

International Council of Christians and Jews Conference

“So that you may know one another...” (Qur’an 49:13)

A Christian-Muslim-Jewish Encounter

Istanbul, 22 June 2010

*Metropolitan Emmanuel of France
Ecumenical Patriarchate*

Introduction on the 'Other'

A person's definition of the 'Other' is part of what defines, or even constitutes the self and different phenomena and cultural units. Thus, the definition of the word *other* in its wider meaning of a different person than one's self, is mostly studied in the area of Social Sciences. There, the *other* can take the role of the friend, the enemy or the opponent, the relative, the familiar, the stranger. This semantic pluralism unfolds in a typology of relations that is expressed with a variety of distances from friendly closeness, to hostile enmity. It is obvious that in the social, but also in the religious horizon interpersonal relations are estimated as empirical events, and are therefore assigned, or shifted on concepts such as justice, morality and theology. That means that the *other* is objectively removed from the “I, or we” and is estimated on a neutral, or rather cold basis, with the intention of placing him, or her near or far from one's self. However, the biblical stance relativizes this distance from the *other* and introduces for the first time with the parable of the *Good Samaritan*, the modal proximity of the *neighbor*, instead of the local-tribal distance. Most probably, in that time in Judaic tradition, the *other* evoked feelings of aversion, skepticism, abhorrence or xenophobia. And that is true for all cultures and civilizations.¹

The term *xenophobia* includes a totality of reactions with certain prejudices mostly for the stranger that comes from a different tribe or nation. It can even go as far as to someone who confesses a different religion. Nevertheless, *xenophobia* is the interchangeable reservation toward the unknown. It is *not only the fear of the other but of all otherness* which is essentially the *fear of the different*². This leads the human being to identify *difference with division*. The fear of the other is rooted in our very existence since birth, rejecting communication and communion. We all have undoubtedly born witness to such phenomena, especially in our contemporary times and contemporary multicultural societies in which we not only come across, but we live with a multitude of *otherness*. It is however unacceptable to justify a stricter and more xenophobic attitude, based on the fact that we fear the different. On the contrary, it is this reality that urges us to discover this *otherness*, to build bridges and to

¹ Vasileios Gioultsis, “*The Neighbor in the Theology of Apostle Paul*”, in *Klironomia*, Vol. 36, p. 141-150 (in Greek).

² Zizioulas, John D., Edited by Paul McPartlan, *Communion and Otherness. Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, T & T Clark, 2006, p. 2.

communicate; to ensure a peaceful coexistence in order to listen and to be listened to, to respect and to be respected.³

Apostle Paul, formerly known as Saul, is in my opinion the perfect example of how someone can transcend this fearful *otherness*. His initial extreme fear and hatred toward the *otherness* of those who have accepted the teaching of Christ and His Apostles, transforms him into a persecutor of innocent victims. He hates because he is guided by his fears. He experiences the post-fall insecurity of an instinctual phobia that reduces human sociability to individualism. He considers the *other* as dangerous, for he has not learned how to love. This is unfortunately the logical reaction of xenophobia that represents the feelings and the stance of a fearful Saul and for that matter of all fearful Sauls throughout human history. Nevertheless, the former Saul will become the Apostle of the Nations. What leads him to this transcendence? The miracle of an internal and deeply personal change that transforms him and suddenly the distant *other* ceases to be an enemy; the distant *other* approaches and takes a place in his heart: neither race, nor color; neither sex nor social status; neither religion nor profession stand in between any longer. In his Epistle to the Romans St Paul says the following: "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law...and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."⁴ In this perspective the stranger, the foreigner, the one who confesses a different religion, the very enemy is pulled close and becomes a brother. Privileges or shortcomings, honors or low decent, differences of nationality, religion, sex, or social status disappear in face of the *other* who is the image of the living God. In St Paul's theology, no matter how far the *other* might be, he or she becomes the *neighbor, the child of God*.^{5,6}

Personhood: *Communion and Otherness*

The human being is the most authentic image of God in the world. For this reason the human being has been appointed by God as the guardian and steward of the entire divine creation. The distinction of human being in male and female (Adam – Eve) determined in a characteristic way the necessity of the *other* not only for the sake of identity of the human being but also for the function of the human being in its communion with God and the world. God, humanity, and the world are intrinsically related together with every kind of communion that is expressed with the double reference of the human being to God and to the world and influences its relations with other human beings. According to a very prominent contemporary orthodox theologian, His Eminence, Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, "*There is no model for the proper relation between communion and otherness either for the*

³ Vasileios G., "*The Neighbor in the Theology*...p. 141-150.

