

Holy Wisdom

Peace: Showing that Others Matter!

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EDITOR'S NOTE: It is necessary through the collaboration of NGOs to raise awareness among communities as we promote peace. If you will, the need for community consciousness is a way we can connect parties and others. It is important at this time that all parties begin to realize that they are a part of a larger picture, that they are in it together and they have common concerns. If there is a conflict all parties have contributed to the conflict and they have the power to come together to develop a non-violent intervention to result into a resolution. It is time for us as people to acknowledge that there is something more that exceed our own individual positions and needs. The United Nations, religious institutions and NGO can be an avenue to promote community consciousness to encourage global consciousness, clear and realistic decisions as they promote non-violent solutions to conflicts!

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Our Work at the United Nations

Zachary Yesko – First Day

04 October 2013 –

Today is a milestone day in my life, it is the day I received my United Nations security clearance to represent the Syrian Orthodox Church in America. I arrived in the UNITAR building, across 1st street from the actual UN Headquarters. It was a sight to see, as the individuals around me were from places all over the globe. In the elevator, a translator from Cuba directed me on where to go to fill out the necessary paperwork to receive my pass. She gave me her information in case I would ever need help during my tenure there. Right away, I felt welcomed by the various representatives throughout the complex. I then filled out the forms in the office of the Department of Public Information and Non-Governmental Organizations. After, they led me downstairs to get my photograph taken for my identification card. In that office, there was energy and excitement from those waiting to receive their passes. I then got my picture taken and my identification card was printed. Upon first glance at the card, I realized that the camera truly does add ten pounds. But it does not matter, the card is a gateway to see; firsthand, how global events are being handled. It is truly an honor and a phenomenal opportunity that I will never forget until the day I die, and I am eternally grateful to Father Anthony DeLuca for giving me this chance to represent the Syrian Orthodox Church in America.

- Zachary Yesko, United Nations Youth Representative

(Editor's note; date of entry of Z.Y. was October 4, which is Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the peacemaker; "Lord Make me an instrument of Thy peace...." This was not planned. Very late Monday night, we knew we needed a new representative; paper work just flew and Z.Y. was able to meet the Friday deadline early that morning.)

Disaster Resilience and Disability: Ensuring Equality and Inclusion

10 October 2013 –

UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction Margareta Wahlström along with a panel of civil and government representative addressed an audience on disaster risk and reduction, with a focus on the roles of those with disabilities.

Communities and nations around the globe want to ensure the safety of their citizens when preparing for a disaster, natural, or man-made. Intricate evacuation plans are installed for ordinary citizens. However, these plans are not all-inclusive. Disabled individuals have been hung out to dry upon evacuation, making rescue efforts especially difficult.

In 2015, a rectified version of the "Hyogo Framework for Action," will be sure to include persons with disabilities, unlike the original 10-year plan established in 2005. Obviously, most natural disasters are unavoidable, so response to them is as important, if not more important, than planning and preparation. Each disaster, natural or man-made can teach governments, organizations, and individuals how to better preparation and response.

-Zachary Yesko, UN Youth Representative

Valerie Amos on the situation in Syria

25 October 2013 –

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, discussed how the United Nations Security Council must act in order to stop the current violence in Syria.

Numerous humanitarian efforts have failed because of the ever-worsening violence. This past week, the UN attempted to send a convoy into the action to bring medical help to those in need, but failed because drivers were too afraid to proceed into areas experiencing the most fighting.

In regards to stopping the chaos, Amos stated “Without real and sustained pressure from this [security] council on the government of Syria and the opposition groups on the ground, it will be impossible to make further progress.”

This situation appears that it will not be solved from inside Syria anytime soon. However, there is major international debate whether or not to intervene in their domestic affairs, and we can only hope this conflict can be resolved as peacefully and as soon as possible.

- Zachary Yesko, United Nations Youth Representative

Open forum discussing modern biology

1 November 2013 – In association with the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) had an open forum discussing modern biology earlier today. The discussion, led by Ms. Laurie Garrett, a senior fellow for global health at CFR, for her expertise in global health systems, epidemics, and bioterrorism was titled “Biology's Brave New World: Looking Toward Threats to Global Health.” Executive Director of the World Health Organization office at the UN, Dr. Jacob Kumaresan was in attendance to answer questions as well.

The main focus of today's talk was the concept of new technology being designed to save lives, but can be used to take lives if possessed by the wrong hands. This concept is referred to as DURC, or dual use research concern. For example, a strain of the bird flu in a laboratory in use as a potential vaccine could be slightly genetically altered to form a weapon if desired. As a result, many pharmaceutical companies will not publish their findings when discovering a new cure or vaccine.

This should be a scary thought for readers, especially when security in laboratories is subpar. In the past few years in the United States, there have been hundreds of individuals infected with a bacteria or virus developed in a laboratory. Some of those individuals are laboratory workers, others live or work in the immediate area. In 2005, two years after the global SARS scare, there was another outbreak in China. Their laboratories have few regulations, and one of them suffered an accident, releasing the disease into the air.

Science, especially biology has grown exponentially over the past decades. There is currently a contest for high schoolers to create their own, complex, genetically unique, organism, in a laboratory. This has positives and negatives, because it seems as though some of life's unsolved mysteries can be solved using science. However, if good science is used by bad people, chaos can ensue. Do the dangers of science and technology outweigh the potential benefits?

- Zachary Yesko, United Nations Youth Representative (attended on site)

[R.D. Laing Laing in the 21st Century. A Weekend Symposium addressing R.D. Laing's legacy and contemporary relevance in commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of his death. \(October 25-27, 2013, Wagner College\)](#)

REFLECTIONS ON THE SYMPOSIUM: IMMORTALITY

In the brochure, the subtitle of the Symposium mentions the 25th Anniversary of his death. St. Paul, when having difficulties in getting his message across to some city in the ancient world, made use of a diversionary tactic. He brought up the subject of the immortality of the soul which he knew would get the Pharisees and Sadducees going as they differed violently on immortality. It is not my intention to cause disruption.

But during this Symposium I have been wondering why my associations have gone back to Plato where in the *Phaedo*, he tries to establish the immortality of the soul. He argues that we are composed of body and soul; the body is perceptible and thus composed of parts and accordingly subject to dissolution, destruction and death. The soul, on the other hand, is not perceptible but is grasped by thought; it is not composed of parts and thus is exempt from dissolution, destruction and death. The argument did not convince me a half century ago and neither today.

This undercurrent of mortality-immortality and reductionism-teleology, I believe, has run through all the presentations but most dramatically in the presentation of the medical doctor who by training knows the body best- the physical and perceptible - which body through sickness and time, corrupts and dies. Here was one of the most valiant efforts in disallowing the mind or soul to be touched by the material even by the slightest amount of medication. (In my first twenty years of practice- 60's-70's, I was able to do the same). As if by such drug introduction, the mind would not be preserved in its entirety as spiritual and accordingly would be subject to dissolution and death. This evoked the most dramatic response where a participant cried out, "Please role play with me."

I propose that we consider that if we found our thinking, cognition, consciousness and spirituality could be reduced to neurology, biochemistry, molecules and atoms, the story is not over and this reductionism is not the end.

Our mind is able to reflect over this reductionism and in so doing has transcended the reduction. This reflective process in return might be able to be reduced to a material process. But this is an ongoing dialectic because again the mind is able to reflect over and consider the latest reduction and in so doing has transcended it again. Now this process of reduction and reflection leads to an infinite series. But in looking at the series, we see a forward movement of ever increasing complexification, direction, purpose. The reductionism allows for an emerging teleology which transcends. Mind is always in the vanguard and moves in an ongoing dialectic.

As the only one here that is required to work on Sunday - I just came back from an inter-faith service with students and parents- I must say, " Be not afraid, I go before you always."

Anthony DeLuca, Ph.D., Psy.D..

