to the reception of conciliar decisions.

Even if the Oriental Orthodox Churches are unable to formally accept the councils after Ephesus (431) to be ecumenical (and the Second Vienna Consultation agrees that the first three councils are ecumenical in “a fuller sense”, “because of their common acceptance in the Church” cf. 2nd Cons., p. 176), they do not by any means exclude the theological and historical development characterizing the later councils. Indeed, some Oriental Orthodox Churches have even incorporated certain canons on discipline of the Council of Chalcedon in their own traditions. The possibilities of such a “spiritual reception” ought to be explored.

As the individual local and ecumenical councils are only expressions of the conciliarity inherent in the Church itself, structures of primacy could also only be perceived as expressions of ecclesial conciliarity within the framework of episcopal collegiality. Any primacy aiming at universality – be it in the form of an “Ecumenical Patriarch” or the Pope – is alien to the Oriental Orthodox Churches and would be accepted only as a subsidiary service to the Churches united in *koinonia*. Bishop *Krikorian* refers to Amba Gregorios’ contribution at the Fourth Consultation (4th Cons., p. 229), according to which the Bishop of Rome, but in principle also the bishop of Alexandria or Antioch, was conceivable as an organ for the promotion of universal unity and a speaker of a universal representation of all Churches. The right of the Pope to convoke an ecumenical council, even a leading role in a collegial body for the confirmation of ecumenical councils all seem acceptable to the speaker.

The doctrine of universal primacy of jurisdiction and of infallibility of the Pope, however, could not be assimilated. Consistent further development of the more recent Catholic view of the Pope being *not outside or above* the college of bishops, but part of it might well open up new approaches; but actual practice of primacy was little influenced by this view.

By way of conclusion he reminds of the joint call at the Second Consultation for the Churches to drop anathemata directed against persons who are venerated as saints in other Churches (Pope Leo and the Patriarchs Flavianos, Anatolios and Gennadios on the one hand; the Patriarchs Dioskoros, Mar Severos, Timotheos Ailouros and Philoxenos on the other hand). The respective churches are asked to state to what an extent this was being done.

b) A profound analysis of the four Consultations seen also as a spiritual process was offered by Prof. *André de Halleux* OFM.

Although the participants in the Consultations were no official delegates of their Churches, in a spiritual sense and by their conviction of faith they truly represented the different traditions. Taking part in the celebration of the Eucharist in the various rites, reflected the mutual attestation of unadulterated preservation of the eucharistic mystery and the inner ecclesial bond of sharing in it. Thus, it became simultaneously clear that all theological reflection and each theological statement refer back to the mystery, which will never be fully grasped. Eventually the same is true of dogmatic definitions of ecumenical councils whose ecumenicity as a comprehensive representation of the different traditions varies. In this respect there is a marked gradation from the first three councils to those following in the first millennium and again from these and those held in the West during the Middle Ages and in modern times. – Even for the obligatory doctrine of faith of an ecumenical council it is true that the acceptance of its doctrine is not so much to be seen as a permanent possession of an intellectually recognized truth, but as a “faithfulness” to the revealed gospel in the tradition of the Church.