⁴ Rom. 13:8-10

⁵ Gal. 3:26

⁶ Vasileios Gioultzis, *The Neighbor in the Theology*... p. 141-150.

Church or for the human being other than the Trinitarian God.” The conception of the human being in Orthodox theology is based on the understanding of the person which is distinguished from an individual. *“The Person is otherness in communion and communion in otherness. The person is an identity that emerges through relationship (schesis, in the terminology of the Greek Fathers); it is an ‘I’ that can exist only as long as it relates to a ‘thou’ which affirms its existence and its otherness. If we isolate the ‘I’ from the ‘thou’ we lose not only its otherness but also its very being; it simply cannot be without the other.”*⁷ Furthermore, personhood is inconceivable without freedom, it is the freedom of being other...this freedom is not freedom from the other but freedom for the other. Freedom thus becomes identical with love. God is love because he is Trinity. We can love only if we are persons, that is, if we allow the other to be truly other, and yet to be in communion with us. If we love the other not only in spite of his or her being different from us but because he or she is different from us, or rather other than ourselves, we live in freedom as love and in love as freedom.”⁹

The reference of the human being to God, as portrayed in the various religious traditions and especially in the biblical tradition of the three monotheistic religions, includes always the reference of the human being to the world, even though this dual reference might be understood or interpreted differently. Therefore, the reference of the human being to God in the three monotheistic religions is different than the reference in the great eastern religions. Consequently, the interpretation of the relation of the human being with the world is different, as is the interpretation of the dual reference of the human being in the Greek philosophy of the classic era. Nevertheless, the common inspiration of all religious or philosophical interpretations of the double reference of the human being towards God and towards the world is the common conscience concerning the ontological unity of the human race. This unity is expressed with the natural tendency of human beings to form societies upon the basis of pure territorial or racial criteria. On this basis, the human being, as a social being by nature, set up the first types of societies, which developed into two types of perfect societies, the religious and the state community. These two types of society are perfect because they can exist as they are (per se) without being dependent on any other perfect society. But both of them are nourished by an imperfect society, i.e. the family that offers members to both the religions and the states. The coincidence of the two perfect societies in the same state entity with historical or cultural criteria, determined not only their historical union but also their mutual interdependence.

It is self evident though that the positive or negative consequences from the historical union of the state and the religious authenticity were connected with many

⁷ Zizioulas, John D., Edited by Paul McPartlan, *Communion and Otherness. Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*, T & T Clark, 2006, “The first thing that emerges from a study of the doctrine of the Trinity is that otherness is constitutive of unity, and not consequent upon it.” Ibid, p. 4.

⁸ Ibid, p. 9.

⁹ Ibid, p. 9-10.

confusions of national or religious introversions which distorted the image of the *other* in the structures of a society with national, or ideological criteria. Especially during the modern times the secularization of the State with national and state criteria projected the individual human rights of the citizen and set aside the traditional social criteria of the union of the state with the religion. Therefore, the human being was disconnected from its reference to God in order to promote its absolute autonomy in the world with regard to the Creator, the transcendent *other* of religion (Enlightenment Era). This absolute autonomy of the human being has also corrupted its relation with the world as the *other* of the divine creation imposing the abusive or non-abusive exploitation of the world (Industrial Revolution). Moreover, the premise of the individual interest over the social one evaluated the *other* of the whole society as a threat (*homo hominis lupus*) and therefore demanded either its submission to the power of the state or even its disappearance in the razing criteria of the modern ideology.

Therefore, the image of the *other* in the contemporary reality of the world has been distorted, not only because of its disconnection from the image of God as the *other* of the referential existence of the human being, but also because of the consequences of this disconnection with regard to the quality of the relationship of the human being with his or her neighbor as the *other*, and with the world as the *other*. These consequences are particularly onerous in the structures of contemporary societies of Christian peoples. Indeed, the chimerical and utopian vision of modern mentality, mostly so of the Christian world for absolute autonomy of the human being from God and from the world was mainly opposing the traditional structures of the society that have been formed in the centuries-long period of the harmonic union of state and religious authorities on the basis of principles such as natural justice and divine law. It is therefore logical that the breach of this union caused a profound crisis, not only in the social system, but it has also affected the function of all interpersonal relations. Thus, the social theory of the autonomous human being excluded not only any type of religious authority, but also the objective value of the principles of natural justice in the structure and function of society. The principle of freedom of religion declared the tolerance of religion as a mere individual right of the citizens and not, of course, as one traditional and reliable system of principles and values with which people have been living for centuries and continue to do so. Consequently, the individualistic theory of an autonomous human being led to the alienation of interpersonal relations of people, since the *other* (person) or the *other* (neutral i.e. idea, principle, value) has been presented as a threat for the autonomy of the human being and their coexistence has been placed in the context of tolerance of the *other*, with different national backgrounds, religious beliefs, ideological concepts etc.