NGO/DPI Executive Committee to offer counsel on media/PR strategy

Dr. A.M. Riccitelli has attended several meetings (October 4, 11, 18) organized by members of the NGO/DPI Executive Committee to offer counsel on media/PR strategy. The purpose of these meetings has been to decide the best way to raise the profile of DPI-only affiliated NGOs and their contribution to the work of the United Nations. Most UN Missions are familiar with ECOSOC NGOs, but the work of DPI affiliated NGOs is less well known to many UN Missions. Our statement of purpose includes: NGOs are considered the "third pillar" of the UN after the Security Council and General Assembly; they play a critical role to spread the messages of the UN across the globe and they provide feedback to the UN from Civil Society; in fact, NGOs are referenced in UN resolutions including the Millenium Declaration, RIO + 20, the Post 15 Millenium Forum and serve as catalysts for global debate on these issues.

Month of September 2013

On September 6, 2013, Dr. A.M. Riccitelli attended the *United Nations High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace*. Among the speakers were H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremic, President of the General Assembly, H. E. Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, and His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia. His Holiness reminded all present that peace is the privilege of a small minority, that the greater part of the planet is in conflict. He called for peace to all, especially for those who have no peace. He continued that peace is an absence of war but includes the presence of spiritual qualities such as respect for others. This can only happen if ALL churches cooperate fully in peace and reconciliation.

Month of October 2013

Dr. A.M. Riccitelli has attended several meetings (**October 4, 11, 18**) organized by members of the NGO/DPI Executive Committee to offer counsel on media/PR strategy. The purpose of these meetings has been to decide the best way to raise the profile of DPI-only affiliated NGOs and their contribution to the work of the United Nations. Most UN Missions are familiar with ECOSOC NGOs, but the work of DPI affiliated NGOs is less well known to many UN Missions. Our statement of purpose includes: **NGOs are considered the "third pillar" of the UN after the Security Council and General Assembly; they play a critical role to spread the messages of the UN across the globe and they provide feedback to the UN from Civil Society; in fact, NGOs are referenced in UN resolutions including the Millenium Declaration, RIO + 20, the Post 15 Millenium Forum and serve as catalysts for global debate on these issues.**

Month of November 2013

On November 1, Dr. A.M. Riccitelli and SOCA youth delegate Zachary Yesko attended a discussion forum organized by United Nations Academic Impact in association with the Council on Foreign Relations. Moderated by UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal with comments offered by Dr. Jacob Kumaresan, Executive Director, WHO Office, New York. Ms. Laurie Garrett, for the last decade, a Senior Fellow for Global Health at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, was speaker. She is the best-selling author of: *The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance* (1996) and *Betrayal of Trust: The Collapse of Global Public Health* (2000). The forum was webcast live on: webtv.un.org

Participants included students from Pomona, Ca, Monmouth, NJ, as well as South Korea and Indonesia.

November 5, Dr. A.M. Riccitelli attended a meeting with members of UN/NGO/DPI executive committee to discuss the final draft of a letter which will be brought to UN Missions. The letter discusses the elimination of the position of Chief, NGO Relations and the efforts of the 1300 DPI affiliated NGOs all over the world to increase awareness, through their strong outreach and communications efforts, of the work of the UN around the world. The letter seeks the supports of UN Missions in recognizing the work of the 1300 DPI affiliated NGOS and in reinstating the position of Chief, UN Relations.

On November 6, there was a Town Hall Meeting in the Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium at the UN to discuss DPI/NGO Conference Planning for 2014, when the annual conference will return to UN Headquarters. The meeting included discussions on establishing the Conference theme, establishing the Conference Planning Committee, and nominating the Conference Chairs. The last meeting to be held at UN Headquarters in New York was in 2007. The topic was climate change and the conference was chaired by Richard Jordan.

Inside Look at Major UN Actions & Events

APRM@10: Perspectives on Transformative Governance and the African Agenda 2063 – A Dialogue with the Diaspora, NGOs, Women, Youth and Academia



DPI  **NGO**
Working Together: Making A Difference

High-Level Session | APRM@10: Perspectives on Transformative Governance and the African Agenda 2063 – A Dialogue with the Diaspora, NGOs, Women, Youth and Academia

Thursday, 24 October 2013
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
ECOSOC Chamber, E. 46th Street & 1st Avenue
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Background Information

This high-level session has been organised by the United Nations (UN) Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), in collaboration with the Department of Public Information (DPI), the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union (AU) to the United Nations, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Secretariat, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordinating Agency.

It marks the NEPAD Week and celebrates the 10th anniversary of the APRM, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of the African Unity (OAU)/African Union (AU). Further, the year 2013 marks ten years since the establishment of the OSAA, whose mission is to enhance international support for Africa's development and peace through its advocacy and analytical work. The office also assists the UN Secretary-General in improving coherence and coordination of the UN system support to Africa, and facilitates inter-governmental deliberations on Africa at the global level, particularly for NEPAD.

Featuring members of the African Peer Review (APR) Panel of Eminent Persons, the session will provide an opportunity for leaders from the African Diaspora, representatives from non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations, including youth and women's groups, as well as academia and the media, to discuss the APRM's achievements, best practices, and challenges over the last 10 years. The session will explore future prospects for enhancing the APRM's contributions to political and economic integration, equitable growth, and inclusive sustainable development that aim to ensure a peaceful and harmonious future in the African continent. The overarching objective of the session is to mobilize all stakeholders and recognise the perspectives and potential contributions of all groups in supporting the implementation of the APRM as a mechanism for advancing the transformative governance principles of the African Agenda 2063.

¹ The Organization of the African Unity (OAU), first established in 1963, is now the current-day African Union (AU).

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Syria Meets Deadline on Chemical Weapons

The international body overseeing the disarmament of Syria's chemical weapons says the Assad government has met the deadline for submitting a declaration of its facilities (LAT) and the plan to destroy its arsenal. Details were not available for the plan, which the Hague-based Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons must now consider in its executive council. Western states are likely to scrutinize the plan since their intelligence found forty-five chemical weapons sites (Economist) and Syria's government has identified only twenty-three. Inspectors have been in the country since October 1 and have overseen destruction of bombs, unarmed warheads, and mixing machines. But the destruction of the chemicals themselves is to be more complicated.

Humanitarian Briefing on Syria

Friday morning (25 October) Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos will brief the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Syria, to be followed by closed consultations. While not confirmed, it is possible that some non-Council members may request to participate in the briefing under rule 37 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Council. It seems that a press statement is a possible outcome, although this was not confirmed at press time.

There has been momentum for a humanitarian briefing in order to monitor whether there has been progress in gaining greater humanitarian access in Syria since the Council adopted its 2 October presidential statement on the issue (S/PRST/2013/15). However, the need for such a briefing grew more urgent amid increasingly dire reports regarding the siege of Moadamiyeh in the outskirts of Damascus.

In a press release on Saturday (19 October), Amos said that OCHA had been denied access to Moadamiyeh for months, and while 3,000 citizens had been evacuated, an equal number remained trapped amidst continued shelling and fighting. While Amos's public remarks did not directly blame Syria for siege conditions around Moadamiyeh, media reports indicate that government troops have blocked food, medicine and supplies from entering the town for months with residents reporting that such conditions have lasted a year. Amos urged an "immediate pause in hostilities" to evacuate the remaining citizens. Amos also noted that thousands of civilians remained similarly trapped in other locations across Syria such as Nubil, Zahra, old Aleppo town, old Homs town and Hassakeh—indicating civilians under siege in both rebel and government controlled areas.

The need for a briefing was raised by the UK this morning (23 October) and there was no resistance to the proposal. Council members will likely be interested in having more clarity from Amos tomorrow on her plans to implement the 2 October presidential statement. The presidential statement urged all parties, in particular the government, to facilitate unhindered humanitarian access and paid particular attention to access for medical personnel and supplies amid reports that the government had deliberately denied access to medical care. The statement further urged the government to take immediate steps to lift its bureaucratic impediments and approve NGOs to undertake relief activities, allow additional humanitarian hubs, expedite predictable procedures to grant visas to humanitarian personnel as well as permits for convoys, and allow goods and equipment needed for humanitarian operations to be imported.