Deviating theological formulations firmly established in certain ancient church traditions must not be dismissed too hastily as a divergence from a given orthodox theological standard of speech, but are to be regarded as multifarious reverberations of one and the same substance of faith in the face of the linguistic and intellectual unfathomability of the mystery. The diversity of liturgical rites, which go back to Apostolic times, find their correspondence in the different ecclesial and theological traditions. This principle is also true of the Petrine ministry of the Bishop of Rome. In the Western tradition this ministry found its own peculiar theological reflection and expression. The other traditions must not jump to conclusions and regard it as standing outside the principles of conciliarity and collegiality. However, occidental definitions of papal supremacy over a council and his right of confirmation to be perceived in this sense, ought to be related back to their origins in the modern Western “debate of conciliarism” and the formulation of the question there. They do not belong in the context of ancient conciliar history or a future ecumenical council in a regained *koinonia* of the Churches. Here comes in the consensus of the Second Consultation based on the definition of Vatican II according to which “the role of the Bishop of Rome is always to be seen *within* a council and not *above it*” (*Vienna Dialogue Booklet Nr. 1*, p. 58). Catholic doctrine of infallibility, in particular, is to be understood as being by nature set in a conciliar context. Thus, the Fourth Consultation formulated the consensus “that infallibility . . . pertains to the Church as a whole, as the Body of Christ and the abode of the Holy Spirit” (*Vienna Dialogue, Booklet Nr. 1* p. 86). The structures of conciliarity and episcopal collegiality had their strongest ecclesial transparency in the liturgically and sacramentally defined *koinonia* of the ancient Church. We owe the elucidation of this model of thinking to “eucharistic ecclesiology” which, however, must not be seen in terminological opposition to any “universal” ecclesiology. The sacramentally founded exchange of life of this *koinonia* affords at the same time a model for future church unity in the form of a *koinonia* of local Churches and ancient church traditions, which is not limited to peaceful co-existence, but represents communion and participation in the fullness of life.

c) Secretary General *Stirnemann* then submitted *points for practical action* which had emerged from the four Vienna Consultations as well as steps taken by PRO ORIENTE for their realization.

Following that, the individual Oriental Orthodox Churches reported – each for a different geographical region – on the response there to the results of the four Vienna Consultations as well as on the expected implications for the future.

From among the sequence of *ten short reports* only the two most articulate statements by Archbishop Theophilos for the Patriarchate of Antioch and Amba Bishoy for the Coptic Orthodox Church ought to be mentioned here. *Archbishop Theophilos'* report showed the strong sense within the Syrian Orthodox Church of a turnabout in relations with the Roman Catholic Church as a result of the dialogue, initiated by the Vienna Consultations, having culminated in the meeting and Common Declaration of Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Zakka I Iwas on June 21st, 1984 (Vienna Dialogue, Booklet Nr. 1 p. 117). Given the common Christological witness of the Heads of both Churches, justifying already now mutual administering of the sacraments in emergencies, there were no more theological problems of equally high priority abstracting the path to full koinonia (with the only possible exception of the primacy issue). A decisive factor for the future was further progress in practical ecumenism locally.

*Amba Bishoy* was able to point to the successful conclusion of the first stage of the official Roman Catholic – Coptic Orthodox dialogue, which had led, on 12th February 1988, to the signing by Patriarch Shenouda III together with his Synod and Father Duprey as representative of the Pope together with the Coptic Catholic bishops of the Christological consensus of faith (Vienna Dialogue, Booklet Nr. 1 p. 120) formulated earlier on at the First Vienna Consultation (Vienna Dialogue, Booklet Nr. 1 p. 46).

However, he was more cautious than his archepiscopal brother from Antioch when it came to the interpretation of the Christological consensus as the all-important turning point in the Catholic-Coptic relationship. Instead, he strongly underscored the importance of a statement made by the Coptic Synod in a letter of 16th September 1986 addressed to Cardinal Willebrands, claiming that six further issues, primarily that of the procession of the Holy Spirit, must be examined for possible church separating divergencies.

### 3. The Relevance of the Liturgical Tradition

Next, the assembly turned to the first of the new issues of the Fifth Consultation "*The Theological (Trinitarian, Christological and Ecclesiological) Implications in Liturgical Texts of the 'Praying Church'*".

a) Quoting extensively above all from the Anaphora of the "318 Orthodox Fathers", Archbishop *Timothios of Kefa* showed how complete and at the same time differentiated the Trinitarian and Christological faith of the ancient Church was expressed here (5th Cons., pp. 99–102).

b) *Father Thomas* (5th Cons., pp. 103–109) from the Patriarchate of Antioch emphasized the liturgical prolificacy especially of the Syrian Orthodox Church from its beginnings, something which is matched by the richness of the theological witness. This is true even for the very early East Syrian liturgy of the apostles Addai and Mari (used to this day in the Assyrian and Chaldean Churches) as it is for the Clementine Liturgy of

the Apostolic Consultations and above all for the Jerusalem Liturgy of James, the high appreciation of which runs through the entire history of the Syrian Orthodox Church.

