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**ARCHBISHOP ELIAS ZOGHBY  
AND HIS EFFORTS AT  
ORTHODOX-CATHOLIC RECONCILIATION  
WITHIN THE PATRIARCHATE OF ANTIOCH:  
AN EXPOSITION IN THE LIGHT OF  
CONTEMPORARY ECUMENICAL THOUGHT**

By

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## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	3
Introduction .....	4
<b>Chapter One: A History of the Schism and the Ecumenical Endeavour of the Byzantine Churches in the Patriarchate of Antioch .....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Antioch's Significance and Leadership Role in the Early Christian Community.....	7
1.2 Antioch as Patriarchate.....	8
1.3 Antioch as an Important Example of Mediate Communion .....	11
1.4 Break-up of Antiochian Unity.....	13
1.5 Present-Day Patriarchate .....	15
1.6 Informal Ecumenism and Communion: Inter-Church Marriages between Eastern Christians.....	17
1.6.1 The Catholic Church .....	18
1.6.2 The Orthodox Church.....	21
1.6.3 The Eastern Christian Situation: The Byzantine Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.....	23
1.6.4 Inter-Church Families: Witnesses to Christian Unity .....	25
1.7 Formal Ecumenism and Communion: History of the Ecumenical Movement in Antioch .....	26
<b>Chapter Two: A Brief Biography of Archbishop Elias Zoghby .....</b>	<b>33</b>
2.1 Personal history .....	33
2.2 Personal Vocation and Seminary Life.....	35
2.3 Archbishop Elias Zoghby: Man of Faith, Man of Truth, and Man of Toil .....	38
<b>Chapter Three: An Examination/Synopsis of Archbishop Elias Zoghby's Main Works on the Subject of Ecumenism.....</b>	<b>41</b>
3.1 Early Ecumenical Works as a Result of the Second Vatican Council (1960's).....	42
3.1.1 "Christian Unity and the Salvation of the World" .....	43
3.1.2 "The Unity and Diversity of the Church" .....	44
3.1.3 "Understanding the Eastern Churches" .....	45
3.1.4 "One Church, East and West" .....	46
3.1.5 "The Two Christian Traditions" .....	47
3.1.6 "In Pursuit of Orthodox-Catholic Unity" .....	47
3.1.7 "Equality: the Basis of Union Between Orthodoxy and Catholicism" .....	48
3.1.8 "The Second Vatican Council and Christian Unity" .....	49
3.1.9 "Uniatism and Ecumenism" .....	49
3.1.10 "The Future of the Uniate Eastern Catholic Churches" .....	51
3.2 "Progression of ecumenical works" .....	52
3.2.1 "Orthodox in Union? Yes! Uniate? No!" .....	53
3.2.2 <i>We Are All Schismatics</i> .....	55
3.3 Recent Ecumenical Works .....	59
3.3.1 Ecumenical Reflections.....	59
3.3.2 History of the Project of Reunification of the Byzantine Patriarchate of Antioch ...	61
3.4 Analysis of Archbishop Zoghby's Main Ideas.....	64

<b>Chapter Four: A Commentary on and Evaluation of Archbishop Elias Zoghby's Initiatives and the Current Ecumenical Movement.....</b>	<b>71</b>
4.1 The Reaction of both Catholic and Orthodox Church Authorities to Archbishop Elias Zoghby and His contributions .....	71
4.1.1 The Catholic Standpoint.....	72
4.1.2 The Orthodox Opinion .....	74
4.2 The Current Ecumenical Climate and Concrete Situation of Orthodox-Catholic Relations.....	75
4.3 The Thought of Archbishop Elias Zoghby in Comparison with <i>Ut Unum Sint</i> .....	78
4.3.1 Trinitarian Basis of Church Unity.....	79
4.3.2 Church Unity as Willed By God .....	80
4.3.3 The Dialogue of Love and the Dialogue of Truth.....	80
4.3.4 Prayer and Love as Tools for Christian Unity.....	81
4.3.5 The Reality of Partial Communion between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches and the Possibilities Which Flow from It.....	82
4.3.6 The Role of Entire Communities, Especially the Eastern Catholic Churches, In Fostering Church Unity.....	83
4.3.7 Working for Christian Unity is an Obligation for Every Christian.....	85
4.3.8 Church Unity and Legitimate Diversity .....	85
4.3.9 Importance of Humility and Repentance in the Ecumenical Task.....	86
4.3.10 The First Millennium as a Normative Model for Future Church Unity.....	87
4.3.11 Church Unity Needs to be Built on the Foundation of the Catholic Church and the Mission of Peter .....	88
4.3.12 The Necessity of Avoiding Facile or Reductionist Approaches .....	88
4.4 Evaluative Remarks.....	89
4.5 What the Current Ecumenical Movement Can Learn from Archbishop Elias Zoghby and How His Ideas Can Reshape the Movement and Move it Forward .....	92
Conclusion and Future Development.....	94
Bibliography.....	98

## Abstract

This thesis studies Archbishop Elias Zoghby and his efforts at Orthodox-Catholic reconciliation within the Patriarchate of Antioch in the light of contemporary ecumenical thought. He has spent the past forty years promoting the cause of unity among the Catholic and Orthodox Churches and has written several articles and books on the unification of the Byzantine Churches of Antioch. Kyr Elias encountered many challenges and criticisms for his project of Double Communion and received much attention for his theological contributions. Although his ideas have been set aside as impractical, it is argued that his treatment of the subject of ecumenism is based on the experiences of everyday life of the lay faithful of Antioch. As such it is a viable representation of lived communion.

Chapter One examines briefly the history of the Church of Antioch its experience of the tragedy of schism, and its special vocation to breaking new ground, all from a perspective that helps to better understand the present ecumenical climate within that Church and the milieu from which Archbishop Zoghby emerged. Chapter Two introduces the man himself, his life and his ministry. In the third chapter the written ecumenical works of Archbishop Zoghby are examined chronologically. In Chapter Four is an analysis of his ideas, explored by means of the reactions of both the Catholic and the Orthodox authorities to his initiatives. Furthermore, this chapter sets Kyr Elias's writings alongside the ecumenical ideas of Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* in order to compare and contrast the two. The conclusion notes some of the weaknesses of Archbishop Zoghby's initiative, but also highlights some aspects of his proposals that have not yet been fully accepted and perhaps not even fully understood by the ecumenical movement at large.

## Introduction

The ecumenical movement between the Catholic West and the Orthodox East has been a long and arduous effort plagued by a resurgence of old memories of mistrust and suspicion. The so-called Great Schism of 1054 was the beginning of an extensive era in which -- instead of working together as heirs to the apostles -- the great Churches of Rome and Constantinople existed and evolved independently of each other. Some of the Catholic West's endeavours, for which recent popes have since apologized, made matters worse.<sup>1</sup> The twentieth century, however, showed much promise. With the lifting of the mutual excommunications and the commencement of the Orthodox-Catholic dialogues, the road to unity seemed hopeful.<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby emerged in this environment as a central figure in the ecumenical movement especially within the Patriarchate of Antioch. Although he encountered many challenges and much criticism along the way, he maintained his position that the Churches should be one.

This thesis introduces not only Archbishop Elias Zoghby to the reader; it also presents the milieu from which he emerged. The Patriarchate of Antioch is one which is ancient and rooted in a biblical community. It would be incorrect to conclude that Kyr Elias's approach could arise in any of the Eastern Christian Churches because there is a specific historical context in which he is working. In Chapter One of the text we will examine briefly the history of the Church of Antioch from a perspective that will help us best understand the present ecumenical climate within that Church and the milieu from which Archbishop Zoghby emerged. Chapter Two will present his personal perspective in relation to his historical background. This will be accomplished through

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<sup>1</sup> For example: the sack of Constantinople (AD 1204) by the Crusaders and the proselytizing missionaries.

<sup>2</sup> Pope Paul VI and Athenagoras I, Joint Declaration *Pénétrés de reconnaissance* (7-12-65), 3: AAS 58 (1966), 20. The excommunications were mutually lifted in 1965: "Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I in his Synod...declare by mutual agreement...to regret and to remove from memory and from the midst of the Church the sentences of excommunication" (Ibid., 4).

a brief biographical sketch examining not only his upbringing, but also his vocation as well as his various accomplishments throughout his life. In the third chapter we will examine the written ecumenical works of Archbishop Zoghby chronologically. In Chapter Four we will conclude with an analysis of his ideas. In addition, this chapter will explore the reactions of both the Catholic and Orthodox authorities to his initiatives. Furthermore, this chapter will set Kyr Elias's writings alongside the ideas of Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*. As an Eastern Orthodox by birth who moved to the Eastern Catholic Church as a youth, I can personally contribute a unique perspective to the lived ecumenical relations expressed daily among members of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches of Antioch. Throughout this document I will make several references to the lived and informal communion that I have experienced.

## Chapter One

### *A History of the Schism and the Ecumenical Endeavours of the Byzantine Churches in the Patriarchate of Antioch*

It is impossible to understand Archbishop Zoghby's unique and sometimes controversial approach without understanding the concrete context of the Church of Antioch. It has the distinction of being the place where Jesus' followers were first called Christians. It is the place where the first Christian divisions arose and were healed. It is the place where the question of admission of Gentiles to the Christian community raised new and painful issues. At the same time it lives under the shadow of being divided into five rival patriarchates. Thus, Christians of the Antiochian tradition can justly feel pride about their early ability to overcome division, and simultaneously feel the extreme pain of being among the most divided of Christian communities. Thus, it is not surprising that a bishop of the Antiochian tradition was both moved and motivated to overcome disagreements in novel ways.

Antioch, once a leading cultural and religious center, retains a noteworthy place in history. Over the centuries Antioch has played a major role in history because it has seen the rise and fall of many powerful empires; but most of all it has established itself as a place of significance. Of most importance to Christians is the fact that Antioch was, for a time, the staging point for the worldwide expansion of Christianity, in particular the birthplace of Gentile Christianity.

Even before the Christians, however, its importance was noteworthy. Antioch, or Antakya, as it is known today in the Near East, was until recently a politically important location. This city was considered a great metropolis of the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire - third city of the realm. According to historians, Antioch was a great artistic, administrative and commercial

centre<sup>3</sup>. In the fourth century, for example, it housed a great population estimated at over 200,000 people. Its importance was even greater than is immediately evident because, on any given day, a wide variety of people passed through the city and brought with them news of the outside world.<sup>4</sup> Truly, history proved Antioch to be one of the great cities of the East. But where did it all begin?

### 1.1 Antioch's Significance and Leadership Role in the Early Christian Community

A brief account of the city's history is necessary in order to place Antioch in its proper geopolitical context. Antioch was founded in 300 BC by Seleucius (king of Syria and one of Alexander the Great's generals), and was the centre of the Seleucid Kingdom. It was modeled on the great city of Alexandria. The Romans took over Antioch around 64 BC and it became the capital of the Roman province of Syria. It remained in Roman possession until the sixth century when the Persians captured it after it was almost completely destroyed by an earthquake. In the mid 7<sup>th</sup> century, Antioch fell into the hands of the Arabs. Subsequently, at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Byzantines recaptured the city until the Turks took it over in 1084. The crusaders captured it in 1098.<sup>5</sup> It fell to the Egyptian Mamluk Sultan Baibars, in 1268, after another siege until 1517. Since the sixteenth century, Antioch has been ruled by the Turks, and is now part of modern Turkey.<sup>6</sup> According to the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, Antioch was well known as the third greatest city in the Roman Empire following Rome and Alexandria.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> G. Downey. "Antioch." *Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. William J. MacDonald (New York: McGraw Hill Books, 1967), 1: 458.

<sup>4</sup> R. Stark. "Antioch as the Social Situation for Matthew's Gospel," *Social History of the Matthean Community* ed. David L. Balch (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 191.

<sup>5</sup> According to Glanville Downey in his book *Ancient Antioch*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 272, "in 1098, after a long and famous siege, the city was captured by the Crusaders under Bohemon and the Frankish principality of Antioch was founded. This lasted until 1268."

<sup>6</sup> "Antioch," *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <<http://www.britannica.com/ebc/article-9355511>> [Accessed March 5, 2005]. See also: Glanville Downey, *Ancient Antioch*, 11ff.

<sup>7</sup> Raymond E. Brown & John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 85.

Perhaps Antioch is best known to Christians as the place where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians (Acts 11:26); Antioch played an important role in Christianity because it was closely associated with the apostolic Church. It was a good place to evangelize because it was commonly known to be relatively open to new religions, cults and other ethnicities.<sup>8</sup> Since Antioch was home to several Jewish and Gentile Christian leaders, several dialogues took place among the early Church authorities on how to manage converts. In addition to this, Antioch is known not only as being the home of the first Gentile Church, but also for being the first missionary Church.<sup>9</sup> According to some scholars, the “Christ Movement attained a degree and kind of self-identity at Antioch which made it visible to outsiders as a distinct movement [apart from Judaism] very early in its history.”<sup>10</sup> Antioch was home to many great Christian leaders, several illustrious theologians, it initiated a distinguished school of exegesis, and was a breeding ground for different schools of thought and tendencies, sometimes orthodox and sometimes heterodox.<sup>11</sup> At least one of the Gospels is thought to have been written in Antioch: the Gospel of Matthew. Even Saint Paul referred to Antioch’s significance in his ministry (see Acts 13:47). It seems clear that Antioch was an important centre of Christendom, fulfilling many perceived prophecies and setting in motion important events in the life of the Church, initially through its apostolicity and later in its role as Patriarchate.

## 1.2 Antioch as Patriarchate

Antioch’s important role in Christendom is demonstrated by its significance as a Patriarchate. According to Christian tradition, Saints Peter and Paul founded the Christian community of

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<sup>8</sup> Stark, *Antioch as Social Situation*, 192.

<sup>9</sup> James Strachan, “Antioch,” *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, ed. James Hastings (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1973), 69.

<sup>10</sup> Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), 16.

<sup>11</sup> Brown & Meier, *Antioch and Rome*, 12.

Antioch. Saint Peter is believed to be the first Bishop of Antioch, from 33 – 40 AD.<sup>12</sup> Historians maintain that, after Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD, Antioch became an even more important centre of Christianity in the East. Its authority spread over Syria, Phoenicia (now Lebanon), Arabia, Palestine, Cilicia (now Southern Turkey), Cyprus and Mesopotamia (now Iraq)<sup>13</sup>. Consequently, Antioch exerted a major influence on the Eastern Churches which continues to this day. It is a patriarchate for a number of communities of Catholic and Orthodox Christians. More recently the patriarchs, although retaining the name “Patriarch of Antioch,” have moved to different locations in the Middle East, namely Syria and Lebanon.

The importance and influence of the Church in Antioch is apparent. However, it was not officially recognized as a patriarchate until well after the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. In 451, at the Council of Chalcedon, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem was recognized as, having authority over several bishops that had until then been under Antiochian jurisdiction.<sup>14</sup> This did not sit well with Antioch. However, this council is also important to the Antiochians because it also saw the division of the Patriarchate due to the Monophysite debate. On the one hand, it was believed that Christ had two natures, human and divine, and this was evident from his life, death and resurrection. On the other hand, there was also the belief among some Christians that the human and divine natures of Christ were somehow combined, and that as a result the human nature was overtaken by the divine during the Incarnation, leaving Christ with one nature -- divine.<sup>15</sup> The council declared such “Monophysite” theories as heresy and

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<sup>12</sup> J. M. Neale, *A History of the Holy Eastern Church* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2003), 3. (See also: Glanville Downey, *Ancient Antioch* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963], 11ff.).

<sup>13</sup> G. Downey, “Antioch,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. William J. MacDonald (New York: McGraw Hill Books, Volume 1, 1967), 623.

<sup>14</sup> Downey, *Antioch*, 623.

<sup>15</sup> Interesting to note (in Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria: from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961], 534) that “this was the time when the Monophysites under the energetic leadership of Jacob Baradaeus – and with the support of the Empress Theodora – were gathering renewed

excommunicated its proponents. Unfortunately, many who simply felt that Chalcedon should have continued to use the phraseology of Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Council of Ephesus, but who were not really Monophysite in thought were alienated by the Chalcedonean teaching. As a result, from the year 550 AD, the Antiochian Patriarchate was divided into the Melkites (literally “the King’s Men”, or those loyal to the imperial council), who accepted Chalcedon, and the “Monophysites” (currently known as the Syriac Orthodox Church), who clung to the terminology expressed by Saint Cyril of Alexandria that there was one divine nature of Christ.<sup>16</sup> The Patriarchate, after this division, was composed of two communities that were each diminished in number, but certainly not in influence.