Council members will be keen to have an assessment from Amos on OCHA's dialogue with the government following the adoption of the presidential statement and whether there has been any

measurable improvement in humanitarian access in the interim. There have been indications that the government has not cooperated fully with OCHA in spite of the Council's unanimous call for substantial, concrete and quantifiable steps to increase humanitarian access in Syria. Many Council members have pointed out that this apparent lack of robust cooperation stands in stark contrast to the government's compliance with resolution 2118 on chemical weapons. Some Council members have attributed this to the government's view that a presidential statement does not have the same binding weight as a resolution under international law. In addition, the government appears to be under no particular duress to change what they view as already compliant behavior vis-à-vis humanitarian issues. While Council members are pleased with Syria's compliance with resolution 2118, there remains considerable consternation that the chemical weapons track seems to have distracted international attention away from the larger conflict, including the disastrous humanitarian situation.

The Council has already had five humanitarian briefings on Syria in 2013. Three briefings were in consultations on 18 January, 27 February and 20 June, while two others were public briefings on 18 April and 16 July. Council members are cognizant of the fact that, humanitarian access aside, Amos has in the past strongly argued that there is no humanitarian solution to the Syrian crisis and what is needed is a political solution to halt the increasing militarisation of the conflict. It is unclear whether the unconfirmed Geneva II peace talks, provisionally slated for late November, will be able to deliver such a political solution.

Source: <http://www.whatsinblue.org/2013/10/humanitarian-briefing-on-syria-1.php>

UN Rapporteur Condemns Prison Overcrowding



UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Juan Mendez

October 23, 2013

A senior UN official has said that overcrowding in prison amounts to ill treatment or torture.

In a report issued in New York on October 22, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Juan Mendez estimated there are 10 million prisoners worldwide and that this population is "placing an enormous financial burden on states."

He added that UN standards on the treatment of prisoners were adopted more than half a century ago and no longer fully comply with international human rights law.

Mendez said the standards should also be extended to apply to mental institutions and police stations.

Mendez also urged the United States to improve prison conditions for Albert Woodfox, a former Black Panther member who was convicted of killing a Louisiana prison guard.

Woodfox has been held in solitary confinement for more than four decades.

Source: <http://www.rferl.org/content/un-mendez-prison-rights/25145087.html>

OCP Secretary Meets Patriarch Abune Mathias of Ethiopia

Addis Ababa: With the blessings of Rt Rev Chorbishop Kyrikose Thottupuram of Chicago (OCP Chancellor) George Alexander (OCP Secretary) paid a special visit to His Holiness Patriarch Abune Mathias of Ethiopia.

Abune Mathias is the Sixth Patriarch and Catholicos of Ethiopia, Archbishop of Axum and Ichege of the See of Saint Taklehaimanot who leads more than 45 million Ethiopian Orthodox Christians worldwide.

Archbishop Abune Thimotios and Fr Dr Jossi Jacob were present for the occasion. Abune Thimotios introduced George Alexander and details of Orthodoxy Cognate PAGE Society. Patriarch welcomed the activities of the Society and showered his blessings for the very unique initiative.

A proposal on behalf of the OCP Secretariat an official request was submitted to the Patriarch requesting to organize a second Addis Ababa Conference. The request also contained several areas that require urgent attention with regard to the unity of Oriental Orthodox Churches.

This special meeting was arranged between the Patriarch and Secretary by the kind initiative of Abune Thimoteos before the start of the Holy Synod session of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

<http://marthoman.tv/?p=11486>

George C. Thomas

"Get involved..." the UN Secretary-General tells students in speech at Corvinus University

On 8 October 2013, in a speech at Budapest's Corvinus University, a UNAI member, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told students and young people that they lived in a global village, and were not just citizens of Hungary, but also citizens of the world. "Get involved. Turn your passion into compassion for our world. Be a global citizen. Help us foster peace among people ... and harmony with our planet," he urged.

The Secretary-General was at Corvinus University to receive an honorary doctorate. Accepting the honour on behalf of all United Nations staff working for peace, development and human rights around the world, the Secretary-General recalled that in 1956, at the time of a popular uprising in Hungary, on behalf of his school, he had sent a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General at the time – Dag

Hammarskjöld. The letter appealed to him to support the brave people of Hungary. Exactly 50 years later, when Ban Ki-moon was elected United Nations Secretary-General, the Government of Hungary recognized his effort by designating him a “Hungarian Hero of Freedom,” he recalled.

“It is a humble reminder to me that the struggle for human rights is constant everywhere – and all of us have an obligation to speak up for a better world,” he said.



The Secretary-General expressed satisfaction at the progress made during the recent session of the General Assembly on a number of issues and at the decision by the Security Council on Syria, but emphasized that the world needed to act on longer-term challenges. “None is more critical than sustainable development -- promoting prosperity and social justice while protecting the environment,” he said.

The Secretary-General noted that the end of the year 2015 was the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals – or MDGs. These goals were set at the turn of the century to cut poverty and hunger, empower women and girls, expand health and education, and protect our environment. He underlined that there were many successes. “Extreme poverty has been cut in half. More children are in school. More people have access to improved sources of water. But many goals have lagged behind. Hardship and discrimination remain all too common.”

He observed that the world must do two things. First, spare no effort to reach the MDGs by the 2015 deadline. And second, define a new set of goals for the new set of challenges facing our world. Calling upon the students to become actively engaged, the Secretary-General asked them to help foster peace and harmony.

“The world cannot wait. We must not defer. We must deliver,” he emphasized.

Source: <http://outreach.un.org/unai/resources/newsletters/>

Religious News from Around the World

His Holiness Karekin II: 14 Years of Leadership



Monday, November 4, marks the 14th anniversary of the consecration and enthronement of His Holiness Karekin II as the 132nd Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.

On this happy occasion for the entire Armenian Church, as we mark 14 years of His Holiness' pontificate, the Eastern Diocese conveys its love and good wishes to our dear Vehapar.

Catholicos Addresses WCC Assembly in South Korea



"The ecumenical spirit has deep roots in Armenian civilization," said His Holiness Karekin II on Wednesday. "And today as well, the Armenian Church welcomes expanded dialogue—a quest for common ground and mutual support—for the glory of Christ's holy church, the peace of the world, and the welfare of all mankind."

The Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians was speaking before an audience of more than 4,000 people: church leaders from around the world who had gathered in Busan, South Korea, for the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

The WCC Assembly—which meets every four years—is convening from October 30 through November 8. His Holiness Karekin II delivered his remarks during the opening ceremony, as a message of blessing on the proceedings. Leaders of roughly 360 churches, representing some 150 countries, along with high-ranking government and diplomatic officials, are taking part in the conference.

A video message from the Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was shown during the ceremony, and a written message from Roman Catholic Pope Francis was read. The WCC's General Secretary, the Reverend Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit—recipient of the Eastern Diocese's "Friend of the Armenians" award in 2012—also spoke.

His Holiness Karekin II departed from Armenia on October 28, leading a delegation of some 17 figures from the worldwide Armenian Church. (To see the list of delegates, [click here](#).)

Among them is the Eastern Diocese's Ecumenical Director, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, who is also a longstanding member of the WCC's executive board. In South Korea this week, Archbishop Aykazian served as the moderator of the assembly's first plenary session, focusing on its overall theme, "God of Life, Lead Us to Peace and Justice."

The Armenian Church has been a member of the WCC since 1962. [Click here](#) to read His Holiness'

message of blessing to open the WCC assembly. Click on the following links to [view photos](#) and to [follow news](#) of the gathering on its official site.