Both in terms of texts and symbolic rites the Syrian Liturgy of James gives special expression to the very mystery of incarnation, even in its extra-anaphoric parts. This is done in a very emphatic manner e. g. in Mar Severos' responsorials and in Bar Salibi's prayer for the breaking of the bread. – The anaphora of James itself is a comprehensive witness to the mystery of salvation and its eucharistic manifestation and reflects the entire Trinitarian faith of the Church.

By way of conclusion the speaker acknowledged the liturgy of baptism as another focal point of Christological-soteriological and ecclesiological statements.

c) Ecclesologically vital for the continuation of the Consultation was the paper presented by *Father Kilmartin SJ*, professor at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, on "*Ecclesiological Implications of Classical Eucharist Prayers*" (5th Cons., pp. 85–98). Here, the often invoked ecclesiological notion of "diversity in unity" was being verified in a precise and exemplary way by means of those texts of the ancient Church which give evidence of the Trinitarian and Christological faith in its genuine execution and at the same time in the context of action of the Body of Christ. The most important of the various eucharistic prayers used in the different Churches date from the fourth to fifth centuries and show a form largely developed as early as in the third century (i. e. by Hippolytos), ultimately going back to prayer patterns of the time of the New Testament and even to the Jewish *Berakah* as a preliminary stage. Its basic structure already contains the *thanksgiving* for God's saving activity for the benefit of the chosen people and the *petition* for the completion of the salvation. These elements furnish the structural pre-conditions for the Trinitarian and Christological as well as the soteriologically defined thanksgiving of the Church, and likewise for the petition which, drawing on the Church's saving experience, extends to the whole of redeemed mankind.

The eucharistic activity invariably embraces the entire saving work of the Triune God and particularly the action of the Holy Spirit for the Church in its universality and time-transcending integrality, in which the local Church is given a sacramental share and thereby is *essentially linked with all the other local Churches celebrating the Eucharist*, forming an inner unity.

The speaker then took the special example of the individual elements of the anaphora to illustrate the various aspects of this unity: thanksgiving, sanctus, narrative of institution, anamnesis-offering-prayer, epiklesis and intercessions.

In spite of the variety of the texts, all ancient church traditions show a similar development in structure and in substance ranging from Hippolytos' Anaphora to the Apostolic Constitutions and the Antiochian and Alexandrian Anaphoras. The second part of the paper illustrated the eucharistic action under the leadership of bishops and presbyters and with the participation of deacons as well as all sectors of the community *as a mirror of the structure of the Church*, with each local Church being in turn the exact likeness of every other local Church and the image of the universal Church. Moreover, ordination rites are a particularly good expression of the link between the ministry and the action of the Triune God as well as its connection with the entire Apostolic succession. At the same time they witness the whole range of the threefold ministerial duties of Martyria (witness to the Gospel), Leitourgia (worship of God) and Diakonia

(mutual service of love). The Apostolic succession whose undivided character is shown (e. g. in the episcopal ordination prayer of Hippolytos) and enacted in every ordination thus also implies that every bishop beyond the link with his own local Church is called to *care for all local Churches and their unity*.

The third part of the paper tried to offer an approach to the understanding of the Petrine ministry of the Pope for the unity of the Church by way of eucharistic ecclesiology. When each Church is the exact likeness of every other local Church celebrating the Eucharist and the mirror of the universal Church this does not exclude, but rather demand that there be between the Churches a possibility of verifying ortho-Eucharist in the framework of ecclesial koinonia as well as in the vertical dimension of liturgical tradition and Apostolic succession. Such a special authenticity within the koinonia on the part of certain Apostolic local Churches which in case of doubt is in particular secured by the Roman Catholic Church and the koinonia with its bishop, is indeed being witnessed in that stage of the liturgically determined ecclesiology of koinonia of the ancient Church which precedes the development of the Imperial Church.