Under this perspective, although the constituted tolerance has been proven necessary for a peaceful coexistence of citizens with different national backgrounds,

religious beliefs and ideological concepts within the framework of a state, or even on a global perspective, it still remains insulting for the sacredness in the face of the *other*, in whom the love and justice of the Creator continue to radiate. Tolerance of the *other* is the first positive step that is of value only when it constitutes the starting point for mutual recognition of the common reference to the Creator, from which all discriminations and disruptions of the world are overcome. This means that we must first get to know one another through the richness of our religious traditions, because only knowledge can set a human being free from prejudices and superstitions of the historical past that affect negatively our relations with the *other* in contemporary multicultural society.

It is almost common conscience that the image of the *other* has been blemished to a greater or lesser degree in all religious traditions, due to prejudices of the past, which have nourished an unhealthy tendency of isolative introversion, or even suspiciousness among the representatives of the various religions. Interreligious dialogue has always been and still remains the only path to effectively treat these morbid phenomena in interreligious relations because only by a common reference of the ethical and spiritual values to the Creator of human kind and the world, can real meaning be applied not only to the recognition of the identity of the *other* in its genuine dimensions, but also to the mutual knowledge of one another. Therefore, by using the sacred sources of our respective religious traditions as our primary and irremovable guide, we have the high duty to demonstrate that the particularity of the religious traditions does not exclude the fruitful cooperation of the faithful in the context of the contemporary multicultural society. On the contrary, it encourages this fruitful cooperation. The common religious, spiritual and ethical values constitute not only the source, but also the perspective of interreligious dialogue that, through Education can inspire the common conscience that the *other* is an authentic extension of our *being* and deserves our absolute respect. Whatever a human being divides, God unites!

The Orthodox Church and Interreligious Dialogue

In this framework, the Declaration of the Third Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference (Chambésy 1986) on “The contribution of the local Orthodox Churches to the realization of peace, justice, freedom, fraternity and love between nations, and the removal of racial and other discriminations” invited the local Orthodox Churches “to contribute to interreligious collaboration, and thereby, to nations and to the triumph of the goods of freedom and peace in the world for the well being of contemporary man, independently of race and religion. It is understood of course that this collaboration excludes all syncretism, as well as any attempt on the part of any religion to impose itself on the others.” Furthermore, if one surveys the diverse religio-cultural contexts of various Orthodox Churches, both Eastern and Oriental, one can observe that there is a long history of peaceful co-existence between

Orthodox and people of other religions. When the Crusaders in the Middle Ages launched that dreadful campaign to liberate the Holy Land, while passing from Constantinople and its surroundings they accused the Orthodox of “being too tolerant toward the Muslims”!¹⁰

The Ecumenical Patriarchate, true to the ideas of promoting unity, cooperation and peaceful coexistence between the faithful has launched academic consultations, both bilateral and trilateral with Judaism and Islam in an effort to renew the process of knowing one another. “In this regard, the inter-religious consultations were not only timely but also significant” since they began to be held shortly before the “period of many nationalist, religious and spiritual confusions that were caused both by the rapid collapse of the atheist totalitarian regimes of existing socialism, but also by the ‘new world order’ which is being put forward on a global level, with primarily economic criteria and with the obvious questioning of spiritual values.”¹¹ These Academic Consultations provided the opportunity to learn more about one another’s perspectives on the various issues that they dealt with. This is indeed a result that should not be underestimated at all, even though, as many may claim, it involved only people of high ranking and that such consultations never reach the grass-root levels, namely the majority of the faithful. The basic point of departure through which grass-root levels can be reached is Education and that has always been a great concern of these Consultations, which try to offer opportunities to promote this type of education among young religious representatives. Furthermore, with this objective, the Institute for Postgraduate Studies in Orthodox Theology at the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Chambésy/Geneva) is committed to forming young religious and lay leaders in the area of inter-Christian and interreligious dialogue.