Anti-Christian terror is everyone's concern

BY STEVEN B. NASATIR

October 24 at 9:15 am



An Egyptian woman mourns during the funeral of several Copt Christians who were killed in Warraq's Virgin Mary church in Cairo, Egypt, Monday, Oct. 21, 2013. Egypt's Christians were stunned Monday by a drive-by shooting in which masked gunmen sprayed a wedding party outside a Cairo church with automatic weapons fire, killing several, including two young girls, in an attack that raised fears of a nascent insurgency by extremists after the military's ouster of the president and a crackdown on Islamists. (AP Photo/Khalil Hamra)

The persecution of any religious minority anywhere by anyone is an evil injustice. It requires all persons of conscience to speak out and, when possible, take action.

The upcoming 75th anniversary of [Kristallnacht](#) makes this an auspicious time to raise awareness about the contemporary violence targeting religious minorities and their places of worship. Of particular concern are attacks against Christian minorities that have occurred with alarming frequency from Syria to Egypt, from Iraq to Pakistan, and from Kenya to Sudan.

November 9 marks 75 years since the pogrom against Jews committed by mobs throughout the Nazi Reich. Often called Kristallnacht, or the "Night of Broken Glass," when rioters killed or injured hundreds

of Jews; burned over 1,000 synagogues; destroyed 7,000 Jewish-owned shops and businesses; vandalized cemeteries and schools, and; sent 30,000 Jews to German concentration camps. It marked a turning point in the escalating campaign of persecution culminating in the Holocaust.

These events, seared into Jewish collective memory, make us doubly aware—and duty bound—to raise our voices when the deadly brew of religious bigotry and wanton violence are mixed.

Today in Syria, a once thriving Christian population—a community nearly as ancient as that country's once great Jewish community—has been depopulated by 25 percent, [according an estimate the Patriarch Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarch Gregorios III Laham](#) shared with the BBC.

In September, [The Associated Press reported that Syrian Christians in Maaloula](#)—a community dating to the birth of Christianity and that still speaks Aramaic—were driven out or forcibly converted to Islam by rebels aligned with al-Qaeda.

[“It is chaos, it is violence, it is blood, it is death. Life has been paralyzed. We have lost everything,”](#) said Archbishop Theophile Georges Kassab of Homs.

In Egypt, some supporters of ousted President Mohammed Morsi last summer unleashed their rage against that nation's Christians, a historic community constituting 20 percent of the country's population. [Mobs burned dozens](#) of Christian schools, convents, monasteries, institutions, and churches of any, and all Christian denominations. And just days ago, [gunmen on a motorcycle opened fire outside a Coptic Christian](#) church during a wedding, murdering four, including an 8-year-old girl.

“It never happened before in history that such a big number of churches were attacked on one day,” [Bishop Thomas, a Coptic Orthodox bishop in Assiut told Al Jazeera](#). “We normally used to have attacks once a month or so.”

As Kristallnacht teaches, the burning of houses of worship can be a red alert that worse is yet to come. September saw the horrific Taliban bombing of Anglican worshippers in Pakistan, which took 85 lives, and, [according to accounts shared by witnesses](#), the targeting for murder of Kenyan Christians—deliberately separated from others in a chilling reminder of Nazi “selections”—by al Shabaab terrorists in a Nairobi shopping mall.

Attacks like these have contributed to a decline in the Christian population in the Middle East and North Africa from 9.5 percent to 3.8 percent of the total population from 1910 to 2010, [according to a Pew Forum report on Global Christianity](#).

Tellingly, Israel is the only Middle East country where the [Christian population has grown in the last half century](#), from 34,000 to 158,000, in large measure, according to many observers, because of the religious freedoms enjoyed there.

As a Jew, I'm proud of the status of religious minorities in the Jewish state. As an American, I'm especially proud to live in a society where people of different faiths (and no faith) share the values of tolerance and coexistence. Despite isolated though sometimes deadly instances of religiously-inspired terror during the past few decades, ours is a nation where no Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, or person of any other faith must live in fear because of who they are.

It is time to sound the alarm about the religious persecutions of Christians and others. Let us raise our voices, and call on our elected representatives to take action. People of all faiths should support passage of [H.R.301](#), legislation that would direct our President to appoint a State Department Special Envoy to Promote Religious Freedom of Religious Minorities in the Near East and South Central Asia.

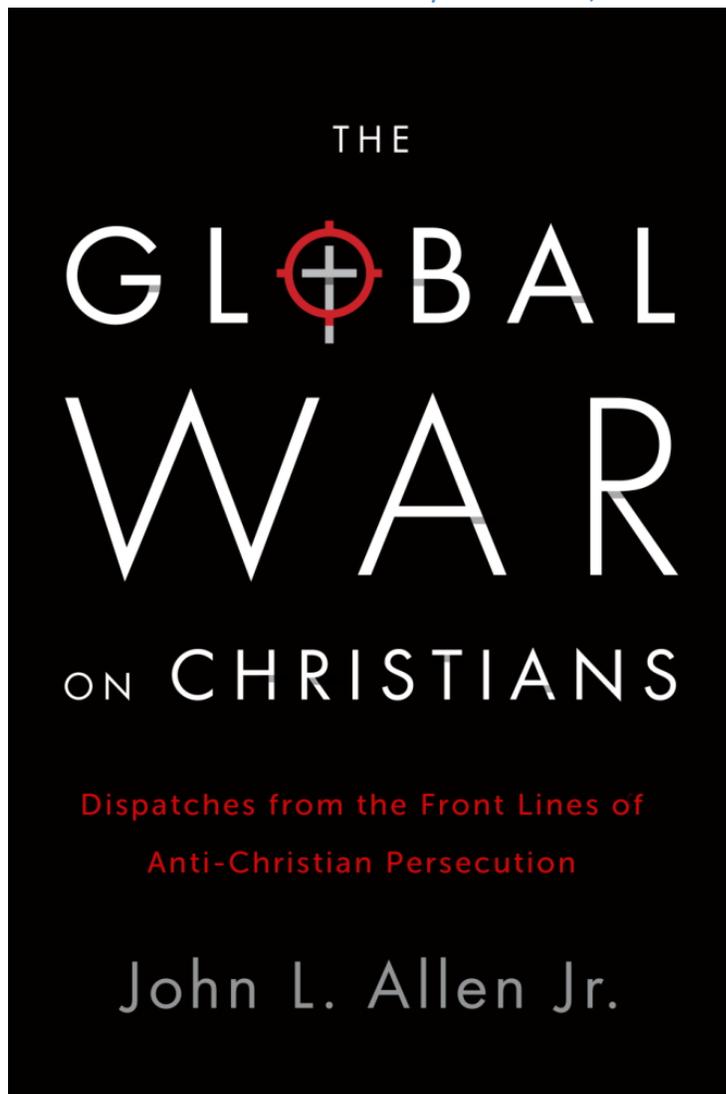
The bill will facilitate U.S government responses to human rights violations, combat acts of religious intolerance and incitement targeting religious minorities, and help address the needs of religious minorities.

Further, we must demand that international institutions designed to protect human rights, especially the United Nations, must actually do so without prejudice.

For people of conscience, for people of all faiths, now is not the time to be silent.

Steven B. Nasatir is president of the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago.

[The Global War on Christians by John Allen, Jr.](#)



More information on the book can be found on the following website:

<http://www.imagecatholicbooks.com/2013/09/12/sneak-peek-the-global-war-on-christians-by-john-allen-jr/>

Second Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission Meets in London



At the instruction of our beloved Patriarch His Holiness Mor Ignatius Zakka I, His Eminence Archbishop Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim represented the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch at the Second Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission which met in the United Kingdom from 3-7 October 2013. At the end of their meeting the participants issued the following communique':

The Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission has held its second meeting 3-7 October 2013 at St Columba's House, Woking, England. Our Churches rejoice at the resumption of this important dialogue after ten years.

We greatly appreciate the hospitality offered by the Anglican Communion, the Church of England, and the Diocese of Guildford.