This approach, trying to interpret the papal ministry in terms of eucharistic ecclesiology, attracted great attention among participants and was also echoed, in the final Communiqué (The Vienna Dialogue, Booklet Nr. 1, p. 86). – Instead of talking about a “sacramental authority” of the Pope in relation of the universality of his office there was a preference already during the discussion for the expression “rooted in the sacramentality of the Church”.

d) Mons. Harnoncourt suggested by the very title of his brief, succinct paper on “*The Faith of the One Church in the Expression of Different Rites and Texts within the Christian Service*” (5th Cons., pp. 111–113) the ecumenical vision behind the choice of “liturgy” as a main theme for the Fifth Consultation: Liturgy is a fundamental expression of the faith of the Church; *taking precedence over dogmatic definitions* and theological reflection. This results from liturgy being an essentially dialogical process of the proclamation of revelation and God’s saving action on the one hand and human response of faith in his direct turning to God on the other hand.

The principle of “*lex orandi-lex credendi*” (law of praying-law of believing) can be historically verified. The substance of faith is formulated in baptismal and eucharistic prayers, before it is secured in dogmatic definitions. The liturgical activity reflects the “hierarchy of truths” which has its origin and goal in the “one truth” of the Triune God and his Salvation. This “Truth” itself is the essence especially of the celebration of the Eucharist and witnessed in eucharistic prayers.

But manifestation of the one mystery of salvation is always realized in the local Church. Thus, through their sacramental-liturgical acts all local Churches partake of the One Church. The elements which are common to all churches are easily recognizable in liturgy: praise of God, anamnesis of his saving deeds and epiclesis, the structural elements of lecture, gospel, prayer, hymns, symbolic acts. In the concrete form of liturgical tradition however, this is done in different texts and rites, which for all that thus realize the life of the One Church in a special way.

#### 4. Models of Future Unity

The second major topic of the Consultation was: “*What Future Unity Do We Envisage? Possible Models of Future Unity*”. Two short papers dealing with this subject could not fully bear out the peculiar significance of the issue did however point to areas of incipient convergence and took the edge off the transition to the third major topic of the Consultation, the issue of primacy.

a) Mons. Harnoncourt (5th Cons., pp. 120–123) continued to develop his ecclesiological concept of “unity in diversity”. Not only liturgy is through its history and nature evidence of the fact that the different ecclesial traditions are no contradiction to unity, but rather its multifarious mirror. The rightful diversity of traditions also extends to their dogmatic, theological and disciplinary, and naturally even more so to their ethnical and cultural aspects. This dogmatic and theological diversity arises from the *inexhaustibility of the revealed mystery* itself which can never be fully accessible in a single or ultimate dogmatic definition nor grasped by the mind. Thus dogmatic statements are invariably subject to the tension between apophatic and kataphatic theology and their different modes of expression and invariably stand in need of *dialectical completion* for their correct interpretation.

The complex diversity of ecclesial traditions is in the final analysis also a realization of the biblical *diversity of charismata*. This idea has also found fundamental formulation in the Consultations on the Church as well as in the Constitution on Liturgy and in the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council. – From among the models of unity discussed on the international level of ecumenism that of “reconciled diversity” might be taken as a point from where to go on but the impression must be rejected that “diversity” as such needs “reconciliation”.

b) The short paper read by the Coptic Orthodox priest *Tadros Malaty* was a very terse formulation of future unity as a “*Return to the Ancient Pre-Chalcedonian Church*” (5th Cons., pp. 116–118). At that time each Church undisputedly enjoyed its own tradition in keeping with Apostolic tradition. Future unity of the Church would have to be founded on complete unity of faith, thus inseparably linked with love. This was still hampered by historical psychological difficulties vis à vis the Roman Catholic Church as well as by unresolved questions of faith. Still to be clarified were the questions of the procession of the Holy Spirit, immaculate conception, indulgence and mixed marriages with non-Christians. The still ongoing practice of proselytism had to cease. This was a sign of love which cannot be separated from efforts for the unity of faith.