A most recent example of such initiatives that have been put in action is the launching of the Inter-Religious Training Partnership Initiative, co-organized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the World Islamic Call Society. It took place in Athens, 13 December 2008, and it provided joint training opportunities for young imams, priests, theologians and students of respective Muslim and Christian Orthodox communities, in order for them to use inter-religious dialogue as a tool to facilitate peace and reconciliation. The aim of such activities is to learn and share good practice from around the world and to look within the respective faiths for guidance. This Initiative commenced with a three day Seminar that included over 65 participants who came from all the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches and the Islamic communities of North Africa, Europe and the Middle East.

¹⁰ Papatomas, Archimandrite Grégoire, « *Église en dialogue* », in *Episepsis* 707 (31.12.2009) p. 24

¹¹ Opening Address of Metropolitan Damaskinos, Fourth Academic Meeting between Judaism and Orthodox Christianity, Jerusalem, 1998.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate and the World Islamic Call Society will continue to organize such training courses, which will focus on interreligious mediation by empowering young people with the skills to facilitate dialogue, and broaden the awareness of the importance of cooperation between Christians and Muslims in North Africa, Europe and the Middle East, as well as to concentrate on communication and media strategies with the aim of making the dialogue more visible. Such initiatives will establish a network of trust for future religious leaders to support their counterparts at the local and global levels.

Furthermore, by promoting the common acknowledgement of the prominent value of the human person may serve as presupposition for wider collaboration in this field. The experience of the Orthodox Church with this regard may prove beneficial as well. All this represents a vocation, to be worked on by all with peacefulness and creativity. The Orthodox Church, in close collaboration with the—peace-loving—faithful of other world religions considers it its obligation to work for peace on earth and brotherly relations between the nations. We are called to contribute to inter-religious consultation and co-operation and, in this manner, to the eradication of all forms of fanaticism, to the reconciliation of nations and the triumph of the values of peace and freedom in the world, serving modern man regardless of race and religion. Naturally, such collaboration excludes any forms of syncretism or attempts of religions to impose themselves upon others. And this can only be clarified by educating the faithful and removing thus any prejudice or fear that may be hidden behind the idea of dialogue with faithful of other religions. It cannot be stressed enough that the Academic Consultations, in their endeavour, systematically and clearly declared the purpose and nature of the discussions that theologians of both religions should engage in. “They should assess their own faith while being ready to listen and, if necessary, to reformulate their thinking.”

His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in his address to the *Conference on Interreligious Dialogue*, that took place in Istanbul, March 7, 1998, began with the observation that this conference was convened to discuss important issues in peace: *This Conference is an occasion of joy, for representatives of the most known religions of humanity find ourselves gathered together in order to discuss in peace and not to line-up to face each other.* He stressed the fact that *the majority of us present unquestioningly believe that the religion to which we each belong is the bearer of God’s truth.* He noted that the study of world religions makes it clear that their respective perceptions of God, world and man and their relationship not only do not coincide, but that they often contradict one another. And he asked: How can we hold discussions in good faith on beliefs that leave no space for any doubt when each of us is firmly convinced of the truth in his own religion? His response to this question was that there are two ways that can lead us to useful results. The first way is to look for means that will allow us to coexist and interact in peace, whereas the second is to seek mutual deep understanding of the teachings of the religions we do not know

about in order to overcome misunderstanding that arise due to our poor knowledge about them.

In addressing the major difficulty - achieving mutual understanding of each other's faith - he asked that we recognize that self-understanding of a religion by its adherents manifests itself at *three levels*. First is the level of experience. Second is the level of rational and empirical knowledge. Third is the level of clouded insights at which, unfortunately, the masses seem to function. Many of the conflicts that arise among the adherents of different religions are due to misinformation and misunderstanding. Therefore, the Patriarch stressed, religious leaders are responsible for educating and guiding the masses, who are easily carried away. He noted that religious leaders share in the responsibility for conflict in the world¹². Though the Patriarch did not speculate on the problem of truth at this time, he spoke boldly on the problem of misunderstood truth by the masses, and on the great need for peaceful coexistence of all people and of all faiths.¹³