During the course of its meeting the Commission shared in daily prayer from the various traditions represented, and considered and discussed the following papers:

- The Procession of the Holy Spirit (Coptic Orthodox presentation)
- The Filioque in the Anglican Tradition
- The Filioque and Anglican Action
- The Filioque and the Armenian Orthodox Tradition
- The Draft Agreed Statement on Christology (2002) and its reception

The context in which we have met has been one of continuing concern for the countries in the Middle East in particular, as well as Kenya, Pakistan and Nigeria. Participants felt that Rev 1.9 spoke powerfully to us. 'I, John, your brother, who share with you in Jesus, persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos, because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.'

On Saturday 5 October we worshipped in the Coptic Orthodox Church of St Augustine, Gomshall, and Surrey. Through this act of worship the members of the Commission, together with local church members, prayed and expressed solidarity with the peoples at the heart of suffering.

At the service, Bishop Angaelos said, 'we gather to remember our brethren in Egypt, Syria, and throughout the Middle East, where many continue to suffer persecution for their Faith. Some suffer

even to the extent of losing their lives, yet their faithful witness in the Middle East is a blessing to the whole Church, and to the whole world.'

Bishop Geoffrey Rowell added, 'We have reflected on our common faith in Christ, and how we speak of Him, and live in Him, by the life-giving work of God's Holy Spirit. We have done that in the deep awareness of the suffering of fellow Christians in Syria, in Egypt, and in many other places. The God whom we worship and adore is the One who comes down to the lowest part of our need.'

On Sunday 6 October members of the Commission were welcomed to the Eucharist at The Chapel Royal, Hampton Court, for its Feast of Dedication, and were joined by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd. Justin Welby. In greeting them Archbishop Justin said, 'we meet with an urgency and importance to meeting, which is together to seek God's powerful hand to deliver the people of Christ, who seek only to serve him and serve their people.' We express our thanks for his presence with us and his encouragement for the work of this dialogue. We are also deeply grateful to his predecessor Dr Rowan Williams for his significant work in reviving this dialogue.

The Commission shares the joy of the Coptic Orthodox Church at the enthronement of its new Pope and Patriarch, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, and of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church at the enthronement of its new Patriarch, His Holiness Abune Matthias I.

The third meeting of the Commission is planned to take place in Cairo, Egypt, in October 2014, hosted by the Coptic Orthodox Church, addressing the themes of ecclesiology, primacy and collegiality, and pastoral co-operation.

At the conclusion of the dialogue the Commission thanked God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the unity that they experienced and shared.

Members of the Commission

Anglican

The Rt Revd. Dr. Geoffrey Rowell (Co-Chair) The Church of England
The Most Revd. Dr. Michael Jackson The Church of Ireland
The Revd. Canon Harold Nahabedian The Anglican Church of Canada
The Rt Revd. Duleep de Chickera The Church of Ceylon
The Revd. Canon Dr. William Taylor The Church of England
The Very Revd. Dr. Samy Shehata the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East
The Rt Revd. Jonathan Goodall The Church of England
The Rt Revd. Clive Handford The Church of England (Unable to attend the meeting)
The Revd. Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan (Co-Secretary) Anglican Communion Office
Mr. Neil Vigers (Administrator) Anglican Communion Office

Oriental Orthodox

Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria
His Eminence Metropolitan Bishoy (Co-Chair) Egypt (Unable to attend the meeting)
His Grace Bishop Angaelos (Acting Co-Secretary) England

Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church – Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, Armenia
His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian USA
The Very Revd. Archimandrite Shahe Ananyan Armenia

Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church – Holy See of Cilicia, Antelias – Lebanon
His Eminence Archbishop Nareg Alemezian (Acting Co-Chair) Lebanon
His Grace Bishop Shahe Panossian Kuwait

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church

His Grace Archbishop Abba Gabriel Ethiopia
His Grace Archbishop Abba Yacob South Africa

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

The Revd. Fr Dr KM George India (Unable to attend the meeting)

Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch

His Eminence Archbishop Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim USA
His Eminence Archbishop Mor Gregorios Joseph India (Unable to attend the meeting)



[Pope Francis meeting with Putin could help mend Catholic-Orthodox relations](#)

Reuters

November 7, 2013

Pope Francis meeting with Putin could help mend Catholic-Orthodox relations

By Philip Pulella

Pope Francis will receive Russian President Vladimir Putin on November 25, an encounter that could help mend strained relations between the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Church.

Russian-Vatican relations have been fraught since the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union, with Moscow accusing the Roman Catholic Church of trying to poach believers from the Russian Orthodox Church, a charge the Vatican denies.

But Putin is the first Kremlin leader since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution to publicly profess religious faith to the Orthodox church and has several times advocated ending the long feud between the two major Christian churches.

Putin and the pope will hold their first meeting on November 25, a Vatican spokesman said on Thursday.

Putin, who also met his two immediate predecessors, could invite the pope to visit Russia, diplomats

said.

Popes Benedict and John Paul had standing invitations from the Russian government but could not go because they received no matching invitation from the Orthodox Church. Francis would need the same to go to Russia.

Another dispute between the churches concerns the fate of many church properties that Soviet leader Joseph Stalin ordered confiscated from Eastern Rite Catholics, who worship in an Orthodox liturgy but owe their allegiance to Rome.

Stalin gave the Catholic property to the Russian Orthodox Church, but after the fall of communism, the Eastern Rite Catholics took back many sites, leading to a rise in tensions.

The Russian Orthodox Church, which has resurged since the collapse of the Soviet Union, has some 165 million members in former Soviet republics including Russia and other states.

Francis is the first non-European pope in 1,300 years. His predecessors came from countries Italy, Poland and Germany that were caught up in the 20th century's two global conflicts as well as in the Cold War that followed World War Two.

Diplomats have said that Francis, an Argentine with no European political baggage, would have a far better chance of improving ties with the Russian Orthodox Church.

There have been signs of a general warming between the western and eastern branches of Christianity.

On March 20, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew became the first worldwide spiritual leader of Orthodox Christians to attend a papal inaugural Mass since the Great Schism split western and eastern Christianity in 1054.

[Muslims and Jews Vow To Stand Up For Each Other During Upcoming 6th Annual Weekend of Twinning](#)

At a time of increased Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, Muslims and Jews will be coming together in cities across America and around the world during the upcoming 6th Annual International Weekend of Twinning, November 15-17, to pledge to be there for each other if either community is victimized by hate crimes or incitement.

According to Rabbi Marc Schneier, President of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, a New York-based not-for-profit agency that sponsors the Weekend of Twinning, "Dialogue is an important first step in building ties of communication and cooperation between Muslims and Jews, but it is not enough. Whenever Jews or Muslims are targets of bigotry anywhere in the world, members of the two communities should stand together against both Islamophobia and anti-Semitism . We must truly become our brothers and sisters keepers."

The Weekend of Twinning is an annual event sponsored by the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding (www.ffeu.org) and held every November and December. It is based on synagogues and mosques and Jewish and Muslim organizations in cities across North America, Europe and around the world forming one-on-one partnerships and holding joint programs on the same weekend. The official Weekend of Twinning is November 15-17, but kickoff events have already taken place in place in synagogues and mosques across France as well as in Wellington, New Zealand and Sydney, Australia, where local Muslims and Jews cooked and distributed food to people who lost their homes in recent fires near that city. Twinning events will continue until mid-December.