The imperially recognized patriarchate, sometimes called the Melkite Church, continued to be powerful. History tells us that the Melkite Church adopted the Byzantine rite around the 10<sup>th</sup> century and gradually became more Byzantine due to the everlasting influence of Constantinople. To this day the Church of Constantinople exerts significant influence on the Antiochian Orthodox. The Melkites followed Constantinople into the so-called great schism with Rome. After that point Rome began to look upon their former allies, the Melkites, as schismatics and sometimes heretics.<sup>17</sup> The crusaders from the Latin West overtook Antioch, establishing a Latin Patriarchate. At that time the Melkite Patriarchs resided in Constantinople – this turn of events made them even more dependent on the Church of the imperial capital. The Melkite Patriarch returned to Antioch in 1268 when the Crusaders’ kingdom fell. However, due to political instability, and for safety reasons, the Patriarchate’s location was moved in 1366 to Damascus

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strength and were organizing themselves into what amounted to an independent Church totally detached from official Orthodoxy.”

<sup>16</sup> G.D. Gallaro, “Melkite,” *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Berard L. Marthalaer (Washington: Thomson/Gale, 2003), 9: 627.

<sup>17</sup> Gallaro, Melkite, 627.

where both the Catholic and Orthodox successors to the Chalcedonian, or Melkite patriarchs of old, reside today.

### **1.3 Antioch as an Important Example of Mediate Communion**

Antioch, because of its influential position, played an important role as mediator. Throughout the history of the Church, particularly the early Church, Antioch was seen as a place to discuss pertinent issues and to attempt to resolve them. The bible certainly makes this clear regarding the debates associated with new Christians. The main issues centered on the Jewish and Gentile Christians and what was necessary for their conversion. The questions that were raised were whether the Jewish traditions and laws should be upheld and whether the rites of circumcision and dietary rules should be followed by non-Jews. Michelle Slee, in her book *The Church of Antioch in the First Century CE*, discusses the possibility that circumcision and food selection were not the main issues. Interestingly, she suggests that the conflict may have its origins in the question of sharing from the same Eucharistic table. How could Jews share the same table with unclean Gentiles? According to Slee, “many Jews in the first century CE were bitterly hostile to Gentiles. Such Jews often categorically denied the possibility that Gentiles might ever be saved.”<sup>18</sup> The only way they could be saved is by converting fully to Judaism. In general, the Jewish Christians were quite hostile to the Gentile Christians. These disputes are recorded in the second chapter of Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

Saint Paul says bluntly that he opposed Peter “to his face” (Gal 2:11) regarding these issues. Saint Paul argued that both Jews and non-Jews, the circumcised and non-circumcised, were equal in God’s eyes and worthy of His salvation. More importantly, Saint Paul believed that they were living in the eschatological age and because of this the salvation of the Gentiles, regardless of

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<sup>18</sup> Michelle Slee, *The Church of Antioch in the First Century CE* (London: Sheffield Press, 2003), 25.

their conversion to Judaism, was at hand. As a result, the Antioch Church was “torn apart by division and facing an uncertain future.”<sup>19</sup> Jewish and Gentile Christians thus were facing serious divisions -- possibly the first schism of the Church. It is not hard to believe that the early Christians in Antioch were “influential in the complete separation of Christianity from Judaism.”<sup>20</sup> These discussions are considered to be among the first “ecumenical” dialogues regarding the law of the Church. At issue were relationships with people outside the Christian community of Antioch. Some Jewish Christians saw their communion with other Jews as crucial, while others wanted to bring non-Jews into the Christian community. One can see parallels between this situation and the efforts of Melkite Greek Catholics today to simultaneously maintain ties with Rome and also have full communion with non-Catholic Antiochian Orthodox.

Antioch was a place of mediation, the middle ground where these things could be discussed and resolved. Saint Basil (the fourth-century Cappadocian Father) was also a noteworthy proponent of finding a middle way. Being a mediator in several religious disputes, he was often called upon to play a role of unity because he displayed understanding and openness to heretics and schismatics, at times bringing them back to the faith. This is clearly demonstrated in his efforts to unite the Christians who were divided by a schism in Antioch. Due to the Arian controversy, there typically were two bishops in Antioch, the Catholic, or Nicene, and an Arian bishop. But at one point there were two Nicene claimants. The role of Basil in this controversy was as follows:

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<sup>19</sup> Slee, *Church of Antioch*, 43.

<sup>20</sup> Betty Jane Bailey & Bailey, J Martin, *Who are the Christians in the Middle East?* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 61.

Mellitus [sic] was one Nicene bishop and Paulinus was another. Basil took the side of Mellitus [sic], but at Constantinople I Gregory Nazianzus had been party to appointing Paulinus. Reports got to Rome and Alexandria that Paulinus was a Nicene bishop and so they supported him. It caused no disunity between Basil and Pope Damasus, but Basil tried to get the pope to see Mellitus' [sic] side<sup>21</sup>.

Thus, Basil is in full communion with Pope Damasus of Rome but at the same time Basil maintains communion with Melitus. This put Damasus in mediate communion with Melitus even though Damasus was in direct communion with Melitus's rival, Paulinus. Thus, Antioch becomes a ground for mediate communion already in the fourth century. This legacy cannot go unnoticed by Christians of the Church of Antioch living today.

#### **1.4 Break-up of Antiochian Unity**

In any great metropolis there are always differing ideas and differing theologies deriving from the same basic religious beliefs. Antioch was no different in this respect. We see differences of opinion first in the apostolic Church between Saint Peter and Saint Paul (see Gal 2) regarding the Gentile Christians and Jewish laws. One could say this was the first "schism" of Antioch. As well, as previously mentioned, the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD) was important for Antioch. Conflict regarding this Council's decisions caused the fragmentation of the patriarchate which lasts to this day.

Antioch is unique among patriarchates because of the diversity of its members. According to Jean Corbon, Antioch was "born under the sign of plurality".<sup>22</sup> One of the original members of the Pentarchy – Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem – Antioch has been home to many Orthodox and Catholic Churches. Currently, five bishops hold the title of

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<sup>21</sup> "Saint Basil the Great". <<http://www.hist.edu/370basil.html>> [Accessed January 20, 2005]. See also H.Burn-murdoch, *The Development of the Papacy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), 166-171.

<sup>22</sup> Jean Corbon, *L'Eglise des Arabes* (Paris: Cerf, 1977), 21.

“Patriarch of Antioch.” They all claim to be successors the Apostle Peter. The Patriarchates are listed as follows (in alphabetical order):

- Greek Orthodox & Greek Catholic (Melkite)
- Maronite (Catholic)
- Syrian Orthodox (Syriac/”Monophysite”) & Syrian Catholic

These Churches base all their roots in the apostolic Church of the first century. The divisions came about because of disputes and disagreements in the Church at various times. Each Church group currently has its own leadership and separate Patriarchate. The Greek Orthodox Church in 1724 became divided into Orthodox and Catholic. In fact, as was already noted, the name “Melkite” was used for the Greek-speaking and imperially-oriented Church after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD. Only after the schism of 1724 did the Church in communion with Rome find that name as part of its official nomenclature. Both the Greek Orthodox and their Catholic counterpart follow the Byzantine Liturgical tradition. Additionally, it should be noted that there was a Latin Patriarchate established in Antioch after the first crusade. The post, which was seen as an affront to Eastern Christianity, was finally abolished in 1964.

The Maronite Church, unique in that it is the only Eastern Church without an Orthodox counterpart, also has its roots in the apostolic Church of Antioch. The Maronites trace the origins of their separate ecclesiastical status to the fourth century hermit St. Maron who is believed to have been a colleague of Saint John Chrysostom. His followers spent their lives devoted to an existence for God and His Church. These followers, primarily monks, fled to the mountains of Lebanon because of various persecutions. The monks then built up lay communities around their monastic centres. They have been in full and visible communion with Rome since the twelfth century (although they claim to never have been out of communion with Rome). The majority of their followers are of Lebanese origin and currently can be found all over the world. Their

liturgy is Antiochian in origin and, although it often greatly resembles the Latin Rite Liturgy (due to Latin influence), they are progressively returning to their Antiochian heritage and their West Syrian liturgical tradition.

The Syrian Orthodox and Catholic Churches also originated in Antioch. However, they were often labelled in earlier times as the “Monophysites.” After the Council of Chalcedon they were separated from the imperial Church represented by Rome and Constantinople. They use a traditional ancient Antiochian, or West Syrian, Liturgy (the Liturgy of St. James) in the Syriac language. The Syrian Catholics have been in communion with Rome since the seventeenth century, when they “denounced the Monophysite heresy” and accepted the ecclesiastical sovereignty of Rome.

### 1.5 Present-Day Patriarchate

The Patriarchate of Antioch consists of two main rites, Syrian and Byzantine. All five Patriarchs are adequately classified within these two categories. The Maronite, Syrian Orthodox, and Syrian Catholic Churches belong to the West Syrian, or Antiochian Rite; the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic belong to the Byzantine Rite. All the Patriarchs reside in Lebanon, although the Melkites and Syriac Orthodox have their official headquarters in Damascus, Syria. The largest concentrations of faithful reside in the Middle East; however the numbers in the Diaspora, if added together, far outnumber their countries of origin. The breakdown of the faithful of Antioch (as of 2004) is as follows<sup>23</sup>:

- **Melkite:** the total number of Melkite faithful in the world equals 1,340,913. Lebanon = 378,407; Syria = 281,000; Jordan = 31,300; Holy Land = 71,190; Brazil = 418,000; USA = 29,323; Canada = 43,000; Australia = 45,000 and Venezuela = 25,000. There are also minimal numbers in Mexico, Iraq, Egypt, Sudan and Kuwait.

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<sup>23</sup> Statistics from the Catholic Near East Welfare Association. <<http://www.cnewa.org>> [Accessed on March 22, 2005].

- **Maronite**: the total number of Maronite faithful in the world equals 3,106,792. Lebanon = 1,431,983; Syria = 46,105; Jordan = 1,200; Holy Land = 7,504; Argentina = 700,000; Brazil = 468,000; USA = 57,000; Australia = 150,000; Canada = 80,000; Mexico = 150,000.
- **Syriac Catholic**: the total number of Syriac faithful in the world equals 123,376. Lebanon = 14,500; Iraq = 60,000; Holy Land = 1,550; Egypt = 1,739; Syria = 30,130; Turkey = 2,150; USA = 12,842. There are also minimal numbers in Kuwait and Sudan.
- **Syriac Orthodox**: the total number of Syriac Orthodox faithful in the world equals 500,000, plus 1,200,000 in India. These faithful are found in Syria, The Holy Land, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey, Australia, Americas, India.
- **Antiochian Orthodox**: the total number of Antiochian Orthodox faithful in the world equals 750,000. These faithful are found in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Kuwait, Iran, the Americas, Australia.

As one can clearly see, the Christians of Antioch in communion with Rome far outnumber their Orthodox counterparts making Orthodoxy, although still numerous, somewhat the minority in the Church of Antioch. This could also be a contributing factor to why they are fairly apprehensive toward ecumenical dialogue and some of the plans for possible reunion with their Catholic brothers and sisters.

One thing that the Antiochian Christians have, especially those in the Middle East, is a common adversary. They are fighting together, not only for their respective countries, but also for their identity as Christians. In a turbulent society fast becoming more and more Islamic, what keeps the Christians resilient is their interdependence. Their strength is only maintained when they stick together. Although formal communion has not been attained, informal communion occurs every day. Informal communion finds expressions daily, particularly through inter-Church marriage, a relatively common occurrence today for most Christian families.

## 1.6 Informal Ecumenism and Communion: Inter-Church Marriages between Eastern Christians

*"You live in your marriage the hopes and the difficulties of the path to Christian unity."  
- Pope John Paul II to Inter-Church Couples, 1982*

Christ's endorsement of marriage is demonstrated at the Wedding at Cana where He performed His first miracle. Although he encouraged celibacy (see 1 Cor 7:1-15, 7-39), the Apostle Paul also insisted strongly on Christian marriage being a symbol of the union between Christ and His Church. When a man and a woman from two different Christian traditions fall in love and decide to marry, they begin the long journey of learning to live the unity of their love in the face of the divided Churches. This is a reality that more and more people face today more than ever. The three main ingredients of a committed marital relationship include physical, mental and spiritual union. All three are necessary for the relationship to work and to remain strong. An Inter-Church marriage is, defined as, "one in which the spouses belong to and are active members of two different Christian Churches not in full communion with each other."<sup>24</sup> However, what happens with Inter-Church marriages between Eastern Christians who superficially and, for the most part, internally, have all the same traditions? Churches of the Patriarchate of Antioch are distinctive in that there is widespread sacramental sharing throughout, especially within a given liturgical tradition, even when ecclesial loyalties (for example to the Orthodox or Catholic Communion) might differ. This adds a new pastoral dynamic to the Patriarchate and the lived and "informal" communion and sacramental sharing being experienced by the lay communities. One must understand the experiences of these Christians from both the

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<sup>24</sup> Jude D. Weisenbeck, SDS, "Opportunities and Challenges of Inter-Church Marriages for the Ecumenical Movement," *Ecumenical Trends* 24 (1995):12.

Eastern Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions, as well as the views of these Churches regarding intermarriage, in order to fully comprehend Kyr Elias's point of view.

### **1.6.1 The Catholic Church**

If one of the parties is not Catholic, there may be concerns about how the Catholic Church will look upon the relationship. The Catholic Church usually tries to warn Inter-Church couples about the inherent difficulties in such marriage and will usually allow the marriage to take place only under certain conditions.<sup>25</sup> The Catholic Church acknowledges and respects the beliefs of each person involved. They generally accept, as fellow baptized Christians (see canon 813), any individual or faith group which devoutly, seriously, and prayerfully considers themselves to be Christian. While membership in the Catholic Church is open to all persons willing to accept its teachings, the Church does not attempt to force anyone to become Catholic even when they plan to marry a Catholic.

According to the canons, the Catholic Church affirms the right and responsibility of a Catholic parent to pass on their faith to their children; this is in accordance with canon 814 of the Eastern Code. Canon 814 basically states that:

1. The Catholic partner declares that he/she is prepared to remove dangers of falling away from the faith and makes a sincere promise to do all in his/her power to have all the offspring baptized and reared in the Catholic Church;

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<sup>25</sup> Canon 1125 of the *Code of Canon Law* states that the Catholic party is to declare that he or she is prepared to remove dangers of defecting from the faith, and is to make a sincere promise to do all in his or her power in order that all children be baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church. The other party is to be informed of these promises to be made by the Catholic party, so that it is certain that he or she is truly aware of the promise and of the obligation of the Catholic party. It is important to note that no special guarantee should be requested of the non-Catholic party and the obligation contracted by that party. However, in pastoral practice, we do see the odd situation where the non-Catholic party is required to agree to raise their children in the Catholic Church. (Ernest Caparros, Michel Theriault, Jean Thorn, ed. *Code of Canon Law Annotated*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, [Montreal: Wilson and Lafleur Limitée, 2004], 879-880).

2. The other partner is to be informed at an appropriate time of these promises which the Catholic partner has made, so that it is clear that the other partner is truly aware of the promises and the obligation of the Catholic partner;
3. Both partners are to be instructed on the essential ends and properties of marriage, which are to be excluded by either spouse.<sup>26</sup>

The Catholic parent must intend to have all their offspring baptized and raised in the Catholic Church. Understandably, compliance with this prescription is difficult in many instances, however well-intentioned one may be when entering marriage. Although the non-Catholic partner may agree, experience shows that usually they do not comply (especially if it is the mother who is the Catholic partner). The marriage must, in addition, always be blessed and consent exchanged in the presence of a Catholic priest in order to be a valid marriage<sup>27</sup>. Marriages between Catholics and other non-Catholics are held as valid, though illicit if a dispensation of *mixtae religionis* had not been obtained.

