



مجلس المشرق للكنائس
The Middle East Council of Churches

The Ninth General Assembly

“So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us”

26-30 November 2007

Paphos-Cyprus

Final Statement

The Ninth General Assembly of the Middle East Council of Churches convened in Paphos-Cyprus during the period 26-30 November, 2007 with the theme ““So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us” (2 Cor 5:20).

Present in this Assembly were the four presidents of the Council: H.H. Pope Shenouda III and their Eminences Archbishop Dorotheos, Metropolitan Yuhanna Kolta and Rev. Dr. Safwat el Bayadi, and the Council’s General Secretary Guirguis Ibrahim Saleh. Present also were delegations representing the member churches: The Orthodox, the Oriental Orthodox, the Evangelical and the Catholic. In addition a number of the revered heads of churches in the Middle East participated in this Assembly: The Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostomos II, Patriarch Ignatios Zacca I Iwas, Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, Patriarch Gregorios III Lahham, Patriarch Antonios Naguib, Patriarch Ignatios Boutros VIII Abd el Ahad, Rev. Dr. Salim Sahiouny, Bishop Munib Younan, and Bishop Munir Hanna Anis. Present also were representatives from the Ecumenical Councils in the World and representatives of some ecumenical agencies.

The opening session was attended by the Ambassadors of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Lebanese Republic and the Syrian Republic.

A word of appreciation and thanks was first addressed to the Orthodox Church of Cyprus for receiving the Assembly and following up all its works through the presence of its Archbishop, then the participants studied and discussed during four days the General Secretary’s report and learned about the various activities and services carried out by the churches through the Council’s divisions, departments and programs and its offices in Beirut, Cairo, Jerusalem, Amman, Damascus, Limassol, Baghdad and the Gulf. The participants gave their comments and expressed their vision for the coming period and emphasized the necessity to activate the ecumenical partnership in the theological, studies, prayers and services’ dialogue in compliance with the Council’s aims in animating the work towards the unity of the church and its witness in the Middle East and the World. They also emphasized the importance of the dialogue, cooperation and communication with all the Muslims in order to build a more peaceful and just world.

The participants also discussed ways for the consolidation of the Christians in the Middle East and strengthening their presence for its developments, advancement and formation of its civilizations.

And in order to activate the Council's work and make it more useful and of greater impact, the General Assembly put forward the question of the administrative structure of the Council for review and up-dating in order for the Council's work to achieve its aim.

The issues in the Countries of the Middle East were present in the prayers, reports and discussions. The General Assembly expressed its deep sorrow for the oppression and injustice with which the region's population is afflicted, of wars and occupation, of destruction and death, of capacity and suppression. The General Assembly was informed about what befalls the Christians in Iraq, as they are forced to emigrate, their churches are assaulted and their clergy are killed.

As people of hope, the participants addressed a message to the leaders' meeting in Anapolis asking for the realization of the comprehensive and just peace in their region and that the legitimate rights be returned to their owners.

The Assembly looked forward to the day when people in the Middle East are liberated from the occupation and the injustice in Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan and Cyprus, and when the prisoners are set free, then the human being regains his dignity and rights as he was created at the image of God. The participants addressed their Palestinian, Iraqi and Lebanese brothers calling on them to be united and to cease being apart and killing each other so that love fills back their hearts and their unity gets stronger, the unity that accepts the other will all his differences and its straightened through the honest and free dialogue.

For all that, the General Assembly called on the churches in the World to stand by her in supporting her requests in all the international circles and before their governments.

Finally, the General Assembly elected H.H. Pope Shenouda III an Honorary President to the Council, so we are also elected the Metropolitan Yuhanna Kolta and the Archbishop Theorotheos.

The four presidents to the Council were also elected and they are: H.H. Catholicos Aram I, H.B. Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III, Rev. Dr. Safwat El Bayadi, H.E. Archbishop Boulos Matar.

The members of the Executive Committee were also elected. And there was a renewal for the General Secretary Mr. Guirgis Saleh for another term of 4-years.

Paphos 30/11/2007