For more information about Weekend of Twinning events, please visit:

<http://www.ffeu.org/twinning.html>

- See more at: <http://pressreleases.religionnews.com/2013/11/13/muslims-jews-vow-stand-upcoming-6th-annual-weekend-twinning/#sthash.6bS8BMkA.dpuf>

Source: <http://pressreleases.religionnews.com/2013/11/13/muslims-jews-vow-stand-upcoming-6th-annual-weekend-twinning/>

Standing Conference of **Oriental Orthodox** Churches

The **ORIENTAL ORTHODOX**
CONCELEBRATED
LITURGY



Saturday, October 12, 2013
Divine Liturgy begins at 10:00 AM

St. Mary's Syrian Orthodox Church
644 Paramus Road
Paramus, NJ 07654

For more information or directions, please contact us at Info@SCOCH.org
or call Fr. Joseph Chamoun at (508) 335-7394

SCOCH.org

Principal Celebrants



His Eminence Archbishop Cyril Aphrem Karim
Hierarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church
Archdiocese of the Eastern United States



His Eminence Archbishop Mor Titus Yeldo
Hierarch of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church
Archdiocese of North America



His Eminence Archbishop Abune Zekarias
Hierarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
Archdiocese of North America



His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Hierarch of the Armenian Apostolic Church
Eastern Diocese of America



His Eminence Archbishop Vicken Aykazian
Diocesan Legate of the Armenian Apostolic Church
Eastern Diocese of America



His Grace Bishop David
Hierarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church
Archdiocese of North America



His Grace Bishop Makarios
Hierarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church
Archdiocese of North America



US Consultation: Oriental Orthodox Church- Roman Catholic Church, October 10, 11, 2013 NYC

The Role Of Women In The New Evangelization

Presented at Oriental Orthodox - Roman Catholic Consultation, October 10-11, 2013

Anthony DeLuca, Ph.D., Psy.D.

On Thursday, September 19, I was at the UN Security Council and the debate was on the situation in Afghanistan and recommendations for reconstruction of the country. We had in our hands a summary [distribute text] of Afghanistan's first progress report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The Convention committee responded by recognizing Afghanistan's progress over the past decade. But "The continued low level of women's participation in major national decision making practices was, however noted with only 9 women belonging to the 70 member High Peace Council. Concern was expressed over the recent reduction of quotas of women in local elected bodies and lack of participation in the judiciary, including the Supreme Court."

All members of the Security Council spoke first and then various countries. Among the recommendations, one that was mentioned by each speaker was the rights of women as critical for the restoration of Afghan society.

The European Union [distribute text] expressed the need of women's participation in elections. [quote] "The rule of law is critical for the full implementation in particular the rights of women. Afghanistan must address widespread discrimination against women and girls."

India spoke [distribute text] The merciless killing of Ms. Benarjee - a woman medical worker of Indian origin and married to an Afghan national reflects an intolerance (which flows from the intolerance towards women).

The ambassador of Italy said [distribute text] " We look forward ...[to] the protection of human rights, in particular of women."

I had trouble concentrating all during this meeting because with each statement, for some reason, I kept thinking of our meeting of today.

On Saturday September 29, I had to return to the General Assembly to update someone's speech because late Friday night, the Security Council had come to a resolution on the destruction of chemical weapons in Syria. The Russian Federation and the United States. had co-sponsored this. Heads of state had been arriving to debate the entire world situation. I got there late during the statement of the Prime Minister of India. [distribute text] He said "high priority [must be given to] discrimination against women. Especially critical is women's equal access to economic opportunities and that they do not become victims of violence or targets of prejudice."

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt [distribute text] said in closing, "We are determined to continue empowering women, nationally and internationally."

The Prime Minister of Ethiopia and Chair of the African Union, [distribute text] said nothing about women.

I hope this Consultation will not follow that example.

It is not easy to overthrow encrusted attitudes toward women which have become entrenched in the last four thousand years. To infiltrate a thought system which holds together a civilization for such a long time is difficult. But that world view is crumbling and we don't seem to have a viable cosmology to replace it.

Keeping men and women in distinct castes and to rigorously enforced these roles was felt necessary to preserve a social order.

From Adam and Eve on, men have feared the power of women- Eve is the mother of life and death. Based on psychology, mythology, anthropology, psychoanalysis, world literature and other disciplines, what I have to say is pretty much accepted by the academic community. The Magna Mater, the Great Mother who is both our womb and our tomb. The image of mother, as experienced by the infant, is all powerful controlling life and death. She is both benevolent and fearsome.

In infant development, the baby initially see the one mother as two mothers- one who gives freely of the breast , is close, and gives pleasure, the Good Mother; and the other who withdraws the breast, is distant and evokes rage, the Bad Mother. This splitting may be seen in cultural forms where we have Eve as sensuous, earthy and one who brings the down fall of mankind, the Bad Mother; the other the Virgin Mary, all loving, even a first assistant in our salvation, the Good Mother. In Christian iconography, Mary is frequently seen as offering the breast to the baby- the Good Mother; while Eve in her nakedness and as temptress of men is cast out of the Garden, the Bad Mother.

In normal child development, the infant begins to realize that there is only one mother who has both giving and withdrawing qualities. Where this splitting is not integrated and healed, there are serious personality difficulties later for both the person and for the society. In times of stress and conflict, we are all capable of regressing to the earlier stage of splitting.

These early images always remain in all men. For some they become integrated, for others, they remain raw and primitive; we witness everyday events of rape and violence against women and other lesser evils toward women addressed above by the UN speakers.

For some men, women are feared because they fear engulfment, while others may fear castration as in the Medusa myth- whosoever looks at her face directly will be destroyed. You may be surprised as to how many patients I have seen with the Medusa tattoo as counter-phobic. And so we have the enormous statue of Perseus cutting off the head of the Medusa as a victory of men over the feared Bad Mother proudly displayed in the Florentine Piazza, ever since the Renaissance to the great satisfaction of Italian men. What we fear, we must have control over or annihilate.

Enter Jesus Christ into this patriarchal mindset. His radical message is still not fully actualized in Christianity. We look at some of it which we can handle and forget other parts we can't handle. Page after page of the gospel, show Jesus empowering the disenfranchised and the down trodden especially women. And he is not squimish as seen in the case of the woman with the uncontrollable menstrual flow. I am always bewildered by the story of the woman caught in adultery. I presume she had a partner. But I cannot find in the New Testament, the story of the man caught in adultery. At another time, Christ evens the story by telling us "that a man who lusts after a woman, has already committed adultery in his heart."

After the sinful woman anoints the feet of Jesus, he says wherever this gospel is preached, this story will be told as a remembrance of her. In the last supper, "do this in remembrance of me " is remembered but she is not remembered. The Church fears powerful women; we only need to look at the job done on Mary Magdalene for centuries. Pushing injustices under the rug, is a horrible solution. Witness the disaster of the pedophilia scandal. The same can happen with the women scandal.

On this critical issue, of the involvement of women in the church, each tradition must move at its own pace depending on various cultural incrustations. But it must move. For beginnings, certainly women should be represented on all committees on the parish, diocesan and national levels. We can begin to have women do some of the Readings in the liturgy. Select those women over 80; nobody is going to fight with grandma.

This Consultation has spent much time with the role of women in the church. The issue of women deacons was studied at length. There are biblical sources regarding women deacons; and old sacramentaries detailing these ordinations and in some places the ordination rite is the same for men and women deacons. Historically, women deacons served the church for centuries; some of their baptismal assistance may be obsolete but it could be easily upgraded for our times. I don't think this needs further examination but rather a subtle movement to implement what was once there. Women should be admitted to the study of theology especially those engaged in ministry. This may make their liturgical and pastoral services more plausible. Certainly, there should be study groups detailing the history of women in the church and their liturgical participation.

Now for us men. From the above psychological discussion, we know that men need other men to become men; this is not so much a critical case with women. So at some level, we will need to keep the old boys' clubs which over my life have been the happiest of times.

Justice grants each person what really belongs to him or her and takes the properly moral means to do so.

Unfortunately, we may be limited in bringing this justice to Europe, Armenia, Egypt, Eritrea, India, and Syria but we can begin here.

Thank you very much.

Situation in Syria from Patriarch Zacca

IN THE NAME OF THE SELF - EXISTANT

SEMPITERNAL OF NECESSARY EXISTENCE THE ALMIGHTY

IGNATIUS PATRIARCH OF THE HOLY SEE OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST

SUPREME HEAD OF THE UNIVERSAL SYRIAC ORTHODOX CHURCH

We offer our apostolic benediction and benevolent prayers to our brethren, his Beatitude Mor Baselius Thomas I. Catholicos of India, and Their Eminences the Metropolitans, our spiritual children the Patriarchal Vicars, monks, priests, nuns, deacons and virtuous deaconesses, and our blessed Syriac Orthodox People worldwide. May the divine providence embrace them through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and St. Peter the head of the Apostles, and the rest of the saints and martyrs. Amen.