The restrictions and precaution in the law exist in order to ensure that the couples understand the implication of their union and the responsibilities that ensue from the marriage. Most couples are made aware of this in the Catholic Church during marriage preparation courses, which are required if they are to be married in the Catholic Church. However, if they are not getting married in the Catholic Church, it is more difficult to get the couple to discuss these issues and understand the difficulties involved. Commonly we see opposition on the side of the Church in regards to these unions because it is difficult to live a full sacramental-liturgical life for either one or both spouses in such a union. The opposition of the Church to such unions is very ancient and

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<sup>26</sup> Victor J. Pospishil, *Eastern Catholic Church Law* (Brooklyn: Saint Maron Publications, 1993), 432. (see also (Ernest Caparros, Michel Theriault, Jean Thorn, ed. *Code of Canon Law Annotated*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition [Montreal: Wilson and Lafleur Limitée, 2004], 879-80).

<sup>27</sup> The *Codex canonum ecclesiarum orientalium* (can. 834) and the *Codex juris canonici* (can. 1127) both allude to a distinction that if the couple is married in an Eastern non-Catholic Church, the form for the celebration of marriage prescribed by law is to be observed only for liceity; for validity, however, the blessing of a priest is required, while observing the other requirements of law.

early councils legislated against marriages of this character.<sup>28</sup> However, the Second Vatican Council changed the approach that was taken. There was a new consideration for those not in full communion with Rome, but nonetheless “validly baptized Christians [who] were considered to belong to Churches or ecclesial Communities which were in a least partial communion with the Roman Church”.<sup>29</sup> This is what is said by the Second Vatican Council in *Orientalium*

*Ecclesiarium*:

To obviate invalid marriages when Eastern Catholics marry baptized Eastern non-Catholics and in order to promote fidelity in and the sanctity of marriage, as well as peace within the family, the Sacred Council determines that the canonical "form" for the celebration of these marriages is of obligation only for liceity; for their validity the presence of a sacred minister is sufficient, provided that other prescriptions of law are observed.<sup>30</sup>

While the Western Church<sup>31</sup> usually doesn't promote such marriage, it nevertheless understands the need of the people in regards to these marriages. The Church does not declare them as being invalid. In the Eastern Church, however, the seventh century Council in Trullo, declared marriages between members of the Church and outsiders null and void (canon 72), and this discipline has since been maintained in the Greek Church. The latter has thus shown itself

<sup>28</sup> “Mixed Marriage,” *New Advent Catholic Online Encyclopedia*. <<http://www.newadvent.org/>> [Accessed January 12, 2005].

<sup>29</sup> Roman Cholij, “The ‘iter’ of Mixed Marriage in the Catholic Church,” *Eastern Churches Journal* 2 (1995):94.

<sup>30</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Orientalium ecclesiarium*, The Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, in Norman P. Tanner, SJ, ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 2:905. It is interesting to note that while the decree is referred to as “Secretum de ecclesiis orientalibus catholicis” in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1965), 76, and Tanner uses this same terminology in his English translation, the English text of this decree is presented on the official web site of the Holy See as “Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite” <[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19641121\\_orientalium-ecclesiarum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_orientalium-ecclesiarum_en.html)> [Accessed on January 10, 2005]. The other translations on this web site refer to the Eastern Catholic Churches, but the English stands alone in its use of the outdated terminology “Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite”.

<sup>31</sup> Western Churches here refers particularly to the Roman Catholic Church. The term is used throughout this thesis to refer to Roman Catholics because this is how Kyr Elias uses the term. As well, this thesis is about Orthodox/Catholic reconciliation and has nothing at all to do with Anglican or Protestant Communities because Archbishop Zoghby did not treat that subject; furthermore according to the official teachings of the Catholic Church, the term “Church” is reserved for Catholics and Orthodox whereas Anglicans and Protestants are referred to as Ecclesial Communities (See *Unitatis Redintegratio* Par. 19 and 22).

opposed to marriages between members of the Orthodox Church and Catholics.<sup>32</sup> This will be discussed more in depth in the next section on the position of the Orthodox Church on Inter-Church Marriages.

### 1.6.2 The Orthodox Church

The Eastern Orthodox Church has always frowned upon mixed marriages and still does to some degree. The Church looks upon the prospect of these marriages negatively because of the fear that the Orthodox member will be drawn away and their children will not be raised in the Orthodox Church. According to Metropolitan Neophytos of Aleppo, “the Orthodox Churches forbid mixed marriages between an Orthodox party and a heterodox (heretical or schismatic) party.”<sup>33</sup> They essentially believe that if one is Orthodox, and one marries a non-Orthodox, one is, as the saying has it, “getting into a boat with someone who rows altogether differently than you.” According to the Orthodox, marriage should be a union on both a physical and spiritual level. The key to a happy marriage is oneness. In the Orthodox Church, “unity of faith has always been the presupposition for marriage blessed within the Orthodox Church”.<sup>34</sup> When the party’s religion or Christian affiliation differ, oneness in faith is much harder to attain in the marriage relationship. The oneness in faith includes the Eucharistic sharing, which is not possible amongst Churches not in communion with each other.<sup>35</sup>

Often-quoted figures show that a mixed marriage is two and one half times as likely to result in separation, as opposed to a marriage between two persons who share the same religious

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<sup>32</sup> “Mixed Marriage,” *New Advent Catholic Online Encyclopedia*. <<http://www.newadvent.org/>> [Accessed January 12, 2005].

<sup>33</sup> Metropolitan Neophytos of Aleppo, “Mixed Marriage,” *Eastern Churches Journal* 2 (1995): 88.

<sup>34</sup> Lewis J. Patsavos, “A Canonical Response to Intra-Christian and Inter-Religious Marriages,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 40 (1995): 289.

<sup>35</sup> Alice Scourby, “The Orthodox Church and Intra-Christian Marriages,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 40 (1995): 315.

heritage.<sup>36</sup> The closer the religious traditions are, however, the less likely it is that the separation will occur. Usually the bishop can give dispensation if the non-Orthodox party promises in writing to baptize and raise the children in the Orthodox Church, and the marriage ceremony takes place in an Orthodox Church celebrated by Orthodox clergy. As indicated by Metropolitan Neophytos of Aleppo, “all Eastern Churches forbid mixed marriages unless two conditions are met: the marriage must be blessed by an Orthodox Bishop or Priest [and] the non-Orthodox party must promise to baptize and raise the children in Orthodoxy”<sup>37</sup>.

According to Lewis Patsavos,<sup>38</sup> there are five canons that prohibit the marriage of an Orthodox with a non-Orthodox. The 72<sup>nd</sup> canon of the Council of Trullo (692 AD) is the most prominent. It reads:

An orthodox man is not permitted to marry a heretical woman, nor an orthodox woman to wed a heretical man. And if anything of this sort should appear to have been done by anyone at all, the marriage is to be considered null, and the unlawful wedlock is to be dissolved. For it behooves not to mingle together the things that ought not to be mingled, nor is it right that the wolf be joined with the sheep, nor the lot of sinners with the portion of Christ. But if anyone shall transgress what we have decreed, let him be excommunicated.<sup>39</sup>

This is the basis for the condemnation of mixed marriages and the main reason that such marriages have been prohibited. Usually, however, if one of the spouses is considered a “schismatic” rather than a heretic by the other spouses Church, then this canon would not apply. This is why the Orthodox Church grants permission for the marriage of an Orthodox with a non-Orthodox (Greek Catholic).<sup>40</sup> Typically, these marriages are tolerated because of “economy” or

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<sup>36</sup> Anthony M. Coniaris. “An Eastern Orthodox Looks at Mixed Marriages.” <[http://stelijahcathedral.net/firms.com/Our\\_Faith/On\\_Mixed\\_Marriages/on\\_mixed\\_marriages.shtml](http://stelijahcathedral.net/firms.com/Our_Faith/On_Mixed_Marriages/on_mixed_marriages.shtml)> [Accessed on January 12, 2005].

<sup>37</sup> Metropolitan Neophytos of Aleppo, “Mixed Marriage”, 90.

<sup>38</sup> Patsavos, *Canonical Response*, 288.

<sup>39</sup> Patsavos, *Canonical Response*, 288.

<sup>40</sup> Patsavos, *Canonical Response*, 291.

*oikonomia*.<sup>41</sup> The Orthodox optimally want their faithful to marry other Orthodox, but will tolerate marriage with a “schismatic” Greek Catholic. Basically, they would grant official permission on the condition that the marriage was blessed by an Orthodox priest and, as earlier stated, on the condition that the children would be baptized and raised in the Orthodox Church. In addition, any problems that arise in the marriage must come under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church.<sup>42</sup>

### **1.6.3 The Eastern Christian Situation: The Byzantine Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches**

In the Middle East, mixed marriages are tolerated both in the Orthodox and Catholic Church. In fact, it is a very common occurrence. Most lay Eastern Christians do not see any real difference between the two Churches. Usually what happens in these societies is that the wife and the children naturally follow the husband’s religion, which is in accordance with the civil law. If the husband is Catholic, the wife and children are Catholic. If the husband is Orthodox, the wife and children are Orthodox. This is the norm and pretty much accepted throughout.<sup>43</sup> There is rarely any dispute because the Byzantine Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches as they are the same in the common person’s eyes. A common saying in Arabic is that “all these Churches are ‘the house of God’ and there is no difference between them.” They have the same Liturgy and Sacraments, and the same language and culture. Many of the Christian families in the Middle East, especially Lebanon, are comprised of inter-Church marriages between the Byzantine Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox. These mixed marriages are a result of urbanization, the migration of peoples that, inevitably, leads to contact with people of various cultural and religious differences. For the most part the smaller villages have one Church and all Christians

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<sup>41</sup> Stanely S. Harakas, “Emerging Ecumenical Families,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 40 (1995): 351

<sup>42</sup> Patsavos, *Canonical Response*, 291.

<sup>43</sup> See *Codex juris canonici*, can. 111.

are members of the same Church. Expectedly, since people did not leave their village very often, they would marry within their denomination. For example, my village in Lebanon, Aita El Foukhar, is exclusively Orthodox and all Christians in it are Orthodox. Once people started moving to the city, many of these Orthodox married Melkites, Maronites or members of other Christian Churches.

The Churches also permit such inter-Church unions in general because of the closeness of the communities. Each spouse, however, may retain their own tradition. For example, in accordance with the Eastern Code, a Catholic can affirm their acceptance of the Eastern Orthodox teaching “insofar as it is identical to that of the Catholic Church.”<sup>44</sup> This is also important to bear in mind because if the female spouse gets married in the Orthodox Church and commits to raising her family Orthodox, she still retains her birthright to be a Catholic and personally may remain faithful to the Roman Pontiff. However, it is important to note the following:

High percentages of Catholics who enter mixed marriages eventually stop practicing their faith. With regards to Eastern Catholics who have Orthodox partners of the same tradition, there may be a strong tendency to disregard or to neglect the distinctive requirements of Catholic law. On a practical level, especially for those living in closely integrated communities, there may be little or no awareness of any difference between the beliefs and practices of the two Churches.<sup>45</sup>

Although such rights are present in Church legislation, it is commonly seen that instead of strengthening their faith, inter-Church couples often exhibit a weakened faith. It must be established first, however, that much depends on the strength and nature of one’s religious convictions before marriage. It may be that the frequency of “ecumenical” marriages only manifests how superficial many couples’ commitments to Church life really are.<sup>46</sup> This is correlated, I believe, with the pastoral care that a couple received before marriage. If the couple

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<sup>44</sup> Pospishil, *Eastern Catholic Church Law*, 435.

<sup>45</sup> Choliij, *The Iter of Mixed Marriage*, 101

<sup>46</sup> George Kilcourse, “Ecumenical Married Couples,” *Ecumenical Trends* 14 (1985): 86.

was educated beforehand on the probable ensuing difficulties of their particular situation, the failure of the spouses in such a mixed marriage to remain faithful practicing members of their own Church might not be so frequent. While both the Orthodox and Catholic Churches get a commitment by the other party to raise the children in their Church, this is not enough; these couples need follow up and extra care from the Church.<sup>47</sup>

#### **1.6.4 Inter-Church Families: Witnesses to Christian Unity**

The Sacrament of Marriage does not unite a man and a woman; rather, it is the Church's recognition of a union that God has already begun to work in their lives. An Inter-Church marriage also brings forward something special – it is a union of two Churches. Pope John Paul II said the following in his Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*:

Marriages between Catholics and other baptized persons have their own particular nature, but they contain numerous elements that could well be made good use of and developed, both for their intrinsic value and for the contribution that they can make to the ecumenical movement. This is particularly true when both parties are faithful to their religious duties. Their common Baptism and the dynamism of grace provide the spouses in these marriages with the basis and motivation for expressing their unity in the sphere of moral and spiritual values.<sup>48</sup>

The Holy Father speaks here of the value of these Inter-Church marriages to the Ecumenical movement. He encourages both parties to be faithful to their own particular religious duties. Each one must live their own individual traditions to the fullest while sharing it with their spouse. Essentially, the Holy Father is encouraging these couples to live the unity of the Churches in their married life together. He also states that although this is necessary it might not always be an easy task. The bigger threat is marriage between members of an apostolic Church and those of the

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<sup>47</sup> Although requiring a commitment from the “other party” to raise their family in the Catholic Church is not mandated by Catholic Canon Law, it is still common pastoral practice in some Eastern Catholic Churches where the influence of many generations of Roman suspicion towards the Orthodox is sometimes difficult to erase.

<sup>48</sup> Pope John Paul II. *Familiaris Consortio* (On the Family).

<[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_19811122\\_familiaris-consortio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio_en.html)> [Accessed on January 12, 2005].

non-liturgical, non-apostolic, or quasi-Christian denominations who also engage in various forms of outright proselytism.

While the idea of inter-Church couples enhancing ecumenism may sound nice, in reality, the Churches of the Antiochian tradition (especially the Byzantine Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox) do not have it quite so easy. They have endured centuries of division and even violence, making reconciliation difficult, if not impossible. Divisions of history and doctrine make unity seem almost unrealizable. The Churches must overcome many differences, in order to ensure growth and renewal in the knowledge and respect for other Christians. Nevertheless, “ecumenical” married couples personify a new element of this ecumenical movement.<sup>49</sup> These couples may therefore be seen as a blessing, and through them these two Churches are provided with an opportunity to work most closely together in the pursuit of Christian unity, already realized in the couples’ marriage covenant.

### **1.7 Formal Ecumenism and Communion: History of the Ecumenical Movement in Antioch**

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!*  
- Psalm 23

Christians all profess to admire unity and work towards it.<sup>50</sup> The truth is, this world is already filled with many tensions. These tensions exist between countries, between cultures, between religions and, most disturbing, between Churches. Throughout the history of the Church of Antioch, varying ecclesial loyalties and schools of thought coexisted. For example, as we have

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<sup>49</sup> Kilcourse, *Ecumenical Married Couples*, 86.

<sup>50</sup> “The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council.” (n. 1); “The concern for restoring unity involves the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike.” (n. 5). This can be found in: Second Vatican council, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis redintegratio*, 21 November 1964, in AAS, 57 (1965), 90-107, English translation in A. Flannery, *Documents of Second Vatican Council*, vol. 1, 452-73.

seen in the Scriptures, some followed Paul's way of thinking regarding Gentile converts, while others followed Peter.<sup>51</sup>

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, various missionaries, including the Jesuits, Capuchins, Carmelites and Franciscans, put themselves at the disposal of the local hierarchy of the Orthodox Church of Antioch and worked in co-operation with it. This cooperation stimulated the relationship between Antioch and Rome.<sup>52</sup> Eastern priests who were not in formal communion with Rome encouraged their flocks to welcome the Western missionaries. It may be argued that for both sides, this cooperation was an expression of their shared faith, and common mission. Over the next one hundred years, more and more missionaries settled in the area. These missionaries built residences, started schools, preached in the Churches and were well respected among the Christian communities and their religious leaders.<sup>53</sup> These missionaries were totally integrated into the culture and society. There were even occurrences of intercommunion which became commonplace and were tolerated by the populace. These establishments continue to this day in various parts of the Middle East. Although they were first established as "sheep stealing" institutions, these institutions later became more open and focused on proper education. The Jesuit schools in Lebanon remain some of the most influential and respected educational institutions in the country. Anyone, including people of non-Christian religious traditions, who want their children to have a good education, send their children to these schools.