The ensuing discussion (especially Mar Gregorios) made it clear that it was not so much a matter of “returning” to previous times and to a previously practised Apostolic faith, but rather one of a consistent continuation and a development of Apostolic tradition into the future, with the criteria of the ancient Church providing a standard.

#### 5. Primacy and Petrine Office

It was with eager expectation that the papers of Metropolitan Mar Gregorios and Cardinal König dedicated to the third major topic of “*Special Problems of Primacy and*

*Petrine Office*” (5th Cons., pp. 126–135) were awaited. Would there be a rapprochement of standpoints this time round on questions where difficulties of mutual understanding had prevailed at the Fourth Consultation?

a) *Metropolitan Mar Gregorios* encapsulated the arguments of Catholic theology about papal primacy in three points: 1. derivation from the primacy of Peter; 2. confirmation by the Council of Nicaea (canon 6); 3. support of the Holy Spirit in allowing primacy to develop from the Lord’s institution to its historical form. His findings were negative in all three points. While Jesus meant Peter (and not only his faith) when he talked about “building the Church on Peter, the rock”, this word was to be seen in dialectic connection with the curse of Mt. 16,23 and was not aimed at any primacy of Peter. John 21, 15–17 could not be interpreted in the exclusive sense of a pastoral office of Peter, as the New Testament knows other “pastors” too. In the Acts of the Apostles there was no evidence of a pre-eminence of Peter over other apostles; the decision of the Council of the Apostles is taken by the “Apostles and presbyters” (15, 22). There existed no succession to individual apostles as bishops of a certain local Church. Nor was thinking to that effect on the part of the Church of Antioch with any foundation whatsoever. What exists is a succession to the college of apostles of the episcopacy as a whole. Later prerogatives of metropolitans and patriarchs are not the result of any apostolic institution or special holiness of a city, but rather the exclusive outcome of the civic importance of that city. Canon 6 of Nicaea can only be understood in this manner regarding the privileges mentioned there.

The promised support of the Holy Spirit pertained to the Church as a whole and was again and again revealed in its fundamental conciliarity (such as could be felt in the constructive discussions of the Fifth Consultation), but could not be related in any special sense to the historical development of papal primacy. A common ecclesiology for the One Church of the future could only be developed along the following guidelines: Any authority within the Church must be exercised on a conciliar or collegial basis. It must be at the same time decentralized and coordinated. The old privileges of patriarchs apply to certain ecclesiastical regions, but not beyond. Since the Churches today are all spread on a more or less universal scale, co-ordination of different Churches in the same region is necessary. Any future universal council was not to be conceived under the guidance of a certain bishop, but had to choose a steering committee and continue its work in a permanent synod.

Against this conception of a future universal council which is rather removed from the history of the ecumenical councils of the ancient church, however, some from the other Oriental Orthodox Churches too raised objections.

b) *Cardinal König* reminded in his paper (5th Cons., pp. 136–140) that the principle of “unity in the diversity of traditions” found its expression both in ‘Lumen Gentium’ as well as in the recent papal documents (e. g. *Euntes in mundum*, on the occasion of the celebration of the millennium of the Russian Church, No. 10). The always existing tension between unity and diversity could not be resolved in favour of uniformity, now less than ever given the worldwide relations of the Churches and present-day social development.

With regard to primacy it might be said in accordance with the Communiqué of the Fourth Consultation, that “the future exercise of such an office is not identical with the

present practice which has developed without contact with the Oriental traditions” (Vienna Dialogue, Booklet Nr. 1 p. 86).

However, development of the present form occurred against the background of a conception of ecclesial authority which distinguished between “authority of jurisdiction” and “authority of ordination”. The Eastern Churches never knew this dichotomy which was overcome by Vatican II in respect to the ministry of bishops. The Pope is again understood as bishop among bishops and in his role within the college of bishops. On the other hand there is a pre-eminence in the ancient Church of metropolitans and patriarchs within certain regions. Can this point to common preconditions for any Roman primacy?