Enquiring your welfare, we say: With our steadfast hope in the love of God to His Holy Church and His work within it for the benefit of its children, we offered our prayers and supplications to God the Almighty on behalf of our beloved land Syria the first and last land for the Syrians and for all our sons and daughters in Syria beseeching the Lord to spread His peace in Syria and keep it safe from all kinds of wars. We have also prayed for our dear brothers Mor Gregorios Youhanna Ibrahim, Archbishop of Aleppo and environs, and Mor Boulos Yazigi, Metropolitan of Aleppo and Alexandretta for the Greek Orthodox Church who became victims of terrorism some six months and we have since been exerting all efforts to secure their release. We offer thanks giving to God the Almighty who allowed for the channels of communications to be opened with the responsible parties and due to the confidentiality of the situation we are in no position to elaborate further at this stage and can only thank those who have worked with us_ Today, our dearly beloved in Christ, we write to you with great sorrow within us regarding the great and beloved city of Sadad which came under attack from an unknown armed group and our people in Sadad have suffered great dangers as a consequence. We have called upon the international community to help ease the situation and help OUT Syrian people from the vicious attacks preserving and protecting this historical and great city. To help us secure the release of the two Archbishops and to protect "the mother of the Syrians" Sadad and its residents, and for peace to prevail in Syria we declare a three day fasting beginning on Thursday 24th October to Saturday 26th October concluding with the Holy liturgy in all our churches worldwide on Sunday. May God the Almighty accept your fasting and prayers. Amen. We extend our Apostolic Blessings to you.

May the grace of God be with you all.

[H.G. Bishop David Enthroned As Shepherd Of New Coptic Orthodox Diocese Of New York And New England](#)

Cedar Grove, NJ – The Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches offers its most sincere congratulations to conference member H.G. Bishop David of the Coptic Orthodox Church on His Grace’s enthronement as the Diocesan Bishop of the newly created Coptic Orthodox Diocese of New York and New England.

H.G. Anba David’s new diocese will include the states of New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont. For the past 14 years, in his role as General Bishop and Patriarchal Exarch, His Grace has provided pastoral care for an enormous flock in the wide-ranging Coptic Orthodox Archdiocese of North America. To the great joy of his spiritual children, His Grace will be officially enthroned by His Holiness Pope Tawadros II and the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church on November 16-17.

The Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches asks our merciful Lord to keep the life of our honored father, H.H. Pope Tawadros II, and his partner in the Apostolic service, H.G. Bishop David, for many years on their thrones in peace and happiness and to grant their spiritual children mercy and grace through their prayers and supplications.

Axios! Axios! Axios!

Source: <http://www.scooch.org/2013/10/h-g-bishop-david-enthroned-as-shepherd-of-new-coptic-orthodox-diocese-of-new-york-and-new-england/>

[President’s Appointment of Dr. James J. Zogby to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom](#)

The Syriac Orthodox Community in New Jersey and other States were thrilled to know about the appointment of Dr. James Zogby to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

“It couldn’t have happened to a better person than Dr. Zogby”, exclaimed H.E. Cyril Aphrem Karim, Archbishop of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, for the Eastern United States, from his headquarters in Teaneck, NJ. “The President made the right choice. I know the man very well, and I think he fits this position exceptionally well. He is very knowledgeable about the international religious affairs, especially the Middle East, where his family came from, and I think he will greatly benefit the Commission with his experience and expertise in this matter. In all his decisions, Dr. Zogby proved to be fair, impartial and champion for Religious dialogue, on both American and International levels. Being a scholar in Comparative Religions, he proved to be an expert in debates and negotiations for religious freedom worldwide”

The Syriac Orthodox Community commends Dr. Zogby on his new position and wishes him success in his new mission.

Archbishop of Syrian church in America: Military action will make things worse

The Archbishop of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, for the Eastern U.S., spoke out Wednesday against U.S. military intervention in the region.

H.E. Cyril Aphrem Karim told Fox News' Lauren Green that he opposed the strikes against Bashar al-Assad's regime and hoped the U.S. can instead reach a peaceful resolution.

"We as a people of faith, as Christians, are against violence in all of its forms," Karim said on FoxNews.com Live's "Spirited Debate." "There should be a peaceful resolution of the conflict there." Karim also voiced concerns about who would replace Assad if he was ousted.

"We don't believe that toppling the regime there will help the Syrian people in general ... because we do not know who comes after Assad if Assad is toppled," said Karim. "Are we going to end up like Afghanistan, for example? Where Al Qaeda affiliate groups are very active now and they are killing Christians and Muslims at the same time?"

Al Qaeda-linked fighters have been helping Syrian rebels in their battle against regime forces, but splits among rebel groups have been reported. Karim says there has been fighting between the Syrian rebels, the Free Syrian Army and Al Qaeda affiliate groups.

Karim also said he did not see "convincing evidence" that the Assad regime was responsible for the alleged chemical attack, saying rebel forces could have launched the attack.

Extremist groups fighting alongside rebels have been blamed for the kidnapping of two Syrian archbishops in April.

"The kidnapping of these two archbishops for the last three months is a message not only for these archbishops, but a message for all Christians in Syria that you are not welcome here; that tomorrow when we take over you have no place in our country. You either convert, or you are thrown out or killed," said Karim.

Communique on Syria by Church Leaders

Church leaders from Syria, Russia, United States, United Kingdom, and France, Germany and Turkey and representatives of international organizations in Geneva gathered for a World Council of Churches consultation on the crisis in Syria together with Mr. Kofi Annan and the Joint Representative for Syria, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi.

Churches worldwide have spoken out against the war in Syria. Now is the time to raise one voice for peace and work for a negotiated solution among all parties to the conflict. Blessed are the peacemakers, the Scriptures say. Churches must continue to raise their voice in their congregations and with their governments. We must strengthen the public outcry so that those in power will protect the common interest of humanity.

We believe there can be no military solution to the crisis in Syria. It is time for the international community to assume its responsibility to end the violence and initiate a political process that brings peace for all the people of Syria. Resolute action now is necessary to save lives; waiting has already cost many lives. Collective action for peace is needed to save not only the people of Syria but also the surrounding region as well.

We urge the United Nations Security Council to adopt without delay a resolution based on the 14 September agreement by the Russian and American foreign ministers. We call on the governments of Russia and the United States to exercise their major responsibility for peace, collaborating to convince national and foreign parties to the conflict to put an end to the violence and accept the multilateral compromises that are essential for peace.

The Security Council must also set a date for a second peace conference on Syria, building on the foundations agreed but not implemented after the peace conference in 2012 in Geneva. Many tens of thousands more lives have been lost since then. Many thousands more lives are at stake now. To fail to reach conclusive results at the next Geneva conference is not an option.

The current openings for negotiations also need immediate steps to de-escalate the conflict, including the adoption of an arms embargo by the Security Council and measures to stop the flow of foreign combatants into Syria.

The humanitarian situation in Syria and in neighboring countries is precarious. Humanitarian assistance is a vital aspect of the churches' mission and solidarity with those suffering. Such aid also contributes toward a process of reconciliation. National, regional and international church ministries are alleviating the suffering of hundreds of thousands of Syrians affected by the war. It is important for church-related agencies to redouble their efforts now, including aid for refugees. Full humanitarian access is essential, as stipulated in the 2012 Geneva conference.

Christians in Syria are an integral part of a diverse society with a rich history. They have their place in civil society and commit themselves to build a future for Syria where citizens of all faiths enjoy equal rights, freedom and social justice. They are also committed to engage in constructive dialogues with other religious and ethnic communities so that Syria's pluralistic heritage is protected and secured. The WCC and the wider ecumenical family support such a process.

We join the people of Syria in prayer for a peaceful future for the country and the whole Middle East, and may our Lord keep them in His grace.