In the seventeenth century difficulties arose. The missionaries that were so loved initially now began to openly proselytize. Divisions occurred and differences became firmly entrenched. In 1724 a portion of the Patriarchate vowed allegiance to Rome and appropriated for themselves

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<sup>51</sup> Brown & Meier, *Antioch and Rome*, 14.

<sup>52</sup> Bailey & Bailey, *Who Are the Christians in the Middle East*, 86.

<sup>53</sup> Abdallah Raheb, "Greek Melkite Catholic Patriarchate of Antioch: Birth, Evolution, and Orientations," *Diakonia*: 20 (1986): 12.

the ancient name "Melkite," joining the family of "Greek-Catholic" or, as they were called at that time, "uniate" Churches. Today they are often referred to as "Eastern Catholic." The Orthodox continued to be known as the "Greek-Orthodox" -- or "Rum Orthodox" in Arabic. By this time the great majority of the faithful of this Patriarchate were Arabs. According to various circumstances and motivations, it was more beneficial to pledge allegiance to Rome for some, while it was not for others. Since Rome is an ancient and apostolic See, many of its bishops exercised a quasi-political influence throughout the world, including the Middle East. The actions of the new Eastern Catholics were seen as treason by those more strongly attached to their Orthodox past. Considering the hurtful, and divisive past of the Crusades, their reunification with Rome was perceived as a betrayal of their ancestral laws and traditions. Consequently, communion in one faith with the Western missionaries, who had continued to flourish in the Patriarchate of Antioch, was called into question, and two different conceptions of this communion appeared.

In a sense, the Antiochian identity became lost, at least as it was known for so many centuries before. One division of the Christians leaned more towards Byzantium and became more Constantinopolitan than Antiochian, while the other part leaned towards Rome, with an identity that was sometimes more Roman rather than faithful to the ways of the local Church. The fact was that at the death of Patriarch Athanasius in 1724, a double lineage of patriarchs emerged, one Orthodox and the other Catholic. Both lines have lasted to the present day. From 1724 onward, there are two parallel Byzantine hierarchies, two sister communities who swore Patriarchal and Episcopal allegiance to whom it seemed most advantageous to do so. Both sides had their martyrs and confessors. From this time forth, the two Churches, Catholic and Orthodox, followed two divergent ways and two different destinies. Cyril VI Tanas, was elected to the Patriarchate.

However, only the Catholics recognized him.<sup>54</sup> The Orthodox elected a different Patriarch, Sylvester who recognized (and was recognized by) Constantinople and not Rome.<sup>55</sup> Both of these men claimed the same Patriarchate, resulting in divisions and tensions between the people and hierarchies. The people and hierarchies were divided and the tensions persisted.<sup>56</sup> It is said that the current Melkite stronghold of the Basilian Salvatorian Order, from its foundation (under the leadership of Euthymius Saifi) in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, played a significant role in seeking out Catholic converts since numerous conversions were attributed to them. During the time of Ottoman rule, the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople was given complete authority over all the Christian communities in the empire, including the Melkite Greek Catholics, which made life difficult for them. It was not until 1848 that the Melkites were fully recognized by the Ottomans as an independent Church. Thus, both sides in this divided community suffered, and both used advantages available to them.

Ever since the first schisms, there has been much discussion and effort around reunification. The Eastern Catholic Churches are unique in their composition because, according to Archbishop Zoghby, “neither the Roman Church nor the Orthodox Church were born from schism... the Eastern Catholic Churches were born from schism engineered by Uniatism.”<sup>57</sup> But what is “Uniatism”? In the passage, cited Kyr Elias in all probability has in mind a process with proselytism as its goal. But, to be fair, not all Eastern Catholics can be classed as children of

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<sup>54</sup> In order to truly see the reaction to this event by the Orthodox, particularly Constantinople, let us look at a quote by Constantinus (a Patriarch of Constantinople) in his work *The Patriarchs of Antioch* as cited in John Mason Neale, *The Patriarchate of Antioch*, (London: Rivingtons, 1873). Patriarch Constantinus states that the now Catholic faithful of the Church of Antioch “were carried away, separated from the truth and miserably bowed down to western innovation and doctrine; and through missionaries sent from Rome with plenary papal indulgences and relaxations of fasts; and other irregularities forbidden by the Orthodox Eastern Church and having used great exertions and gone to great expense in order to procure the expulsion of the false bishops, brought in [...] Cyril, who became false Patriarch and invaded for a time the throne by foreign intervention” (186-87).

<sup>55</sup> Raheb, *Birth, Evolution, Orientations*, 17.

<sup>56</sup> Joseph Nasrallah, “L’Église Melchite et l’union des Églises,” *Istina* 21 (1976) : 178.

<sup>57</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *We Are All Schismatics*, trans. Philip Khairallah (Newton: Educational Services, 1996), 9.

“uniatism” if “uniatism” is understood as a process engineered by Rome. The Eastern Catholic Churches are those Eastern Churches, which are in full and visible communion with Rome. Among the various Eastern Catholic Churches, some were drawn into communion with Rome either by Roman proselytism, but some entered into union with Rome through free choice. Once they were in full communion with Rome, however, these Churches suffered from a different kind of “uniatism”: an unhealthy imitation of Roman ways and a concomitant loss of their own identity. In this sense all Eastern Catholics were tinged with “uniatism” even if they entered into communion with Rome on their initiative.

Eastern Catholic Churches have the following in common:

- #1 – they are in union with Rome,
- #2 – they have retained their ancient rites,
- #3 – they have their own hierarchy.<sup>58</sup>

Although these qualities make Eastern Catholics distinctive, they also place them in a difficult position since they are wedged between two worlds. Although Eastern Catholic Churches are not seen as valid by some Orthodox, these Churches do exist, and have existed for centuries and their members have made a conscious choice to be part of this Church.<sup>59</sup>

According to Archbishop Zoghby, the position of the Orthodox Church on the Eastern Catholic Churches is, in most cases, not a positive one. He states,

as far as the Orthodox Churches are concerned, they have not forgotten the wound that the Roman Church caused them by creating Uniatism. The Roman Churches profited from their difficult living conditions in the Near East, their cultural and economic weakness, and from the total confidence they gave to the Latin missionaries, by opening their hearts and churches to them.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> B. Kidd, *The Churches of Eastern Christendom from A.D. 451 to the Present Time* (New York: B.Franklin, 1974), 457.

<sup>59</sup> Nasrallah, *L'Église Melchite*, 190.

<sup>60</sup> Zoghby, *We Are All Schismatics*, 66.

This caused bad feelings for some and difficult situations for others. Furthermore, the Eastern Catholic Churches, up until the Second Vatican Council, were seen as the “bridge Church” to the Orthodox. They represented the bridge that the “Orthodox needed to cross” in order to unite with Rome. The Melkite Church was in a compromised position, being perceived as a traitor by the Orthodox, and receiving second-class treatment from Western Catholics. The Eastern Catholic Churches were perceived by some in the West as an ideal model for how Catholicism would spread throughout the East. However, this approach was officially rejected in the *Balamand Statement* (1993) where it was confirmed that this was not an acceptable ecumenical method or goal.

This chapter has explored the milieu in which Kyr Elias operated. It has been essential to explore this theme, since it provides the key to understanding Kyr Elias’ motivation and contribution to the ecumenical movement. There are several elements that have been explored. First, Antioch played an important role in the early Church and this remained in the memories of Antiochians. They recognize that they should play a significant role in the contemporary Church also. After all, it was that in Antioch that the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. Secondly, it was in Antioch that the battle was fought for the inclusion of Gentiles in what was until then a Jewish-Christian community. Thus, breaking through barriers of exclusivity is something that Antiochians pride themselves on. Lastly, the Church of Antioch has a different perspective on sacramental sharing – it is in the blood of the Antiochians to cross jurisdictional lines. Sacramental sharing between Eastern Catholics and Orthodox is a daily reality. It is important to recognize both the rich legacy Antiochian Christians share, and at the same time to see how the Church of Antioch is divided in a sense more than the rest of Christendom, finding itself today in five patriarchates. It is, therefore, no wonder that at least some Antiochian Christians might be motivated to think “outside the box” when it comes to the problem of Church

unity. The portrait of the Church of Antioch that has been drawn should help one to understand some of the possible motivation behind the contribution of Kyr Elias Zoghby.

Many major events took place throughout the history of Antioch and its Patriarchate. However, this thesis will focus on the Schism of 1724, the division of the Melkite Church into the Antiochian Orthodox and Melkite Catholic Churches, and efforts to heal that division. One major player in the current reunification efforts is Archbishop Elias Zoghby. His work and dedication to the cause of reunification is unparalleled in the Patriarchate. We will explore it in depth in order to better understand the situation of the ecumenical movement and how it is shifting. An examination of the life and efforts of Archbishop Zoghby will now follow.

## Chapter Two

### *A Brief Biography of Archbishop Elias Zoghby*

#### **2.1 Personal history**

In the previous chapter we spoke of the historical and current situation of Antioch. We discussed Antioch's significant leadership role in the Early Church and that Antioch is a severely divided Church which understands the pain of ecclesiastical division and that there is already an informal sacramental sharing due to widespread intermarriage. The Church of Antioch is Archbishop Zoghby's field of activity and in order to understand his ecumenical proposals an awareness of Antiochian Christianity and all of its dynamics is in order.

Now we can move to the specific of Kyr Elias' background. This chapter will explore the life, accomplishments, successes and disappointments of Archbishop Elias Zoghby. What makes him special, remarkable and unique? Archbishop Zoghby was born 9 January 1912 in Cairo, Egypt. The story of his birth alone is a noteworthy one. In the Middle East, a tradition around the birth of a child exists called 'Nedr'. Essentially, it is a promise to God or a saint that you will do something in return for a favor from them. After the birth of their first son, Elias Zoghby's parents lost three children, so they prayed to Saint Elias for his protection and assistance. His mother became pregnant, had a boy, and staying true to her word, named him Elias, placing him under the guidance and protection of Saint Elias.

His parents were Hanné Ishak Yared (Melkite Catholic) and Abdallah Mickail Zoghby (Antiochian Orthodox – converted from Maronite) and like many from this region, theirs was an ecumenical union. As per tradition, however, the family followed the allegiance of the father, so his parents were married in the Orthodox Church and the children were expected to follow. They were new immigrants to Egypt at the time, coming from Lebanon. The area in which they lived

in Cairo, Arb-el-Guenena, had a Melkite Church conveniently situated in it. They found themselves at home with the Divine Liturgy, chanting, and religious traditions, all familiar practices to the Zoghby family. All the children, moreover, were also baptized in the Melkite Church and they attended a religious school, where daily Liturgy was mandatory.

Archbishop Zoghby grew up in a simple, yet very devout household. He indicates that the true trademark of his family was their faith. In the centre of the house was an Icon of the *Theotokos*, handed down by his grandparents. Around this Icon is where the family gathered for their prayers. He remembers this clearly – every morning, they would gather around the Icon and his father would read from the Bible. Every day they would light incense around the Icon, and incense the whole house. He piously recounts that if they did not incense the house, the *Theotokos* would fill the house with the scent of incense, drawing the attention of neighbors who inquired about that exquisite smell. His father would pray the Office every afternoon, always prostrating to the floor in reverence to God. In the same token, his mother prayed the rosary incessantly. His parents attended Divine Liturgy every morning, and Vespers every Saturday night. He was taught always to trust in God, that God has providence over all things. It was truly a family of faith, conviction and love of God. Archbishop Zoghby's parents laid the foundation of faith and trust in God that would follow him his entire life, guiding and inspiring him.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *Mémoires* (Beirut: Procure des Frères, 1992), 14.

## 2.2 Personal Vocation and Seminary Life

*“Our talents are the gift that God gives to us.  
What we make of our talents is our gift back to God.”  
- Leo Buscaglia*

Archbishop Elias Zoghby answered his vocational call, using his talents for the common good of both the Church, and the people he served. He first received the call when he was sixteen. As he himself relates the story, he was attending a private school, not religious one, where daily Liturgy was not the norm. His attendance at Liturgy declined over a matter of months. One night, he just happened to pass near a Cathedral, he saw that it was lit and he heard singing. He felt compelled to go in, as if something invisible were pushing him. He was suddenly filled with an extraordinary sensation. He felt as if he were in paradise. Compelled to go to the confessional, he confessed to the priest. At this time he felt God speaking to him ... saying, “You must become a priest!” He didn’t argue.<sup>62</sup>

When young Elias announced his intentions to his father, his father was ecstatic that one of his children was becoming a priest. Later on, when telling his father of his experience in the Cathedral and how he was surprised that it happened, his father, with all faith said that he was not surprised because he prayed every day in that same Cathedral that one of his sons would become a priest. With his parents’ blessing, he left for seminary that same year. It was the summer of 1928. He went to Jerusalem to study with the White Fathers in the Melkite Seminary of Saint Anne. This was a very difficult and frightening time for him. He had never been away from his family, and the instruction was in French, a language he did not know. Since all the courses in minor seminary were taught in this language, he suffered greatly.<sup>63</sup> He relied heavily on several

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<sup>62</sup> Zoghby, *Mémoires*, 23-24.

<sup>63</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, telephone interview by author, November 14, 2004. CD Recording available at the Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, Saint Paul University, Ottawa. Interview conducted in Arabic.

mentors who encouraged him along his path. Another challenge was the rigid and controlled environment of the seminary, which he was not used to. However, he overcame all these challenges and succeeded by the grace of God. During a spiritual retreat in the second year of seminary, he was reflecting on his vocation and whether he had the strength and courage to pursue the road to the priesthood. As he was sitting in his room, in the darkness, reflecting, a great light shone in front of him and he heard a marvellous voice speaking, saying “I am the Holy Spirit that drives away the darkness.” With refreshed faith and renewed strength he resolved to continue his path, as his God intended for him.

He continued his seminary life with the White Fathers at Saint Anne Seminary in Jerusalem – like many before him and many after him. He felt privileged to study with them. As he puts it, he remembers most of all the faith of the White Fathers, their self-denial, their spirit of sacrifice, their devotion, their humility, their intense religious life and their non-stop religious nourishment for all those who passed through their seminary.<sup>64</sup> Their example, as he notes, marked each and every seminarian who studied there. It is interesting to note that many of those who studied at Saint Anne’s continued to be visionary activists. There is a common thread and a common vision among the graduates. One such graduate that comes to mind is Archbishop Joseph Raya. His dedication to God and God’s people is evident in all the work he accomplished and all the books he had written. He has not only been a priest to the faithful, but also a human rights activist – speaking out for what is right and just – never afraid to speak the truth of Christ and His Church. Archbishop Elias Zoghby has these same characteristics. Presumably, these qualities derived from their experience of true faith and devotion among the White Fathers.

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<sup>64</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, telephone interview by author. November 14, 2004. CD Recording available at the Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, Saint Paul University, Ottawa. Interview conducted in Arabic.

After completing minor seminary, he was invited by the Missionaries of Saint Paul in Harissa (Lebanon) to complete an internship with them, to see if he would like to join them. He accepted, and although he much liked and appreciated the opportunity, he returned to Saint Anne to finish his seminary studies. On the feast of Saint Elias, July 20, 1936, he was ordained at the Saint Anne Basilica in Jerusalem. After his ordination, he was assigned to be a professor of Arabic Literature, Geometry and Mathematics at the Seminary. Later, he returned to Cairo to take on a parish and encountered the customary joys and challenges of parish life.