The 34th canon of the “Apostolic canons” gives hints to a correct understanding: “The bishops of every nation should accept that one among them is the first one (prótos) and consider him as head . . .” About him might be said that the other bishops do not undertake “anything important” without his agreement, irrespective of their authority in all other matters within their dioceses. But the prótos too ought not to act without the consent of the others in matters pertaining to his authority in a similar way, canon 6 of Nicaea with its description of patriarchal competences in Egypt and those of metropolitans around Antioch ties the authority of these “prótoi” into conciliar and collegial processes. The prerogatives of these “prótoi” (called “exousia”) as against other bishops are obviously established *for the sake of unity* and especially of the *preservation of the unity of faith*.

Catholic argumentation in favour of papal primacy is not limited to the reasons which may be drawn from the canons quoted; these canons, however, refer to analogies. The special role of the bishop of Rome, as early as in the ancient Church, cannot be separated from the martyrdom and the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul as is indeed shown by early historical documents. This is the basis of the *spiritual power* of the bishop of Rome who appears as the visible sign of unity of the universal Church. Future primacy and patriarchal rights will be more clearly tied into conciliar processes allowing for the recognition of both church unity and diversity of local traditions.

The unresolvable interrelatedness of primacy and conciliarity as illustrated by the idea of a “prótos” in the ancient Church was received with gratitude by the participants of the Consultation. Nonetheless, the idea of a common “head” of the universal Church met with apparently still little Oriental Orthodox sympathy, given the strictly regional scope of Oriental patriarchal rights.

## 6. Theological and Practical Implications

Two short papers by Metropolitan Mar Gregorios and Bishop Krikorian closed the Consultation. They were dedicated to considerations as to in which perspective and with what topics the series of consultations ought to be continued and which subjects had priority for future inter-Church relations.

a) *Metropolitan Mar Gregorios* (5th Cons., pp. 143–145) had prepared a catalogue of issues which covered the whole range of independent developments of the individual traditions, in particular those of the Catholic Church as against the Oriental Orthodox Churches: phenomena of diversity, ranging from lists of saints (including criteria of

holiness and canonization), to the teaching authority of the councils from Chalcedon to Vatican II and the contents of their teaching, liturgical and disciplinary differences and practical behaviour of the Catholic Church towards the Oriental Orthodox Church during the past centuries (unitarism, "proselytism"). While this enumeration might be regarded as a useful demonstration of the development of the traditions and the richness of the concept of tradition as such, it is no list of individual items to be each treated in terms of their need of convergence or consensus.

b) More closely related to the ideas of the Consultation were *Bishop Krikorian's* suggestions (5th Cons., pp. 142) who felt that future efforts should focus to an even greater extent on theological criteria and those of the history of tradition, under what conditions and within which limitations the different character of the traditions might fit into a future church unity after all. – To what an extent was there a need for e. g. previous convergence or consensus on the issue of primacy? Could the problem and reality of a universal ministry of unity of the Pope be more easily settled within the very framework of a *koinonia* itself formed along conciliar lines (insofar as the Oriental Orthodox Churches would in a first step consider the Catholic perception of this point as a tolerable aspect of the independent tradition of the Roman Catholic Church regarding the view and form of ecclesial conciliarity)?

The commentator thinks this to be worth considering. Because, if the decision of Vatican II that patriarchal rights according to the canons of the first Ecumenical Councils are to be preserved (Decree on the Oriental Churches No. 9), is implemented in its full sense, this must also hold for the separate traditions of patriarchates in their view of conciliar and primatial church structures.

For these, as early as at Ephesus 431 and even more so at the councils from Chalcedon (451) to Nicaea II (787) were given different emphases in the thinking of the patriarchs and other council fathers of the East than by the Roman legates and the Pope himself, something which did not prevent ecclesial *koinonia* or the convocation of common councils at the time.

c) Thus the different conceptions of primatial church structure – a locally limited patriarchal one in the Oriental Orthodox Churches and universally designed one of the bishop of Rome – were both included in their own particular theological pattern of reflection in the final Communiqué as forms of two different ecclesial traditions. As ways towards their harmonization the following aspects should be studied more thoroughly (according to the Communiqué, Vienna Dialogue, Booklet Nr. 1 p. 101): the question of how church authority is rooted in the sacramentality of the Church, that of personal and synodal authority above the level of the local episcopal church, and this in the light of the respective liturgical, canonical and pastoral ecclesial tradition.