As a result of inter-Christian and interreligious dialogue, the Orthodox Church has explored her attitude toward not only other Christian churches and confessions, but also non-Christian religions by articulating our theological opinion based on the Christian understanding of God. Rev. Dr. George C. Papademetriou, a professor of Orthodox Theology states that emphasis is on the mystery of divine reality - the essence of God - which exceeds human capabilities. It is a basic truth of Orthodox Christianity that God's essence is incomprehensible and inaccessible to the human person; it is "beyond" all creaturely approach. He continues to demonstrate that the Orthodox view of dialogue with other religions is also rooted in the Church Fathers. Subsequent to the Apostolic age St. Justin Martyr, a second century apologist spoke about the principle of the "seminal word" (spermatikos logos). He made the claim "Whatever things were rightly said among all men are the property of us Christians."¹⁴ Because of their piety and holiness, the Gentiles and Jews will be saved. St. Justin states that "Christ is the first-born of God, and we have declared above all that He is the Word (Logos) of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived according to reason are Christian."¹⁵ "All peoples are able to participate in the 'spermatikos logos' or seed of reason: 'For each man spoke well in proportion to the share he had of the 'seminal word' (reason disseminated among men), seeing what was related to it," because 'the seed of reason (the Logos) implanted in every race of men' makes God's revelation accessible to all.¹⁶ The pre-existence of the eternal Logos of God enables 'all the races of men to participate' in God's revelation.

¹² His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, "Greeting" (Conference on Interreligious Dialogue), in *Orthodoxia*, Second Period, Year 5. No. I (January - March 1998) pp. 103-107.

¹³ "An Orthodox Christian View of Non-Christian Religions", <http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith8089>

¹⁴ Justin Martyr, "Second Apology, 13." *The Ante-nicene Fathers*, Vol. I Grand Rapids; Wm. Eerdmans Pub, Co (1950) p. 193.

¹⁵ Ibid., "First Apology, 36", p. 178.

¹⁶ Ibid., "Second Apology, 8", p. 191

The 'seed of the Logos is innate in all the races of men and resides in all people' uniting humanity and making all 'part of the Logos.'¹⁷

In light of the Church Father, Professor John N. Karmiris from the University of Athens, draws the conclusion "that the salvation of non-Christians, non-Orthodox and heretics depends on the all-good, all-wise and all-powerful God, who acts in the Church, but also through other 'ways.' God's saving grace is also channeled outside the Church. It cannot be assumed that salvation is denied non-Christians living in true piety and according to natural law by the God who 'is love' (1 John 4:8), In his justice and mercy God will judge them worthy even though they are outside the true Church.¹⁸ This position is shared by many Orthodox who agree that God's salvation extends to all who live according to His 'image' and 'participate in the Logos.' The Holy Spirit acted through the prophets of the Old Testament and in the nations. Salvation is also open outside the Church."¹⁹

As Orthodox Christians, we strongly believe that other religions should not be simply rejected as wrong, but considered in the perspective of their relation to the Logos of Christ. As Metropolitan George Khodr of Mount Lebanon states "God has also revealed Himself in these Scriptures. Our God is a hidden God and it does not benefit us to define objectively the intensity of the Divine Presence in the Abrahamic Bible..." We have come to this view, not simply through an abstract theological or even philosophical reflection, but rather through our long experience living next to or among people of different religions. The Middle East Council of Churches in its Fourth General Assembly declared that if the Christian faith is authentically lived, then Christians have the responsibility to struggle for the rights not simply for a particular group, but also for the dignity of each and above all, for the integrity of those who are victims of injustice. "This responsibility of all people in every society, regardless of color, race and creed, becomes a spiritual dimension, a fidelity in Christ, who calls us all to assume on behalf of everybody all true human solidarity." In this way the Orthodox people learned to approach other religions not simply in an abstract theoretic view, but from their spirituality. This approach could be a specific Orthodox contribution to the theology of religions, or even to the very delicate issue of the Christian mission among other religions.²⁰

Another aspect that should not go unnoticed and that is commonly considered as one of the greatest stumbling blocks in the realization of a true, sincere and fruitful

¹⁷ Ibid., "Second Apology, 8, 10", p. 191. See also the excellent study by John N. Karmiris, "The Universality of Salvation in Christ ", Athens: Offprint from *Theologia*. Vol. 5.52. p. 34 (in Greek); Yannoulatos, Anastasios, "Facing the World. Orthodox Christian Essays on Global Concerns", WCC Publication, Geneva, Switzerland, p. 145-146.

¹⁸ Karmiris, *The Universality of Salvation in Christ*, p. 49-50. See also Sherrard, "Christianity ... " op. cit., p. 55.

¹⁹ Theodore N. Zeses, "The Operation of the Holy Spirit Outside the Church" (in Greek). *Seminarion Theologon Thessalonikes*, No, 5, Thessalonike (1971) p. 184-199.