It was here that the light of ecumenism from his youth was rekindled for him. Around him were many people discussing the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic Churches and how close they are in history, traditions and practices. In his opinion, the schisms were unjustifiable. His family, as is the case with many Middle Eastern Christians in inter-Church families, was an example of communion. They live communion and do not perceive the differences that history has handed down. A common saying in Arabic is “They are all houses of God”, speaking of all Churches. Because of his upbringing and his surroundings, he has always found the separation intolerable. During his time in Egypt, he began truly reflecting on the schisms and why they occurred. He started researching the schism and learning more about it. Something kept nudging at him that something about Uniatism didn’t sit right with him. Even at this early time, he was thinking that there was no reason for separation from the Orthodox and that unity should be an important aspiration of all Christians – particularly those of the Church of Antioch. This became something he would pursue his whole life and something he would fight for.<sup>65</sup>

In 1951, he was made Archimandrite and Patriarchal pro-vicar in Alexandria (Egypt) by Melkite Patriarch Maximos IV (who would later play a key role in the Second Vatican Council). As Archimandrite in Alexandria, he used his authority to uphold the faith, and to stand up for his

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 47.

faithful, even to the point of threat and persecution. In 1954, he was elected Archbishop-Patriarchal Vicar General for Egypt and the Sudan. Again, for his public protestation and refusal to follow laws unfavourable to Christians and for his opposition to the creation of a Muslim state, he was persecuted and later arrested in 1955. After this time, he attended the Second Vatican Council with the Patriarch Maximos IV and made an impression on Pope Paul VI with his devotion to faith and tradition, particularly in the area of marriage and the favouring of the innocent spouse in cases of abandonment. At about this time, the Pope declared he would make the Patriarchs of Antioch Cardinals. This did not sit well with the Melkites because it seemed to mean total submission to the Roman Church and it would require them to embrace the customs of the West. However, after much deliberation Maximos IV did accept. Immediately, Archbishop Zoghby resigned in protest. In 1968 he was again elected by the Melkite Synod, this time to serve as Archbishop of Baalbak in 1968, where he remained until retiring in 1988. In the time he was there, he remained outspoken and devoted to truth and justice. He was kidnapped in 1982 during the civil war by Islamic militants and later released.

### **2.3 Archbishop Elias Zoghby: Man of Faith, Man of Truth, and Man of Toil**

His writings are inspiring for many reasons. Earlier mentioned were his various endeavours and about his participation in the Second Vatican Council as a representative voice, raising the concerns of the Eastern Catholic Churches. This participation deserves special mention, not only because he took part in a historical event, but also because this event influenced his writings considerably. All his writings on the Church and on ecumenism were greatly influenced by what he experienced at the Council. He called his participation in the Second Vatican Council the most significant experience that marked his episcopate<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 87.

He was a great defender of the East at this council and took pride in his Eastern heritage. He felt very strongly that the West, not having experienced the East, nor having the same tradition, should not set the standards for the Eastern Catechism. Because of his formidable nature, his interventions and his tendency to stand up for the truth, he was nicknamed “The Bomb” by the press covering the Council.<sup>67</sup> His main efforts and interventions surrounded the issue of marriage and divorce and the indissolubility of marriage. He asked that, in the event of a divorce, the council pay special attention to the innocent spouse, abandoned by the other spouse. He argued that this innocent spouse should be taken care of and a dispensation should be given so that they might marry again. The innocent spouse, according to Archbishop Zoghby, should not be punished for the sins of the guilty spouse.<sup>68</sup> This got the attention of Pope Paul VI and got him recognition among the other delegates of the council.

Kyr Elias was at many times labelled a troublemaker, but later praised for the final outcome. In addition to his many pastoral works, he worked tirelessly for the cause of unity. He was never satisfied and never saw the purpose of separation. He always asked why, and always sought a solution to the problem. This led him to his project of double communion started in 1975. He came up with a solution that attempted to make both sides happy; the Melkites would be in communion with Rome and the Orthodox Church. The Melkites would be the happy medium. Although he wrote and did many great things, closest to his heart for many years was his diligent ecumenical work. This chapter discussed Kyr Elias and his background in terms of general world view and theological preparation. It also set a backdrop for his writings. Like the previous chapter on Antioch, this chapter helps understand the motivation of Kyr Elias. In the next

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 95.

chapter we will be exploring Archbishop Zoghby's ecumenically themed writings from the time of the Second Vatican Council until the very end of the twentieth century.

## Chapter Three

### *An Examination/Synopsis of Archbishop Elias Zoghby's Main Works on the Subject of Ecumenism*

This chapter will discuss Kyr Elias' writings, spanning over four decades, from the Second Vatican Council until recent times. These writings will be examined chronologically.

Archbishop Elias Zoghby worked tirelessly to uphold the traditions of his Church and the Church of his people, the Melkite Church. He worked diligently towards unifying his Church with its rightful ancestors and its true sister, the Antiochian Orthodox Church. Archbishop Elias Zoghby's writings on ecumenism span the decades and reflect the momentum of the ecumenical movement between Catholics and Orthodox over time. What inspired him to start putting his thoughts and words on paper were the events of the Second Vatican Council, which, although intending to be ecumenical, according to Archbishop Zoghby, was not especially ecumenical after all.<sup>69</sup> The experience of the Second Vatican Council permitted Kyr Elias the opportunity to understand the position of the Western Catholic Church toward the Eastern Catholics. To his disappointment, the Second Vatican Council failed to adequately understand the East, despite the promulgation of *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*. He comments a great deal in his earlier writings on this decree and how it is not sufficient and does not encourage true ecumenical relations among the Eastern Catholics and their Orthodox counterparts. This decree, although encouraging the Eastern Churches to uphold their traditions and values as their heritage dictates, does not necessarily promote unity. Kyr Elias argues that it "turns a blind eye" to the intercommunion, or *communicatio in sacris*, that is already taking place.

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<sup>69</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, telephone interview by author. November 14, 2004. CD Recording available at the Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, Saint Paul University, Ottawa. Interview conducted in Arabic.

This chapter will only examine a select list of Kyr Elias's writings, followed by a consideration of some of his main ideas. The writings presented here are limited to those which deal with the subject of ecumenism, which in the case of Archbishop Zoghby, almost exclusively relates to Orthodox – Catholic rapprochement. Thus, any other writings by Kyr Elias that do not deal with ecumenism will not be included. In order to see whether and how Kyr Elias's ideas on Orthodox-Catholic relations developed over the years, the writings in this chapter will be presented chronologically. Hence, even though works might be cited from collections in which they were republished much later, the articles themselves will be approached in a clearly sequential manner, as they were written, beginning with the 1960's.

### **3.1 Early Ecumenical Works as a Result of the Second Vatican Council (1960's)**

Archbishop Elias Zoghby's earliest written works on ecumenism were, as earlier noted, a response to the Second Vatican Council and its views towards the Eastern Churches. He made eleven "interventions" in total at the Council, many of which were pastoral, but a good number of which were ecumenical in nature and focused on the Eastern Churches and their role within the broader realm of Christianity. These works on ecumenism were written during the 1960's, later compiled and translated in the book *A Voice from the Byzantine East*.<sup>70</sup> The translations in this book will be used for the purposes of this study. The following are summaries of the articles; commentary and analysis will follow in a subsequent section.

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<sup>70</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *A Voice from the Byzantine East*, trans. R. Bernard (Educational Services Newton: Diocese of Newton, 1992). In the Library of Congress cataloguing-in-publication data on the copyright page, this book is identified as a "translation of articles originally published in *Le Lien*, 1963-1970". This claim sent me on an extended search for the original texts. Since a complete set of *Le Lien* was impossible to find in North America I tracked down the stated volumes in which these articles were to have appeared. Out of eighteen articles only two were actually published in the journal *Le Lien*. This caused me considerable consternation until I located the article "Uniatisme et ecumenisme" which was indeed published by *Le Lien* but as a separate booklet, which never actually appeared in the journal. Thus the statement in the cataloguing-in-publication data of *A Voice from the Byzantine East* should be corrected to read "translation of articles originally published *in* or *by* *Le Lien*, 1963-1970".

### 3.1.1 “Christian Unity and the Salvation of the World”

This article written by Kyr Elias focuses on God’s power and the harmony of His creation, how everything He created works harmoniously together. In like manner, human beings were created harmoniously. As stated by Archbishop Zoghby “within [man], unity consists of the harmony of all relations of man’s soul and body, spirit and senses. It is the coordination of all his activities, both spiritual and material, into a unified effort and towards a single goal.”<sup>71</sup> In order for harmony of creation, there is a sort of interdependence among creation and dependence on the Creator. However, this is not always the case, and the human race is divided, not only from the rest of creation each person but within themselves. According to Kyr Elias, each person divided within, “is cast in the impossible role of uniting himself to his brothers.”<sup>72</sup> He continues by insisting that order cannot be created from disorder; unity cannot be had with the external, if there is no unity internally.

The perfect example of unity and harmony, according to Kyr Elias, is the Holy Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He continues that the Holy Trinity is one will – not three, it has one mind – not three, and works as one entity. This balance should be our example and the goal we should strive towards. In the same way, each Christian must be united to Christ throughout his or her Christian life, mainly through partaking in His body and blood. This, in turn, unites all Christians who also partake of this same body and blood. Therefore, according to Kyr Elias, “unity among Christians depends on the union of each Christian with Christ.”<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, “whoever ceases being one with Christ ceases being one with himself, and at the same time, ceases being one with his brothers and, consequently, one with the Church.”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.,9.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.,10.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.,11.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.,11.

### 3.1.2 “The Unity and Diversity of the Church”

In this article, Kyr Elias speaks of Church as being called to be one as the Holy Trinity is one and indivisible. “Father, that they may be one as We are one” (John 17:22). Again, it is stated that humanity, through common faith, love and knowledge of Christ, constitutes a united Church. Christ is the “source and centre” of unity. We, as a Christian community, must take this Church and build it together because unity is achieved by working together to build this Mystical Body of Christ. Kyr Elias continues, “by [our] acceptance of the Church, each person becomes a stone in the construction.”<sup>75</sup> This Church will continue being built until all humanity has accepted Christ at the end of time. Until that time, it is the Christian’s duty to continue to build and adhere to Christ and, through this adhering, unite to all other Christians through Christ and through this adhering unite through Him to all other Christians. Christian unity, according to Kyr Elias, is “not only a unity in faith; it is most especially a union in life, in the common participation in the divine life.”<sup>76</sup> By participating in the Eucharistic life, one participates in unity with Christ and with each other – it is the bond between the faithful and the Church.

Unity, on the other hand, must always take into account universality and diversity among the followers of Christ. The Church is unique in the sense that, being spread throughout the world, it embraced many unique expressions depending on the culture it was serving. The Church must embrace and encourage these differences. Although there are essential unchanging core beliefs, the way these beliefs are experienced and expressed is unique to those expressing them. When a Church (namely the Roman Church) cuts itself off from this understanding of universality and tries to unify by eliminating diversity, it truly cuts itself off from its brothers and sisters and becomes a local, exclusive body. This creates an unfriendly and unwelcoming environment for

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 20.

those of other traditions. Unity comes through Christ, not a mode of worship. Moreover, “if the Church wants to attain Christian and human unity, it must not be identified with any one man or group of men.”<sup>77</sup> It should identify itself through Christ. Separation is a direct result of these issues of identity, and has caused much pain and misinterpretation among the Christian community. As Kyr Elias insists, the people of God must work together, as a universal community, to build the Church of Christ.

### 3.1.3 “Understanding the Eastern Churches”

According to Kyr Elias, Eastern Christians, as a whole, are not well understood by Western [Roman Catholic] Christians. Primarily, according to Kyr Elias, the Roman Church which views itself as the superior Church, does not recognize that the Eastern Churches represent a more historical, more concrete and fuller Church. The Roman Church, by coming to the East, establishing communities based on the Latin Church and turning Eastern Christians from their roots, has disrupted the heritage and tradition of the East. Many Eastern Churches have appropriated many Western traditions and made them part of their traditions, leaving behind the religion of their forefathers. Interestingly enough, Kyr Elias comments “Easterners consider a separation from the Latin Church as a break with a *particular* Church. Westerners think of it as a separation from the *universal* Church for this is *their* conception of Schism.”<sup>78</sup> This is why, in *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, the Eastern Catholic Churches are considered as part and parcel of the universal Latin Church. The Eastern Churches, together, share a common heritage and common traditions since apostolic times. According to Kyr Elias, the declarations of the Roman Church do not provide validation of the Eastern Churches or their practices because they possess it already in and of themselves.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 49.

### 3.1.4 “One Church, East and West”

This article by Kyr Elias maintains that the divisions of the Church, from the beginning, were an unequivocal result of the political differences and conflicts of the East and West. Throughout the years, and especially during the time of the Great Schism of 1054, there were many disagreements between the Eastern and Western Christians. Kyr Elias states that, at this time, “the Latin Church began to see in this development a resistance to the primatial authority of Peter, and the Orthodox saw it as an attempt to dominate which appeared contrary to the principle of the primacy of service.”<sup>79</sup> To bring about unity in the midst of this disunity and conflict is not only the work of God exclusively, but the work of humanity. However, Kyr Elias believes that God has “permitted this unhappy Schism to occur in order to protect the Orthodox Churches from centralization and Latinization, thus rendering ecumenical dialogue immensely profitable and giving promise of great enrichment for the Church when it is again made one.”<sup>80</sup> East-West dialogue should focus on decentralization of the Roman pontificate.<sup>81</sup> As well, the Eastern Catholics have a special role in this dialogue because of their unique connection to both Churches. They must use both their Eastern heritage and Western link, in order to make dialogue fruitful and more effective.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>81</sup> John Paul II seemed to acknowledge this in his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, no. 95: “When addressing the Ecumenical Patriarch His Holiness Dimitrios I, I acknowledged my awareness that “for a great variety of reasons, and against the will of all concerned, what should have been a service sometimes manifested itself in a very different light. But ... it is out of a desire to obey the will of Christ truly that I recognize that as Bishop of Rome I am called to exercise that ministry ... I insistently pray the Holy Spirit to shine his light upon us, enlightening all the Pastors and theologians of our Churches, that we may seek—together, of course—the forms in which this ministry may accomplish a service of love recognized by all concerned.”

### **3.1.5 “The Two Christian Traditions”**

Kyr Elias, in this article, asserts that the Eastern Orthodox and the Western Catholic Churches are essentially “source” Churches from which traditions arose. They both are unique among other Churches because of their apostolic heritage and ancestry, each evolving over time according to their traditions. From the very beginning, these two Churches have been evolving, in parallel and disparately. Each one has grown in its autonomy and has its own hierarchies. For unity to exist between them, they do not need to fuse and become one tradition and one form. No one should give up who they are, but each, keeping its own heritage, can continue along the same Christian path towards salvation. In like manner, the Holy Trinity is three distinct persons but united with one will and one mind. Union, Kyr Elias argues, “is made to enrich everyone and not to impoverish anyone.”<sup>82</sup>

### **3.1.6 “In Pursuit of Orthodox-Catholic Unity”**

Unity as a whole, Kyr Elias argues in this article, cannot be achieved only on a human level, with a handful of Church leaders making decisions for the whole of humanity. Neither should unity be achieved as a means of compromise between the two sides. It is the responsibility of all members of the Churches integrated into Christ to achieve unity of faith, all looking in the same direction. Union is much more complicated than most would believe. It is not merely two leaders shaking hands and coming to an agreement; it takes the entire Church of the West and the entire Church of the East to make unity. The people of God, which includes both the laity and clergy, must come together in order for true unity to take place.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 61.

### 3.1.7 “Equality: the Basis of Union Between Orthodoxy and Catholicism”

According to Kyr Elias in this article, the Church needs to deal with many things when wishing to truly contribute to Christian unity. In order for union to be reached, it should be defined as “a union of Churches in which Latins and Orthodox share true equality, as they did before the Schism, and as they must share today, in all justice and in truth.”<sup>83</sup> The Eastern Catholic Churches, according to Kyr Elias, have been treated as second-class citizens in the actual life of the Catholic Churches, even with the release of *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, which, he argues, caused more harm than good. The Eastern Church should not be presented as a “particular” tradition (something that is not universal). Eastern Christianity is just as universal as Western Christianity. Commenting on *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* as essentially a text by Latins about the Eastern Churches, Archbishop Zoghby says that if people of other traditions rule a Church “who are strangers to its religious, national or social traditions, it will eventually end up being stripped of these traditions and will become a foreign Church in her own country.”<sup>84</sup> We see this happening with the Eastern Catholic Churches. On the other hand, the Church truly is catholic, apostolic and universal when it includes “as equal the two major authentic and apostolic traditions – when it draws inspiration from both traditions.”<sup>85</sup> This “communion” was truly lived in the first millennium of the life of the Church and this should be the goal. The original five Patriarchates of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem are the traditional Patriarchates that, because of their long standing heritage, should be upheld and retained. Their unity in the first millennium should be an example for the present Church.

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 71.

