

CONTRIBUTION OF METROPOLITAN KALLISTOS OF DIOKLEIA TO THE FINAL PLENARY SESSION OF THE 2008 LAMBETH CONFERENCE

Let me begin with the words of St Paul that were quoted by the Ecumenical Patriarch, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, in his message to this Lambeth Conference:

If one member (of the Body) suffers, all the other members suffer with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. I.Cor 12:26.

In precisely the spirit of the Apostle's words, I – as a member of the Orthodox Church - wish to say to you, as members of the Anglican Communion: 'What affects one affects all' (Reflections, para 72). Your joys and sorrows are our joys and sorrows.

And not only that; I wish to say also: 'Your questions are our questions also', or, if they are not yet at this moment our questions, they will be such in the future. (NB double headed eagle : not ostrich)

This means that I, as an Orthodox at the 14th Lambeth Conference, have been following your discussions not as an outsider but with the keen hope that your reflections will show me also as an Orthodox the path that I should be following. So, I have felt repeatedly at this Conference: 'I need you in order to be myself'.

When I return to my Orthodox people, I shall probably be asked two questions in particular:

1. Did the Bishops at Canterbury clearly proclaim Jesus Christ as the one and only Saviour of the whole world?
2. Did the Bishops at Canterbury clearly uphold the Christian teaching concerning marriage as a union between one man and one woman? Did they affirm that marriage is the proper place for sexual intimacy? Did they proclaim the sanctity of the family?

The importance of the first question will be evident to all of us living as we do in an age of syncretism and relativity. And I think that I can answer '**Yes**, they did'. (Reflections, para 107). 'Jesus Christ is the Word of God, the true light that enlightens all, incarnate in human form, from before time and forever'. I am glad that you say 'enlightens all': as Justin Martyr said, there are seeds of the logos in every human heart. But I am glad also that you affirm also the uniqueness of the Incarnation.

As to the second question, I am still hesitant about my answer: perhaps, by the end of this plenary session I shall be more confident. I wonder.

In the Reflections you speak positively about your 'particular concern for children and young people' (Reflections, para 27); you say 'Anglicans affirm the place and goal of healthy family life for all' (Reflections para 47).

But where is there a firm and plain affirmation of Christian marriage? Has this Conference unambiguously reaffirmed the moral authority of the Lambeth 1998 Resolution in its entirety?

The answer to these questions will have a direct and decisive effect on our future ecumenical dialogue

As an Orthodox, I have no wish whatever to see the Anglican Communion disintegrate. May the Lord Jesus keep you in unity? But does not **truth** matter more than outward unity?

Let me end, as I began, with St Paul – with words from today’s Epistle in the Lectionary of the Orthodox Church:

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our lord Jesus Christ. Romans 15: 5.

‘In harmony with one another’: that is my hope and prayer.