²⁰ Ionita, Revd Prof. Dr. Viorel, "Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity: An Orthodox Perspective" p. 10. <http://www.towards2010.org.uk/downloads/t2010paper08ionita.pdf>; See also Khodr, Georges, "Christianity in a Pluralistic World – The Economy of the Holy Spirit", *The Ecumenical Review* XXIII, 1971, 118-128.

interreligious dialogue is fanaticism. Fanaticism, as a perverse psychic phenomenon, is a threat to every person, for it does not limit itself to the religious sphere, though it always combines the desire for power with a psychologically “religious” absolutism. It can manifest itself among atheists and believers, progressives and conservatives. It roots itself in anguish and in pride: the anguish of feeling that the historical forms, to which one is accustomed and which provide one’s identity, are threatened; the pride that comes from belonging to a small group of the elect, who therefore have the right to reject and to punish those considered responsible for these upheavals. The fanatic psychosis often sees plots everywhere. Whoever disagrees is the instrument of demonic powers. If you are different from me, it is because you seek my death. The fanatic is often insecure, worried. A fanatic desires to see only negative differences, a neurosis of “small differences”, as Freud said. A fanatic is incapable of entering into the “otherness” of the *other*, to understand it ever so little, to accept that the *other* might be correct, even if only partially.²¹ And fanaticism is one of the most common accusations that believers have to suffer, especially in the secular European societies.

On a European level, the way that religions are viewed from a European point of view, is something that preoccupies our societies. In the Charta Oecumenica, in chapter 12 (Encountering other religions and world views) there is a recognition of the religious plurality in Europe and a definition of the tasks of the signatory churches to “take seriously the critical questions of others and try together to conduct fair discussions with them”. Therefore, the Conference of European Churches has requested the Churches in Dialogue Commission to devote attention to dialogue between different religions and to reflect on what is required for there to be a fruitful coexistence between the religions in Europe. In order to promote this fruitful coexistence there are certain prerequisites, one of which is to clarify one’s own understanding of other religions.²² The same Commission has been examining a series of church statements on the Theology of Religions and have made a statement which presents some of the points which European churches seem to agree such as the “assumption that God’s saving will is universal: God wants to lead all people into fellowship with His truth and that the creaturely nature of human beings and their being in the image of God is the basis for respect a priori for all religious beliefs.”²³

If we truly desire to move forward all together and provide future generations with a better understanding of peaceful coexistence it is mandatory to learn about one another. Even the Political Bodies of the European Union have realized the importance of knowing one another, for that provides a secure path to overcoming possible strives in contemporary multicultural society. The Orthodox Church has

²¹ Olivier Clement, *On Ecumenism and Fanaticism” Conversations with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY 10707 1997. p. 192.

²² Statement adopted by the CEC Churches in Dialogue Commission at its 5th meeting in Pullach/Munich, Germany (25-27 June 2008)

²³ http://cid.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/cid/Doc_Various_Documents/CiDStatementonThR.pdf

offered its full cooperation in overcoming such obstacles, by working on a basis of mutual understanding and transparency with the European Institution, especially so in the light of the implementation of Article 17 (3) of the New Lisbon Treaty that affirms cooperation and an open, transparent and regular dialogue with Churches and religious associations.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the following seven points summarize the general positive evaluation of the significance of our academic consultations toward mutual understanding and the wider framework for perspectives on the relations between Judaism, Islam and the Orthodox Churches.

First, that our religions are not willing to disturb the divine heavenly peace to serve the deplorable military hysteria of the Earth's leaders.

Second, that our religions are not willing to overlook their teaching about the unity of the human race in order to serve the recent ideologies of fragmentation and social conflicts.

Third, that our religions are not willing to replace the call put forward in their teachings for peace and justice in the world with the demand in more recent ideology for "a war of all against all."

Fourth, that our religions are willing, through inter-faith dialogue, to heal the wounds of the historic past in order jointly to serve the weak and suffering people of our time in a more consistent and responsible way.

Fifth, that our religions are willing to contribute jointly to publicizing the principles of mutual respect and sincere understanding in educational curricula and textbooks, so that the unhealthy phenomena of blind fanaticism and religious intolerance may gradually be eliminated.

Sixth, that our religions are willing to cooperate through modern ecumenical dialogue to defend peace, social justice and human rights in relations between individuals and peoples, irrespective of any religious, national, racial, social or other differences.

Seventh, that our religions are willing to support their people's governments and international organizations in order to achieve fuller awareness of these fundamental principles and the peaceful co-existence between the peoples.