### 3.1.8 “The Second Vatican Council and Christian Unity”<sup>86</sup>

Kyr Elias upholds in this article that both the Eastern and Western Churches have their particular history and established traditions. They have lived like sisters, each in their own home, with their own families and their own lives. However, these sisters are not united. Each, while living apart, “has her own home, her own liturgies, her own theology, her own patristic teaching, laws and traditions.”<sup>87</sup> Uniatism, on the other hand, is merely a temporary state and is transitory, no matter how comfortable its members are. These Eastern Catholics are the ones who truly “feel the division as a bleeding wound, a constant and deep sorrow.”<sup>88</sup>

The Second Vatican Council had a special role of promoting and preparing the way for union. The collegiality demonstrated at the Second Vatican Council, although, as Kyr Elias asserts, the Orthodox were not sufficiently represented, was a good step towards the ecumenical hopes of both Churches. The council also helped pave the road to eliminating the artificial division between the laity and clergy, building the inspiration that someday there may indeed be a true people of God united. According to the council, Christian Unity does not mean an amalgamation of one Church into another. Each should maintain their traditions and heritage and live together in their diversity, enriching one another, living as true sisters.

### 3.1.9 “Uniatism and Ecumenism”<sup>89</sup>

Eastern Catholics, in accordance with Kyr Elias’s next text, have realized for a long time that Uniatism is not a definitive method of unity. Uniatism, according to Kyr Elias, is “a mere

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<sup>86</sup> Originally published in *Le Lien*: “Le Concile du Second Vatican Council et l’Unité Chrétienne,” *Le Lien*, 25: (1963).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>89</sup> This document was made into a booklet (Archbishop Elias Zoghby. *Uniatism et Ecumenism*. (Cairo: *Le Lien*, 1963)), and according to Archbishop Zoghby, distributed to all the fathers of the Second Vatican Council. Although this was published in 1963, it foreshadows, to a great extent, the *Balamand Statement* of 1993.

experiment in unity”<sup>90</sup> whose primary concern is to accelerate the reconciliation between East and West. It is simply stated that “Uniatism is not a final situation but merely a temporary stage.”<sup>91</sup> This “temporary stage” should be viewed as an unsuccessful and negative experiment that should be learned from and not repeated. The Latin missionaries of the past created this state of uniatism in their effort to share their faith and mission with the Christians of the East. They gave their Latin traditions to the Easterners, who externally adapted this into their own particular traditions. Although they have done many great things in the East (that are still in place to this day), these Latin missionaries did much damage as well, isolating Eastern Catholics as being neither truly Orthodox, nor truly Catholic. According to Kyr Elias, this has hindered their healthy development as a Church and made them appear as a “provocation to Orthodoxy and as a challenge to be faced.”<sup>92</sup>

One could counter that effectively, the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* emphasizes the right of Eastern Catholics to embrace the Catholic rite of their choice, while being greatly encouraged to retain their own rite. This might seem to balance things out. Kyr Elias’s point remains valid nevertheless. What has happened in many Eastern Catholic Churches is that they have retained their Byzantine heritage but have added certain “Latinizations” as well. Kyr Elias thus stresses the need to return to the roots of the Byzantine tradition and strenuously “de”-Latinize the Eastern Catholic Churches, not just allow them to exist as a quaint option.

Uniatism is not a method for Christian Unity. This is an outdated form of ecumenism, according to Kyr Elias, for several reasons. Firstly, this sort of union has not established full communion. Secondly, union such as this is superficial and does not delve deeply into the core of Christianity. Thirdly, this union is imperfect because it has come about and continues at the

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 95.

expense of the collective unity. These points demonstrate that greater unity among the whole East and West is much more beneficial than individual unions between particular churches. However, the Eastern Catholic Churches still have an important role to play because they have lived this experience and understand the difficulties faced by both sides. Therefore the role of the Eastern Catholic Churches is one of “witness to a lived experiment of union or that of an experienced guide who, having walked the roads of unity, knows the terrain and now endeavours to keep the Church abreast of what is around the next bend lest she stumble.”<sup>93</sup>

Uniatism, as a whole, must disappear. As indicated by Kyr Elias, all Latinizations and influences from the Roman Church ought to be removed from the Eastern Catholic Churches and they should return to their Orthodox roots and heritage. Doing this will only help the cause of unity rather than hinder it, because even though they have given up the Orthodox name, Eastern Catholics have typically retained the Orthodox traditions, Divine Liturgy and patrimony. According to Kyr Elias, “the problems between the Latin West and the Orthodox East will be less complicated when we pass the Eastern Catholic stage and go on to the stage of mutual acceptance, when the Catholic Church will consider Orthodoxy as a sister instead of a stranger to be converted.”<sup>94</sup>

### **3.1.10 “The Future of the Uniate Eastern Catholic Churches”<sup>95</sup>**

In this article, Kyr Elias stresses that although the Eastern Catholics pose a problem for Catholic–Orthodox union, they certainly do not hinder reunification. The only time a problem will arise is when, and if, unity is reached and the Catholic Church prevents the Eastern Catholics from returning to Orthodoxy. On the other hand, the elimination of the Eastern Catholic

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 100-101.

<sup>95</sup> This article was written in response to an interview done with Greek Orthodox Archbishop Chrysostom (Metropolitan of Myra) concerning the reintegration of the Eastern Catholic Churches into Orthodoxy.

Churches should not be made a bargaining tool. Some Orthodox would like to see this happen before discussing reunification. This is unacceptable because the only way it would happen would be by completely fusing with the Latin Church, or Rome allowing the Eastern Catholic Churches to return to the Orthodox Churches. Each solution is problematic for all concerned. Kyr Elias maintains that the existence and vocation of the Eastern Catholic Churches, if nothing else, is to help the Roman Church move closer to reconciliation with Orthodoxy. Once this union occurs then, over time, the Eastern Catholics will return to their source. This cannot happen rapidly because it would be detrimental to the life of the Church. Kyr Elias continues, “the people on all sides will be psychologically prepared to accept it.”<sup>96</sup> The dialogue for reconciliation must take place between the Roman and Orthodox Churches alone. The Eastern Catholic Churches must not expect to take part in any dialogue because the Schism is truly between Rome and Orthodoxy. However, the Eastern Catholics must still have a voice and must still play a significant role. This role has already begun to be played through the participation of the Eastern Catholic Churches in the Second Vatican Council and through the interventions of Eastern Catholic Bishops on many subjects. The Eastern Catholic Churches must find their place in Christendom through this reconciliation because, as Kyr Elias states, the Orthodox are at “home in Orthodoxy ... the Latins are at home in their Church ... but we are nowhere at home!”<sup>97</sup>

### **3.2 Progression of ecumenical works**

Archbishop Elias Zoghby continued to maintain his ideals and working diligently towards unity. This article of Kyr Elias’ speaks of his introduction of the idea of double communion at the Melkite Synod of 1975. The concept of “double communion” basically states that the Eastern

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 130-131.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 135.

Catholic Churches can be in communion with Orthodoxy and Rome at the same time. Although it did not originally get a positive reaction either from the Melkite Synod, or Rome, he maintained his position nonetheless. This became his trademark and would bring him to the forefront of the ecumenical movement.

Two of Archbishop Zoghby's writings will be featured in the next section: The first is "*Orthodox in Union? Yes! Uniate? No!*" which is an article written in 1994 in French, translated into English in 1995 and published in *Eastern Churches Journal*. It may be argued that this article marked the beginning of a new era for ecumenical movement in Antiochian Christianity. "*Orthodox in Union? Yes! Uniate? No!*" was presented, along with the reintroduction of the project of double communion, at the Melkite Synod of 1995, this drew much attention because all but two Bishops signed this declaration and were in agreement with its principles. In addition to the Melkite Bishops signing the declaration, it was also signed and accepted by a significant representative of the Antiochian Orthodox Church as a sufficient means for the re-establishment of union with Rome. The second text is the renowned "*We Are All Schismatics*" written in French in 1981, and translated into English in 1996. The Melkite Synod because of its candour and lack of feasibility did not receive this book favourably.<sup>98</sup>

### 3.2.1 "Orthodox in Union? Yes! Uniate? No!"<sup>99</sup>

In this profession of faith by Archbishop Zoghby, he insists, "*I believe everything which Eastern Orthodoxy teaches.*" He maintains that the schism between the Roman Church and Eastern Orthodoxy was caused by human and historical reasons. Regardless, a close relationship

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<sup>98</sup> Archbishop Cyril Bustros wrote a response to this book noting that "union with Rome is not a mistake, history cannot be changed according to the way of thinking of today, in 1724 when our Bishops made this union with Rome they had their reasons and we cannot judge them saying that they have done a big mistake. If they didn't make this union maybe we would be in a more miserable situation ... it was a positive step to be united with Rome. (Archbishop Cyril Salim Bustros. Telephone Interview by author. June 6, 2005.).

<sup>99</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, "Orthodox in Union? Yes! Uniate? No!" *Eastern Churches Journal* 2 (1995).

still exists between the two Churches, in spite of all the differences. Much has taken place from the time of the schism until this day. Each Church has evolved in its own respect, the Roman Church more so than the Orthodox which has remained faithful to its Byzantine heritage. In order to have union, Kyr Elias maintains, the Orthodox should not be expected to accept any dogma beyond those taught by ecumenical councils in the first millennium, nor should they have to accept any papal *ex cathedra* declarations. Eastern Catholics have been subject to the Roman dogmas and declarations and their seminarians have been schooled in Western theology, taking them away from their Orthodox roots. However, both the Orthodox and the Roman Churches “have always kept what is essential of the deposit of Tradition, what is essential in the structure of the Church, the episcopate, the sacramentality in general and each of the sacraments”<sup>100</sup> and each has retained her identities, especially the Orthodox who have deliberately retained their traditions. Nevertheless, Churches, East and West, are “simultaneously different and the same,”<sup>101</sup> each a living Church in itself. Both Churches, additionally, have a common faith, even if the vocabulary and expression of the faith is not similar. The Eastern Catholics have continued their Orthodox heritage and continued their Orthodox Faith, even though they are in communion with Rome. According to Kyr Elias, “with Eastern Orthodoxy we have a common faith and also the same way of thinking, interpreting, building and living this faith.”<sup>102</sup> This common faith is what unites Eastern Catholics so intimately with the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

Conversely, Archbishop Zoghby insists, “*I am in communion with the Bishop of Rome, in the limits recognized to the first among the Bishops by the Holy Fathers of the East during the first millennium, before the separation.*” First and foremost, Eastern Orthodoxy, he argues, does recognize the primacy (within limits) of the See of Rome. The Roman Church has a special

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 22.

responsibility, because of its primacy and power, to be a “force of reconciliation, which unites the Church and the world.”<sup>103</sup> However, in their union with her, the Eastern Catholic Churches lost their identity and became a Catholic “rite”. In addition, they suffered a “loss of their autonomy, their total submission, and their degradation to an inferior position in the Church.”<sup>104</sup> As a result, the Eastern Patriarchs united with Rome were no longer brothers, where, between them, mutual respect, collegiality, and spiritual union existed.

### 3.2.2 *We Are All Schismatics*<sup>105</sup>

Archbishop Elias Zoghby has made it one of the main missions in his life to reunite the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches, at the same time eliminating the existence Eastern Catholic Churches who, as the Archbishop holds, created a new schism within the existing one. The key premise of Kyr Elias in this book is that “one does not repair one Schism by causing another.”<sup>106</sup> However, Archbishop Zoghby does not feel part of one Church or the other, he considers himself as being part of both at the same time. This is living ecumenically as part of the one Church which is both Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic. In order to achieve this unity, what is required is respecting the diversity of each tradition while still maintaining oneness. Saint Augustine affirmed ‘unity in the necessary things, liberty in doubtful things, and in all things charity’. Unity in diversity: this term is heard often when speaking of inter-Church dialogue. According to Kyr Elias, “as long as there is an East and a West, there will be different customs within [the] Church of Jesus Christ that are irreducible, even though it is legitimate and complementary.”<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>105</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *We Are All Schismatics*, trans. Philip Khairallah (Newton: Educational Services, 1996).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 45.

Each person formulates their own image of Christ according to their own perspective. This is often seen in the religious art of different cultures. In like manner, each person forms their faith and interpretation of that faith by their own life, culture and traditions. This diversity, instead of being celebrated, is often frowned upon and used as the reason for division. Kyr Elias uses the example of the evangelists to further demonstrate how diversity is present in all manners of faith. Each one of the evangelists wrote seemingly different accounts of the life, death and resurrection of Christ; however, each Gospel is held as accurate and complementary, and divinely inspired! One is not more truthful than the other; they are all accepted as truth. The Church is made up of people, diverse people, and the lived faith of these people expresses the true beliefs of the Church. This is what needs to be considered first and foremost when examining the belief system of a particular Church. According to Kyr Elias “the dogmatic formulations must be interpreted in light of ecclesial practices.”<sup>108</sup> The Churches of the East, particularly the Orthodox, have maintained the belief systems of their forbearers and this must be, not only commended, but seriously considered when examining doctrinal issues that separate the two sides. For this main reason, the schism should not be maintained on the grounds of religious differences; the schism was particularly initiated and preserved because of political and human reasons. As a result, the creation of Eastern Catholic Churches resulted in a schism within a schism.

The Eastern Catholic Churches are, in effect, annexed, rather than united to the Church of Rome. This is a common belief of Eastern Catholics and several reasons provide evidence of this fact. One main indication of this is the supremacy of Rome over the Eastern Churches. According to Canon Law, the Eastern Catholic hierarch ultimately must answer to Rome and the

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 16.

Roman primate.<sup>109</sup> This is not an environment of unity, nor is it an environment of brotherhood. This is one of the essential things holding the Orthodox back from getting closer or even initiating dialogue with their Eastern Catholic counterparts. The leaders of these Churches are not free, all final decisions and approvals must be made through the Roman Curia and ultimately the Pope. The Eastern Catholic Church has two faces, so to speak because of its two sides. Archbishop Kyr Elias asserts that it is the “Church of two faces of Christ, the Roman side and the Orthodox side.”<sup>110</sup> He continues that the “Melkite Greek-Catholic Church ... is not acceptable to Orthodoxy and at the same time [it is] an embarrassment to the Roman Church to such an extent that Catholic ecumenists and theologians regret that Eastern Catholic Churches were created and that they still exist.”<sup>111</sup> To say the least, this puts the Eastern Catholic Churches in a difficult position.

When speaking of unity there are numerous factors to consider. Archbishop Zoghby emphasizes charity and love<sup>112</sup> as vital parts of communion. According to him, “God is Love: it is one the first of the fruits of faith revealed to us by Himself. And he who talks about love, talks about communion. Communion with God is communion with one another in one Church.”<sup>113</sup> Another aspect to take into account is humility; if charity brings the Churches together, humility will truly unite them. Kyr Elias quotes Cardinal Bea rightly when he says, “the door to unity can only be crossed on bent knees.”<sup>114</sup> Instead of this we are seeing the scandal of disunity push the Churches farther and farther apart. Christ prayed that all may be one, but generations have gone

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<sup>109</sup> The Code of Canon Law would make it appear that there is an autonomy but the Eastern Catholic Bishops feel very dominated and this why Kyr Elias consistently states whether you are from the Eastern Catholic or the Orthodox Churches, you are subjected to Rome.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>112</sup> This brings to mind the words of Saint John the Evangelist “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.” (1 John 4:16).

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

by and this has not come to pass. It is not difficult to emerge a skeptic that all will ever be all right with the Churches and unity will ever transpire. However, all these obstacles can be overcome and once they are and there is a lived communion among the faithful “Jesus Christ will be more effectively present among us, and will Himself consummate unity”<sup>115</sup>

According to Kyr Elias, Double Communion is an effective method of living communion, particularly for the Eastern Catholic Churches with an Orthodox counterpart. Throughout history, up to the Great Schism, “Romans and Orthodox had, in effect, the consciousness of belonging to the same Church of Christ, in spite of differences and political interferences in their reciprocal relationships.”<sup>116</sup> Kyr Elias continues, “the only criteria [sic] of communion was the common faith received from the Apostles and the Fathers, and defined by the seven Ecumenical Councils.”<sup>117</sup> This initiative of “Double Communion,” first presented at the Melkite Synod in 1975, would help facilitate the transition from disunity to communion. This initiative was communicated to the Congregation for Oriental Churches in Rome in the same year. Their response was not a positive one; communion, according to Rome, must be realized on the larger scale before individual groups achieve it. Kyr Elias’s response was clear; this is not a satisfactory response, particularly for Eastern Catholics. The East is unique in that the lay people effectively live communion, while the Church hierarchies are not permitted to do so.