Concrete proposals emerging from the Fifth Vienna Consultation are, as stipulated in the Communiqué, the formation of a Standing Committee of participants from the various Churches with the task to co-ordinate and render more efficient the follow-up of the Consultation's work and suggestions addressed to church leaders to set up bilateral commissions for dialogue, first as study commissions, at a later stage as bodies of church hierarchy representation such as had been achieved in the Coptic Orthodox – Roman Catholic Commission and the confirmation by the hierarchy of dialogue results regarding a first important and decisive step.

ADDRESS OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE FEDERAL PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA DR. KURT WALDHEIM AT THE RECEPTION  
GIVEN FOR THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE FIFTH VIENNA CONSULTATION  
ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th, 1988

Dear Mr. President of the Foundation PRO ORIENTE,

Your Eminences,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants in the Vienna Meeting of Theologians.

It gives me great pleasure to extend a cordial welcome on behalf of the Republic of Austria to the participants in the historic meeting between theologians from the non-Chalcedonian Churches and from the Roman Catholic Church. An historic event indeed, as it is the first attempt at a theological dialogue since the separation of these Churches 1500 years ago at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

The desire for a reunification of divided Christendom, which is at the centre of the Ecumenical Movement, has gained strength in the course of this century. Especially in the last few decades, efforts in this direction have been pursued with increasing seriousness.

The first step towards a new understanding in order to shoulder this task needs great patience, much strength of faith, good will and courage. But it also requires a scholarly dialogue on what separates the Churches.

The path which the Ecumenical Foundation PRO ORIENTE has mapped out and followed is to my mind at the same time the one proposed by our Religion and a practical one: to hold scholarly discussions on the different viewpoints in brotherly love, and thereby to distinguish between time-encrusted historical misunderstandings of a theological or semantic nature and real differences in doctrine. The fact that in this context the discussions between the Roman Catholic Church and some of the Ancient Oriental Churches give rise to very great hopes, are an event of distinctive significance and set an example for the dialogue with other Churches has been due among others to His Eminence the Most Reverend Archbishop Emeritus of Vienna, Francis Cardinal König. I know that his successor to the Vienna see, Hans Hermann Cardinal Groër is inspired by the same spirit.

Allow me two questions: Might the human atmosphere of this old Imperial Residence and Capital, Vienna, offer a special opportunity for this dialogue on account of its history? Can one speak of an "Ecumenical Spirit of Vienna"? When I as the Federal President of the Republic of Austria ask these questions in the Imperial Palace of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the remembrance of the last decades of that old supranational Empire comes to mind vividly: Members of nearly all recognized denominations, indeed religions, found ways in their rites and liturgies to pray for the Monarch, for the people and the Fatherland under the Two-Headed Eagle. The Roman Catholic military chaplain, his Protestant colleague, the Eastern Orthodox priest, the Jewish field rabbi, and for the Muslims among the soldiers of the old army, the field imam symbolized that Austrian spirit of brotherhood and comradeship, of tolerance but also of unity in the service of an idea – in this case the idea of the State. This is the spirit which we need so urgently today in Austria as well as in the world community.

Pope John XXIII, to whom we owe the great momentum towards and the new enthusiasms for Ecumenism, provided step-by-step impulses which were intended to lead towards the ultimate unity of Una Sancta, a policy which his successors on St. Peter's See continued and continue to pursue with great energy.

By again welcoming you cordially to the Imperial Palace, I confirm my personal interest and my sympathetic support as Federal President for the progress of your work. I believe I am also entitled to express the best wishes of the Austrian Federal Government and of the people of Austria for your efforts, since the work of PRO ORIENTE represents a contribution to peace among religious communities and thus to general peace in the world.

So far as it is within my abilities and powers, let me also assure you and your aims of the continuing support of the Federal President in the future.