

Dedicated to our new calendar friends

I AM A MAN UNDER AUTHORITY
— Or —
Many Copts We Know Are Really Nice People
Part Three
By Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

The following letter was sent by Metropolitan Ephraim to the editor of a new calendar periodical, in response to an alleged “agreement” between the Orthodox Church and the “Non-Chalcedonians” (those denominations that reject the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Ecumenical Councils).

Holy Prophets Moses and Aaron
September 4/17, 2002

Dear,

I pray that this letter finds you well and with the peace of our Saviour. Amen.

In response to your request, I feel obliged to raise the following questions about the “Agreement” between the non-Chalcedoneans [i.e. The “Monophysites”] and the Orthodox, concerning which you wrote in the last issue of your periodical:

- 1) If it is only a matter of semantics and a misunderstanding between the two parties, as some maintain, then, I assume, there is no problem for the non-Chalcedoneans to accept the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Ecumenical Councils. Am I correct? Have they done this? I saw no mention of this in your report.
- 2) Likewise, if it is only a matter of semantics, have the non-Chalcedoneans accepted all the Orthodox Saints that have been glorified in the Church subsequent to the division that occurred between the two parties? Again, your report makes no mention of this.
- 3) If the non-Chalcedoneans finally acknowledge that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ had two natures — the divine and human — that is wonderful. However, Pope Shenouda, [of the Coptic Church], whom you quote extensively, insists with great emphasis that Christ has but one will. This is the heresy of Monothelitism, which was condemned at the 6th Ecumenical Council. St Maximus the Confessor had his hand cut off, his tongue ripped out by the Byzantine emperor, and he died in exile in Georgia because he would not agree to this heresy. Does the Agreement which you reported have anything to say about this issue?
- 4) If, as reported, both parties condemn Eutyches as a heretic, then there is another problem that has to be addressed. At a Council which took place in

Ephesus in August of 449 (this is known as the “Robber Council of Ephesus” among the Orthodox Christians) Dioscorus — who is considered a saint by the non-Chalcedoneans — presided. *This false Council affirmed the Orthodoxy and sanctity of Eutyches!* It also deposed and excommunicated Theodoret, St. Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople and Pope St. Leo of Rome. In addition, the above-mentioned St. Flavian was murdered at that Council. The 4th Ecumenical Council which gathered in Chalcedon in 451, on the other hand, *deposed* Dioscorus because he would *not* denounce the doctrine or the person of Eutyches. In a document to the Emperors Valentinian III and Marcian, the Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council sent a copy of the minutes of the 3rd session (Oct. 13, 451) with a letter, in which the reasons for the deposition of Dioscorus were briefly given: that he had suppressed the letter of St. Leo, the Pope of Rome; *that he had received Eutyches into communion*; that he had ill-treated Eusebius of Dorylaeum; that he had excommunicated Pope St. Leo; and that he had not obeyed the Council (See *History of the Councils of the Church*, Vol. 3, by Charles Joseph Hefele, Edinburgh, 1883, p. 329). Again, what does the Agreement have to say about this? Is all this, too, simply a matter of semantics?

If the “Agreement” does not deal with all these issues, then it appears to me that, sad to say, *your ["World Orthodoxy"] bishops have betrayed you once again.* As the ecumenistic bishops have demonstrated time and again in their official declarations, they simply are not Orthodox any longer.

I think it is important to point out that many Coptic and Ethiopian bishops, clergy and people have visited our monastery [in Brookline, MA] over the years, and they have been warmly welcomed. I must say, in many ways, they have a piety and simplicity and reverence that, I fear, is missing in many visitors who belong to the various ["World Orthodoxy"] SCOBA jurisdictions. In addition, we are on extremely good terms and have a very warm friendship with the local Coptic priest and his presbytera. They are wonderful and warm people, and I certainly wish that we were in communion with them, because we see so much in them that is good. But, alas, because of the points I raised above, there can be no joint prayers or intercommunion with them until the doctrinal matters are resolved.

I hope this has explained our concerns.

In Christ,
✠ Ephraim, Metropolitan

My final comment: So, who is "out of the Church"? The Orthodox Christian who "follows in the footsteps of the Holy Fathers," or the one who calls himself Orthodox, but does not follow the doctrines of the Holy Fathers?