In the words of Archbishop Zoghby “Catholics and Orthodox among us are related to one another, and frequently live under the same roof. They participate in the same Divine Office, they share the same Divine Liturgy, and they have the same customs. They show no difficulties in intermarrying among themselves and to receive the nuptial benediction from the Church in

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 93.

which they are married, whether Orthodox or Catholic.”<sup>118</sup> To the common person, there is no difference. Why must a difference be forced upon them? As long as this situation of disunity is tolerated and allowed to continue, Archbishop Zoghby insists that “[w]e are all schismatics.”

### 3.3 Recent Ecumenical Works

There were various responses to Archbishop Zoghby, his writings and his tireless efforts to ensure unity – in particular to his proposal of Double Communion. He compiled his own thoughts regarding these comments by writing his *Ecumenical Reflections* and ultimately by writing a historical account of the reunification efforts in Antioch. He maintained that the path of communion is paved with love, fraternity, charity and faith. Once these are truly lived by the East and West, then communion and unity will be realized. As long as pride and disharmony prevail, communion and unity are hopes and dreams, something to aspire to, yet never to be achieved.

#### 3.3.1 Ecumenical Reflections<sup>119</sup>

In this book, Archbishop Zoghby preserves that the first Christians and the Church of the apostles worked together as one. According to Kyr Elias, they “were of one heart and soul.”<sup>120</sup> This is unity – sharing, living in harmony and being one. This unity demonstrates a strong and a rich Church, one of sacrifice, humility and self-giving. Division is “the price of sin and unity is a gift that God grants to humble and contrite hearts, to the poor in spirit and in deed.”<sup>121</sup> The twentieth century has brought about several commendable efforts at reunification; however these things take time, but for how long? Nobody knows and neither side seems to be in a hurry to find

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>119</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *Ecumenical Reflections*, trans. Bishop Nicholas Samra (Fairfax: Eastern Christian Publications, 1998).

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 10.

out. The Christian faithful, however, seem to be living this communion nonetheless. Kyr Elias continues that the main component of living this communion is love, particularly in the case of ecclesiastical communion. As indicated by Kyr Elias, “ecclesiastical communion is communion in the faith, lived in love, around the Eucharistic table. Communion in the faith, lived without love, a purely canonical Communion, is meaningless.”<sup>122</sup> For instance, this communion of love is seen in the Holy Trinity, in whom is the true model of unity. Again, love is a personal commitment that each individual must experience and express for themselves.

It is, nonetheless, the responsibility of the Church hierarchies to promote this love. The role of the hierarch is a role of “preaching, teaching and sanctifying the faithful.”<sup>123</sup> Theologians also play a role in the matter of unity. Through their work they can bring the flock together and bring people to the Church, however, they can also play a harmful role by integrating their own truths into the equation. Kyr Elias maintains “nothing is more harmful for Churches than the ‘great theologians’ of the ‘little truths’.”<sup>124</sup> Instead of drawing the East and the West closer, they can push them apart. True theology, therefore, entails adherence to the words of Christ, resulting in true love and charity particularly between the Roman and Orthodox Churches. This is important particularly because this is the first step to understanding each other and understanding that each Church lives in different worlds and expresses itself differently. For example, the Churches of the Middle East lived, and in many places still live, in constant persecution, and have often experienced martyrdom. These Eastern Christians are, according to Kyr Elias, “normally and naturally Orthodox”<sup>125</sup> and must return to their rightful place. The Eastern Catholics belong in the Orthodox Communion, he believes, also, all must return to the Christian unity model of the

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 67.

first millennium, and all must respect the primacy of the Patriarch of the West as it was earlier expressed. This paradigm of unity is one, which is ideal, according to Kyr Elias, and would result in a more complete unification.

### 3.3.2 History of the Project of Reunification of the Byzantine Patriarchate of Antioch<sup>126</sup>

The project of Double Communion was a method devised for the Eastern Catholic Churches, particularly the Melkite Church to reunite with their Orthodox counterpart while remaining in communion with Rome. Kyr Elias, in this publication, explains that this project had two phases, one in 1975 and one in 1995. Each time this proposal was presented to the Melkite Synod, and later was presented to the Roman Curia. Each time, Rome offered reasons for rejecting this proposal, namely to ensure universal communion before considering particular instances of local communion. However, due to several promising events in the ecumenical community and a favourable attitude towards ecumenism on the part of Rome, 1995 offered a more positive opportunity for presenting this project anew. Archbishop Zoghby, however, took a different approach. He wrote *Orthodox in Union? Yes! Uniate? No!* where he clearly outlined his profession of faith, and provided justification for these assertions (*see* 3.2.2). This is the same profession of faith which he had earlier shown to Orthodox Archbishop George Khodr. The latter was very enthusiastic about it and signed it, writing that “I consider this profession of Faith of Kyr Elias Zoghby to fulfill the necessary and sufficient conditions to re-establish the unity of the Orthodox Churches with Rome.” (Signed February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1995.)<sup>127</sup> Five days later, Melkite

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<sup>126</sup> An abridged copy of this work was published in French (Archbishop Elias Zoghby. *Histoire du projet de reunification du Patriarcat Byzantin d'Antioche* [Kaslik: Université Saint-Esprit, 1998]). However, I will be using Archbishop Zoghby's personal complete copy for the purposes of this study.

<sup>127</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, “Initiative of Archbishop Elias Zoghby,” *Eastern Churches Journal* 2 (1995): 12.

Archbishop Cyril Bustros<sup>128</sup> added “I am in agreement with His Excellency Kyr George Khodr on the fact that this profession of Faith of His Excellency Kyr Elias Zoghby is sufficient to accomplish the unity of Eastern Orthodoxy and the Roman Church.”<sup>129</sup> Each Melkite bishop at the 1995 Synod was polled and given the document to peruse individually.<sup>130</sup> The project was officially presented to the Synod where twenty-five bishops/hierarchs affixed their names to the document, agreeing with the statements.

It was received well by the ecumenical communities, the Melkite Synod of Bishops, and most significantly by both the Melkite and Orthodox Patriarchs, who enthusiastically encouraged the project. A joint commission was established to study the issue further, consisting of Kyr Elias Zoghby, Kyr Cyril Bustros and Kyr George Khodr. This potentially promising commission met only once and hesitations on the side of the Orthodox arose, particularly due to the fear of the reaction of the other Orthodox Churches. They became increasingly more suspicious regarding contentious issues such as papal primacy, the filioque and other pertinent issues. According to Kyr Elias “God’s people [are] prohibited from meeting around the Eucharistic Christ because they cannot reunite around a man, who remains a man, the Bishop of Rome.”<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless, both Churches did commit to strengthen the fraternal ties between them, as well as to work at theological research together and to coordinate their pastoral and humanitarian activities. It was

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<sup>128</sup> Archbishop Cyril was inspired to join this ecumenical movement because he appreciated the approach Archbishop Zoghby took. He said “[the movement] was progressive but we need sometimes to have the courage to be progressive.” (Archbishop Cyril Salim Bustros. Telephone Interview by author. June 6, 2005.).

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>130</sup> During the Melkite Synod the Bishops were asked to sign the Profession of Faith. Archbishop Cyril Bustros, who was present there, indicated that many of the Bishops were hesitant to sign this profession because they were not only unsure of the outcome; these Bishops felt that the Melkite Church should wait for the larger unity, rather than the local unity. However, they were urged to sign so that progress could be made with the Orthodox dialogue. (Archbishop Cyril Salim Bustros. Personal Telephone Interview. June 6, 2005.).

<sup>131</sup> As quoted in Archbishop Elias Zoghby. *Histoire du projet de reunification du Patriarcat Byzantin d’Antioche*. Unpublished original manuscript.

very much an effort on the two sides. Rome seemed to be accepting, if not encouraging, of these efforts at that time.

Kyr Elias draws attention to both Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II who both referred to the concept of communion in the first millennium. In *Unitatis redintegratio* (No.14), those working towards unity were encouraged to pay particular attention to the “relations that existed between the Churches of the East and the See of Rome, before the separation.” Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (No.61) also affirms “the Catholic Church only looks for full communion between the East and the West, by being inspired by the experience of the first millennium.”<sup>132</sup> Kyr Elias continues that Rome and the Orthodox world both discourage local unity, in anticipation of the greater unity of East and West. He states “I don’t see the Roman Church requiring its daughter, the Anglican or Lutheran Church, separated from her and that would ask to return to communion with her, to wait for the time when all Protestant Churches return to communion with her.”<sup>133</sup> Why is it different for the Patriarchate of Antioch? This leaves the Melkites in a difficult position, either to remain as they are and wait, or enter into schism with Rome. According to Kyr Elias, “when the Roman Church created a separation in the heart of Orthodoxy, to make room for Uniatism, she didn’t need the consent of Orthodoxy. Now that Greek-Catholics seek to repair this rupture and reunite their Orthodox Church of Antioch, it is necessary that the entire world, Orthodox as well as Catholic, need to be in accord.”<sup>134</sup> Whether there will be renewed interest in this project of Double Communion or not remains to be seen; in the interim the Churches remain as they are, practicing and living cooperatively, yet divided. Ultimately, “if Antiochian unity is not made immediately, history would reserve that the

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<sup>132</sup> As quoted in Archbishop Elias Zoghby. *Histoire du projet de reunification du Patriarcat Byzantin d’Antioche*. Unpublished original manuscript.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

Church of Antioch, always the one of reconciliation, of Communion and of peace did not allow the millennium of schism between Rome and Orthodoxy end without making the problem of their unity explode through the restoration of its own unity.”<sup>135</sup>

### 3.4 Analysis of Archbishop Zoghby’s Main Ideas

Archbishop Elias Zoghby’s methods have changed over time, although his ideas have remained consistent. In his earlier ecumenical writings (1960’s), Kyr Elias demonstrated a more pastoral tone, speaking to his readers as a teacher, while clarifying many points of history that affected the Eastern Catholic Churches. The later writings of Kyr Elias exhibit more direct and undeviating tones. These later writings appear to be of a man who is frustrated with the whole ecumenical movement between the Roman West and Orthodox East. They appear to be the writings of a man who, perhaps, feels that the situation for the Eastern Catholic Churches is neither one that is promising, nor is it one in which they have room to truly flourish in their environments, both Orthodox and Catholic. The Eastern Catholic Churches are at risk of losing its identity, sliding down a slippery slope the Eastern Catholics embarked upon when reunification with the West was achieved. His themes, therefore, are common throughout. His methods, however, adapt to the times.

First and foremost, Archbishop Zoghby looks to heaven, not only for Divine Inspiration, but also for Divine example. As we have seen, he refers to the Holy Trinity as the perfect model of unity.<sup>136</sup> The persons of the Trinity are three, but they function as a unity, undivided, with one mind and one accord. As Kyr Elias maintains, this is how the Churches should also be, diverse, yet united in Christ. As the Holy Trinity is diverse, so – ideally – is the Church; in both the diverse work together harmoniously. The Divine Persons, though three and diverse, function as

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> This is also an important point of *Unitatis redintegratio*, 2.

one. In like manner, the Churches should work and progress as one. In essence, the model of the Holy Trinity emphasizes simultaneously that the Apostolic Churches are different from one another, yet have the same purpose. One must also keep in mind that, although equal, the Father is the source and holds the Holy Trinity together. This might have definite implications on unity in the coming together of Catholic a West and Orthodox East as Archbishop Zoghby so ardently hopes. One would have to reflect about what leadership would need to look like in a unified Church. Essentially, who would be an acceptable leader for both sides?

Unity, according to Kyr Elias, is about building the Church and the body of Christ together; it is the mission of all Christians to accomplish this task. The ultimate manifestation of unity is through participation and sharing of the Eucharist. In this, one participates both in unity with Christ and with their fellow Christians, a bond that is stronger than any schism. Christ is the one who unites Christians. However, Kyr Elias also speaks of there no longer being a separate Eastern Catholic Church once Catholics and Orthodox unite. This could have significant pastoral repercussions for the lay people in concrete communities. A sudden proclamation of Church unity would force them to choose between loyalties either toward the Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox communion. Most Eastern Catholics might indeed see such an event as taking away their identity. Consequently, this would further divide the community rather than unite it, as people felt themselves forced into a choice that they would have to defend.

In any significant move towards Christian unity, there needs to be a decentralization of power, particularly on the part of certain Church leaders, especially the Roman Pontiff. By distributing ecclesiastical authority, the negative image of a supreme leader would be removed and would liberate the Orthodox from some of their fear of being taken over by the West. Each community must, however, retain its traditions and identity and in no way must any Church be fused or amalgamated into another. Again, this is along the same lines of "Unity in Diversity." Each

tradition is a separate path leading to the one salvation. Additionally, it takes both the Eastern and the Western Churches in their entirety to make unity, including their hierarchies, their clergy and their laity. The unity of the Church cannot be achieved only at the level of one or the other. Next, it is essential to look at the coming together of the Churches in terms of equality. Neither the East nor the West has exclusive claims to salvation, nor should they have any claim to power that exalts one above the other. In order for true unity to become a reality, there must be a return to the way of life of the Churches of the first millennium as a model. This is a common theme in Kyr Elias's writings. Any councils or decisions, such as ex-cathedra declarations, on the part of either Church should not be forced upon, or required of the other.

Furthermore, Archbishop Zoghby continues by arguing that the Eastern Catholic Churches, who were born out of schism, were also an attempt to achieve unity. He argues this point many times, that Uniatism was a failed attempt at unity and should not be used as a method of unity. This echoes the statement generated at Balamand in 1993, but it is a point Kyr Elias made three decades earlier! He continues that those who caused the Schism in the Antiochian Church, namely between the Melkites and their Orthodox counterparts, did more damage than anticipated. They damaged the relationships not only within the Antiochian Church, but also between the Roman East and Orthodox West. The new Eastern Catholic Churches were isolated, neither truly Catholic, nor truly Orthodox and, ultimately under Roman authority. The Bishop of Rome saw himself as being above, not equal to the Patriarch of Antioch. In addition, the long-standing traditions of the Eastern Catholic Churches were being Latinized. There must be a return, Kyr Elias maintains, to the Byzantine roots of the Church and a return to equality.

Interestingly enough, there is some change, or adaptation, in the thinking on the part of Archbishop Zoghby. In his earlier writings, he maintained that any dialogue between the East and West should be had between the Roman and Orthodox Churches alone, without the

participation of the Eastern Catholic Churches, even though these Eastern Catholic Churches must still have a voice and play an important role in the overall process of ecumenical rapprochement. He also insisted on the reunification of the larger, mother Churches, prior to the unity of the Churches under their jurisdiction. In his later writings, Kyr Elias became more active, presenting the project of Double Communion in which the Eastern Catholics would be simultaneously in Communion with Rome and in Communion with Orthodoxy. Thus we see a clear change of focus from an emphasis on union achieved universally to union sought at the local level. What precipitated this change in his approach? Kyr Elias realized that most Roman Catholics and most Eastern Orthodox do not feel the pain of separation acutely enough. In the Church of Antioch, however, it is a matter of daily concern, always present in the consciousness and life of people. He therefore shifted attention to the possibility of a local union where it might be felt strongly enough to carry the proposal through to fulfillment. This proposal seemed outrageous to some, but prophetic to others. Archbishop Elias Zoghby maintains, however, that this is the most effective way to pursue unity, particularly because the Christian people of both Byzantine Churches of Antioch live together in harmony, intermarrying and even partaking in Eucharistic sharing. He pursued this project until it was finally accepted by his own synod. However, this positive reaction didn't last long and, as it stands, unity has not been achieved. Alas, has all the hard work of Archbishop Zoghby been all for naught?