Pre-School Opening Ceremony



On Sunday September 8, 2013 His Eminence Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim officially opened the first Archdiocesan Pre-School in a brief ceremony at the Church of the Virgin Mary in Paramus, New Jersey. The Pre-School, a five day a week program geared to youngsters three and four years old, will operate

from the Church of the Virgin Mary utilizing the church's suitable Sunday school facility. A staff of eight will be hands on guaranteeing the standard of quality noted in the school's philosophy statement.

In his address to the audience, His Eminence said "we wish the staff good luck and pray for their success, hoping this service which we are rendering to the community will flourish abundantly through their efforts."

At the conclusion of the formalities, all those in attendance, including the local members of the clergy and the president of the Archdiocese executive Council, walked from the church to the class rooms and viewed the area. His Eminence spent time with the children, parents and teachers and concluded with everyone singing the Abun dbash-ma-yo (Lord's Prayer).

Oriental Orthodox Concelebrated Divine Liturgy



On Saturday, October 12, 2013, at the Church of the Virgin Mary in Paramus, New Jersey, His Eminence Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim hosted the Oriental Orthodox Concelebrated Divine Liturgy. The Hierarchs present, along with His Eminence, were His Eminence Mor Titus Yeldho, Archbishop of the Malankara Archdioceses of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America, His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America and His Grace Bishop David of the Coptic Orthodox Church of North America.

The entourage of the numerous clergy from all the Oriental Orthodox Churches entering the church was truly majestic, colorful and unique in nature. The anxious audience took many photos and stood with awe as the procession continued on and on. Once everyone was in place, the service began to the ringing of the church bells.

The liturgy was in the Syriac Orthodox tradition and was structured so that each of the Hierarchs participated in the service.

In his sermon His Eminence Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim emphasized that the Oriental Orthodox Churches are one in faith and doctrine. He said, "I can go to any Oriental Orthodox Church and receive Holy Communion." He spoke about the shared experience of the suffering and persecution that all endured in protecting our faith throughout the centuries highlighting the current suffering of Christians in the Middle East and elsewhere. He said, "So many have given up their lives rather than deny their Christian belief." He thanked all the hierarchs and guests for attending and for participating in this activity that

brings all the Oriental Orthodox Churches together. The Archbishop also thanked Very Rev. Fr. John Khoury and the Parish Council and the Ladies Aid of the Church of the Virgin Mary for their hospitality.

At the conclusion of the service all were invited for lunch which was prepared by the Ladies Aid Society of the Virgin Mary.



New AEC Members Take Oath



A special meeting of the Archdiocesan Executive Council was held on Wednesday evening, October 9th at the Archdiocesan Complex in Teaneck, New Jersey. The Council received the following new members who took the oath of office: Dr. Nahla Fatoohi, Chris Toma, Philip Sauma, Sami Gelin, Hulya Sayanlar, Gorge Baho, Allen Aydin and Luke Kurter. The new Council Officers are Elias Sarkar, President; Jack Darakjy, Vice President; Sait Samuel, Chief Financial Officer and Janine Azar, Secretary.

His Eminence Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim welcomed the new members asking the Almighty to bless and watch over them and their families as they take on this new responsibility. He advised them to be diligent in their service to the church. The Archbishop said, "We are all blessed with certain talents from the Almighty so that we can be productive and better serve our families, community and church. This is your calling. You should feel honored and privileged to have the opportunity to serve in this capacity."

Elias Sarkar toasted His Eminence citing the Archbishop's leadership, openness, and zeal during the past seventeen years referencing the long list of truly monumental accomplishments under the Archbishop's watch. He commended His Eminence for his foresight and having the vision when he called for the establishment of the Council over fifteen years ago. The Council President also toasted the new members and the existing members wishing all a successful year.

Also present were the Parish Council Presidents of the local parishes which included: Burhan Coban, Orhan Abaji, Aziz Akyon, Nessim Aydin, Dr. Nahla Fatoohi and Dr. Jonn Arnett. Members of several committees were on hand to give update reports including the Building Committee which is comprised of the following: Semir Sirazi, Ben Isik, Abdelahad Denho, Nasser Shabo, Biniamin Malki and Chris Toma. John Samuel gave the Council a comprehensive update on the search for a new Youth Minister. After all the remaining items on the evenings agenda were addressed, His Eminence concluded the meeting with a few closing remarks and the benediction.



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October 15, 2013

Interview with Middle East Institute President Yevgeniy Satanovskiy by Sergey Strokan: "Al-Qa'ida Has Turned Into Brand"

Middle East Institute President Yevgeniy Satanovskiy told Kommersant correspondent Sergey Strokan why not a single country in the world is safe from the spread of global jihad.

(Strokan) Western embassies have stopped working in dozens of countries of the African-Asian world, fearing terrorist acts. Are we observing a new trend?

(Satanovskiy) In fact, there is nothing fundamentally new about this. At the beginning of the 20th century a quarter of the Middle East's population was Christian. Millions of Jews, millions of Europeans lived in the region. Where are they now? Pakistan was founded as a secular Muslim country. What has it turned into? Terrorist acts and genocide have been reality in the region for decades. But attention is paid to this reality only when Western diplomats or relatives of the elite are dying, as in Kenya.

(Strokan) In the light of the "diversification" of Al-Qa'ida's activity, is every country, even the most quiet and conflict-free, now threatened with its own 11 September?

(Satanovskiy) Al-Qa'ida has turned into a brand. Its cells are decentralized and finance themselves; currently it exists not as a rigid structure, but as a product of jihad subculture, which is being disseminated all over the world through the Internet. Its breeding grounds are African and Middle Eastern emigrant communities financed by Persian Gulf monarchies. Qatar and Saudi Arabia are spending billions of dollars on the worldwide expansion of radical Salafist Islam. They are financing and taking control of Muslim communities, mosques, student clubs, schools, chambers of commerce, Muslim business associations, and charitable foundations. The influence of Islamic radicals is spreading from country to country. Globalization does not give anybody the chance to stand aside.

(Strokan) In the Russian Federation many interpret the Islamists' war with foreigners as a response to the "crusades" of the West in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya and experience a feeling of schadenfreude: He who mischief hatches, mischief catches, they say. Can anti-Westernism be a guarantee against Islamist strikes?

(Satanovskiy) Only as long as terrorists use it (anti-Westernism) for their own purposes. But then they will calmly massacre all those who are counting on staying safe by being opponents of the West. The question is not about the West, the West is just their strongest opponent. The terrorists think that they have beaten Russia already: in Afghanistan and during the first Chechen war. In their opinion it will not be difficult for them to finish off Russia. Especially as their cells are active throughout the Russian Federation. That is why they have now focused on the secular regimes of the Islamic world, on the West, on Africa, and on Central Asia -- far more important territories for the victory of jihad than the Russian Federation. But flirting with them is suicidal. Churchill said that a peacekeeper is a person who feeds a crocodile in the hope that it will eat him last.

(Strokan) By carrying out attacks on foreigners, the terrorists are offering the rest of the world a deal: concessions in exchange for security. Can this blackmail work?

(Satanovskiy) This blackmail "worked" in Russia, in Khasavyurt (where the agreement ending the first Chechen war was signed). And also in Israel with Land for Peace or the Oslo Process. Attempts to reach agreements with terrorists, giving them what they demand, leads to catastrophic results. Until terrorists have been eliminated, they will carry on killing.

(Strokan) The Al-Shabab group, which became notorious after the terrorist act in Kenya, contained citizens of the United States and Britain.

(Satanovskiy) Jihad is spreading to all Western countries where millions of emigrants from African and Islamic world countries have settled. Their communities practice not only barbarian customs, but also the most radical forms of Islam. Their imams and muftis introduce sharia in countries whose laws they do not recognize and recruit followers not only from the immigrant community but also from the local population. As a result, about every tenth representative of the native "white" population who converts to Islam joins the radicals and either becomes part of global jihad himself or helps jihadists.