Although Archbishop Elias Zoghby was a great visionary (some would say a dreamer), a number of his notions compel one to look further into whether or not these would be actually feasible. In his zeal for Christian unity, Kyr Elias is quite adamant about his beliefs and sometimes overstates things, perhaps as a result of cultural conditioning. When speaking of the great return to Orthodoxy, one must consider those involved. Many people would be greatly affected by this. Some of the faithful, perhaps, would not like to "return". The question is not

merely of readiness, but of willingness. Communion with Rome has its advantages and some would prefer to maintain them. Eastern Catholic Churches, despite some Latinization, seem to have held on to the traditions of the past rather tenaciously and have not deviated very far. This same quality may well make them predisposed to hang on to the *status quo*. Furthermore, no Church can boast of being the same as it was at the time of the Apostles. The Eastern Catholic Churches have undergone some minor changes due to Roman Catholic influences, for instance reciting the Rosary. Although Kyr Elias would argue these “Latinizations” should be removed, some would argue that these developments are part of a normal development and cross-fertilization of cultures. I would agree with Archbishop Zoghby, though, that as a matter of principle, Eastern Catholics should not lose their identities or forget the Church of their ancestry and its traditions. The issue really is to identify the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable developments. Kyr Elias does not offer a meaningful treatment of this thorny issue.

In addition, Kyr Elias has made several references to returning to the first millennium model of Church unity. Although this is a very interesting perspective, one should inquire about the nature of the unity that was enjoyed in the first millennium. The imperial Churches were, for the most part, held together by their allegiance to the Emperor. Unity was upheld by governmental, administrative and even military means. Even the great councils were called and enforced by imperial power. Perhaps if there was a unifying force such as this, then this model would work. Until then, it is not easy to perceive how this model of return to first millennium unity would work in this day and age.

One must also consider the fact that achieving the proposed “partial communion” would create a new, even a “neo-uniatic,” Church. This is a problem mainly because this situation would cause a schism within a schism. This is why Rome and Constantinople both stress that all efforts be directed at establishing full communion between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox

Churches. I personally feel that the partial communion as we already see it in the current lived inter-communion is a means or a useful path towards full communion. Since the lay faithful are living this unity already to a great degree, it makes possible an easier transition to full communion in the future and inspires their wider communions to work toward full communion.

Furthermore, Kyr Elias refers to Antioch as being “always the Church of reconciliation”<sup>137</sup> but one must ask how realistic this is when the number of patriarchs in Antioch is greater than that of any other patriarchate? Perhaps this reflects the great desire for unity that Antioch possesses because of its multiple divisions. Nevertheless, however it may be perceived, Kyr Elias’s ecumenical initiatives are a significant contribution to the ecumenical movement and, realistic or not, they propose a concrete means to allow ecclesial communion to become not only a dream, but a reality. Thus my critical reflections are not meant to discredit the prophetic efforts of Archbishop Zoghby, but only to inject some further thought into the process as a whole.

In this chapter, Archbishop Zoghby’s main works on the subject of ecumenism were analysed further. These works, presented chronologically, put forward Kyr Elias’ main ideas on the subject of the reunification of the Eastern Churches belonging to the Orthodox and Catholic communions. His ecumenical initiatives furthered the idea of the Eastern Catholic Churches returning to their Orthodox heritage while still maintaining their connection with the Roman Catholic Church, in the spirit of communion experienced in the first millennium. The definition of communion he provides in his later work, *Ecumenical Reflections* sums up the viewpoint Kyr Elias has maintained throughout the past four decades: communion should be Trinitarian, Eucharistic, and lived in love – communion is born in love and linked with love.<sup>138</sup> The next chapter will take these ideas and examine them in light of the current ecumenical movement and

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<sup>137</sup> Zoghby, *Histoire du projet de reunification du Patriarcat Byzantin d’Antioche*.

<sup>138</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *Ecumenical Reflections*, trans. Bishop Nicholas Samra (Fairfax: Eastern Christian Publications, 1998), 21-22.

will evaluate the reactions of Kyr Elias' contemporaries. Furthermore, Archbishop Zoghby's writings will be contrasted with Pope John Paul II's *Ut Unum Sint*.

## Chapter Four

### *A Commentary on and Evaluation of Archbishop Elias Zoghby's Initiatives and the Current Ecumenical Movement*

Since the Second Vatican Council there have been many developments in the ways the Eastern and Western Churches relate to each other and other Christian Churches. Even though the International Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue was at a stalemate for a while, significant progress has been made. This chapter will discuss the reactions of the Catholic and Orthodox authorities to Archbishop Zoghby's contributions. Furthermore, Archbishop Zoghby's thought will be compared with Pope John Paul II's *Ut Unum Sint*. It will also discuss the current ecumenical climate, particularly the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue, and what Archbishop Zoghby's vision can contribute.

#### **4.1 The Reaction of both Catholic and Orthodox Church Authorities to Archbishop Elias Zoghby and His contributions**

Throughout his life and through his various contributions to the ecumenical movement, Archbishop Elias Zoghby has made significant, yet controversial, contributions to the Christian communities of the East and West. Zoghby continuously made the authorities take notice. Both Catholic and Orthodox Church authorities, nonetheless, had mixed reactions to him.

Kyr Elias received praise at the Second Vatican Council for his pastoral contributions. However, Kyr Elias went from being praised and admired to criticized and even despised over his ecumenical propositions. What was the cause of this? Did he venture into inappropriate territory? But was he not answering the call of Christ to all of us to unify His Church "that all may be one"? Both the Catholic and Orthodox reactions will be examined in order to determine the opinions of those concerned, as well as their reasoning behind their responses. Nevertheless,

neither one would argue the fact that Kyr Elias has played an important role in the life of the Eastern Churches and that his contributions will live on for many generations.

#### 4.1.1 The Catholic Standpoint<sup>139</sup>

In recent years the Catholic Church has continuously encouraged peaceful and friendly relations among the Churches of the East, both Catholic and Orthodox. Roman authorities have, however, frowned upon some of the ecumenical activities between the local Churches, desiring instead to control the process in view of “global” considerations on a larger scale. But *Unitatis Redintegratio* also maintains that the faithful of the Eastern Churches, within their local Churches, should “preserve the family ties of common faith and charity which ought to exist between sister Churches.”<sup>140</sup> When Archbishop Zoghby first proposed his initiative in 1975, the Catholic Church took notice. After much study, the Roman Curia sent back a reply, dated in Rome April 9, 1976.<sup>141</sup> The main points outlined in the letter are as follows:

- 1) Both the Orthodox and Catholic Churches “exclude totally the possibility, either temporary or provisional, of a double communion or a double allegiance;
- 2) Full intercommunion is a long process that should not be exclusive to local unity;
- 3) The groundwork for dialogue and fraternity should be established first and foremost, before anything else is attempted; and 4) All Churches within the Patriarchate of Antioch who are in communion with Rome cannot be forgotten and any ecumenical activity should not be exclusive.

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<sup>139</sup> Archbishop Zoghby maintains that Rome continues to be the primary stumbling block in the reunification project of the Churches of Antioch. For every step forward they make, Rome pushes them back. Even if the people all went to Rome demanding unity, Rome would always find something to justify not moving forward. (Archbishop Elias Zoghby. Telephone Interview by author. November 14, 2004. CD Recording available at the Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, Saint Paul University, Ottawa. Interview conducted in Arabic.)

<sup>140</sup> *Unitatis redintegratio*, 14.

<sup>141</sup> This letter is found in *We Are All Schismatics* by Archbishop Elias Zoghby (1996) on pages 97-99. Unfortunately, an original copy could not be obtained.

All these points would be reiterated time and again as the official position of Rome in response to Archbishop Zoghby's initiative of Double Communion.

In 1995, a second attempt at presenting the initiative of Double Communion was made. It seemed that all concerned were enthusiastic and hopeful. Whereas the Melkite Synod was not positive in 1975, they were positive in 1995. Rome replied in a letter to the Melkite Patriarch, dated June 11, 1997.<sup>142</sup> For the most part, the response reiterated the position taken in the initial 1976 letter of response. The Melkites were requested to refrain from pursuing individual ecumenical discussion with their Orthodox counterparts in Antioch, yet they were encouraged to establish fraternal relationships. In an interview with Monsignor Johann Bonny, the person responsible for the Middle Eastern ecumenical desk at the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in 2004, these points were heard once more.<sup>143</sup> Essentially, it was pointed out that both the Melkite and Antiochian Orthodox Churches belong to a communities that are much larger – the Melkites to the Catholic Communion headed by Rome and the Orthodox to the Communion led by Constantinople – and as long as Rome and Constantinople are not in Communion, their local Churches cannot be in communion. Furthermore, there continues to be a lack of consensus within the respective Synods of Bishops. When asked about the intercommunion, intermarriage and sacramental sharing that takes place on a day to day basis within the lay communities in these local Churches, Monsignor Bonny stated that Rome is aware and chooses to “turn a blind eye” because of *economia* and pastoral need. In regard to Archbishop Zoghby and his tireless efforts at unity, these have not gone unnoticed. According to Monsignor Bonny he has done many great things, he is a “visionary and a prophet” and has

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<sup>142</sup> This is from the original letter dated June 11, 1997 from the Congregatio Pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus To His Beatitude Maximos V Hakim, Melkite Patriarch. June 11, 1997.

<sup>143</sup> Monsignor Johan Bonny, interview in person by author. Conducted at Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Vatican City, May 3, 2004.

played a vital role in fostering the progress of the dialogue in the East, making Antioch's ecumenical process one of the most advanced dialogues between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

#### 4.1.2 The Orthodox Opinion

Before Archbishop Elias Zoghby reintroduced his project of Double Communion in 1995, he went to the Orthodox Metropolitan George Khodr for feedback. The letter of response he received was very positive; as were those from other Orthodox hierarchs he approached, including his Beatitude Ignatius IV Hazim, Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch. The Patriarch, with great enthusiasm for the project, assumed partial responsibility (along with Melkite Patriarch Maximos V Hakim) to re-establish the unity of their two Churches. However, once a commission was established, with Metropolitan George Khodr representing the Orthodox side, many setbacks occurred. First and foremost, the Orthodox representatives started becoming more and more meticulous in raising problematic issues, mainly in regards to questions of papal primacy. In their communiqué dated October 10, 1996,<sup>144</sup> they stated that they acknowledged the efforts of the Melkite Synod. However, the Orthodox maintained that both Churches must work together in conjunction with the international Orthodox-Catholic ecumenical commission to achieve greater unity among the Churches. Thus, in light of the current official efforts toward unity, the faithful are still not permitted to engage in *communicatio in sacris* even though they might feel it appropriate to do so. Nevertheless, the fraternal ties between the Melkite and Orthodox Churches of Antioch should be continually strengthened, as an example for others, while not excluding their other sister Churches. In effect, the Antiochian Orthodox communicated the same message as Rome: local communion without universal communion is

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<sup>144</sup> This can be found in Archbishop Zoghby's History of the *Project of Reunification of the Byzantine Patriarchate of Antioch* (unpublished).

not a desirable goal. Furthermore, Metropolitan George Khodr, wanted to also emphasize that in his signing Kyr Elias's "profession of faith," he was referring to the dialogue between Orthodoxy and Rome, not between Orthodoxy and the Eastern Catholics. Clearly this illustrates that the wounds from the schism and feelings of having been betrayed are profound.

#### **4.2 The Current Ecumenical Climate and Concrete Situation of Orthodox-Catholic Relations**

In order to better understand the events of 1975 and 1996 recounted above, the following needs to be stated. According to Archbishop Zoghby, the First Vatican Council, which he argued was not an ecumenical one, further alienated the Orthodox by the dogmas it promulgated.<sup>145</sup> Another major concern for both sides continues to be the existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches. As we explored earlier, Eastern Catholic Churches share characteristics of both the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and struggle to balance these traits. As Kyr Elias emphasizes, in essence Eastern Catholic Churches are neither truly Catholic, at least in the popular sense which identifies Catholic with Roman/Latin, nor are they truly Orthodox. Archbishop Cyril Bustros agrees that issues such as the universal jurisdiction of the Pope and papal infallibility are the most notable difficulties in the current ecumenical movement.<sup>146</sup> Among the Orthodox, there is an underlying fear of proselytism which somewhat hinders any efforts toward a trusting dialogue. The existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches for them is a constant reminder of this. The Balamand statement (1993) states "[w]ith regard to the method which has been called "uniatism," it was said at Freising (June 1990) that 'we reject it as a method for the search for unity because it is opposed to the common tradition of our Churches'."<sup>147</sup> It seemed at the time

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<sup>145</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, telephone interview by author. November 14, 2004. CD Recording available at the Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, Saint Paul University, Ottawa. Interview conducted in Arabic.

<sup>146</sup> Archbishop Cyril Salim Bustros, telephone interview by author. June 6, 2005.

<sup>147</sup> "Balamand Statement," *Eastern Churches Journal* 1 (1994): 2.

that the fear of proselytism and Uniatism had been addressed and resolved. For that reason, some believed that papal authority was the only issue standing in the way of reunification. But as we have seen, “the memory of past events, remote or more recent, still impedes or hinders ecumenical relations.”<sup>148</sup>

In spite of this it is crucial to see how the spirit of the Zoghby initiative continues. Recently, a new Church in Syria was constructed that was a joint effort by both the Orthodox and Melkite Churches of Antioch. The Church, located in Damascus (a similar Church already exists in Aleppo), is to be used mutually by both communities. During the inaugural ceremony Melkite Patriarch Gregory III said in his speech, “the inauguration of this church is one of most beautiful news now spreading from the Church of Antioch, the good news of brotherhood, communion and partnership ...from Antioch, from Damascus the message of unity is launched to the devised world it is a beginning and a follow up.[sic]”<sup>149</sup> This is a very positive step towards functioning together as Christians, not as Christian denominations.<sup>150</sup>

After 1995 other events continue to evolve in Orthodox-Catholic ecumenism. For example, Pope John Paul II contributed greatly to the ecumenical effort between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. He always preserved his position on the “purification of memories” of those who were wronged by the Catholic Church in the past. As Farrell notes, “the purification of memories is something to which John Paul II has drawn to our [Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity] attention on numerous occasions, and it remains one of the most crucial challenges for those who work for Christian unity.”<sup>151</sup> Pope John Paul II’s visit to Greece in May 2001 was not

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<sup>148</sup> Bishop Brian Farrell, “Ecumenism Today: The Situation in the Catholic Church”. <[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20041121\\_farrell-ecumenismo\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20041121_farrell-ecumenismo_en.html)> [Accessed on May 5, 2005].

<sup>149</sup> “A new Church is inaugurated,” *Orthodox Christian News Service*, 7. <<http://www.orthodoxnews.netfirms.com/159/inaugurated.htm>> [Accessed February 15, 2005]

<sup>150</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, personal telephone interview. November 14, 2004.

<sup>151</sup> Farrell, “Ecumenism Today: The Situation in the Catholic Church.”

only one of precedent, it was one of humility. Surrounded by a crowd protesting his visit, the late Pope began by apologizing for the sins the Catholic Church committed against the Orthodox throughout their years of separation. In his meeting with Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens and all Greece, he affirmed, "clearly, there is need for a liberating process of purification of memory ... for the occasions past and present, when sons and daughters of the Catholic Church have sinned by action or omission against their Orthodox brothers and sisters, may the Lord grant us the forgiveness we beg of him."<sup>152</sup> The Archbishop was reported to have applauded these words. John Paul II's gesture demonstrated the will of the Catholic Church to move beyond its actions of the past and this was a significant step in the right direction toward positive relations with the East. Pope John Paul II continued his visit in Damascus where a great number of people, which included Orthodox and Muslims along with Catholics, gathered to see him. During this visit, the Greek-Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius IV Hazim of Antioch rose spontaneously to embrace the Greek-Catholic patriarch. This received many cheers and applause from the crowd of young people gathered.

Most recently, the return of the Holy Relics of Saint Gregory the Theologian and Saint John Chrysostom to the Patriarchate of Constantinople improved relations between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch, said "[the relics] came back to us not by force, but willingly and joyfully, bringing great joy, delight and satisfaction, a part of which we owe to the gentle and friendly attitude displayed by the most holy brother Pope of the older Rome John Paul II, who responded with brotherly love to our request for the return of the holy relics of the two great saints to Constantinople."<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> "Pope Asks Forgiveness for Catholics' Sins Against Orthodox" *Zenit News Service*, Friday, May 4, 2001 <<http://www.zenit.org>> [Accessed on May 4, 2001].

<sup>153</sup> Archbishop of Constantinople Bartholomew and Ecumenical Patriarch on the occasion of the return of the Holy Relics. <<http://www.ec-atr.gr/afieroma/epistropfi/en/message.htm>> [Accessed June 1, 2005].

These historical events truly marked history and the ecumenical movement. Most recently, during the funeral of Pope John Paul II, not only was there a representation of Orthodox delegates, but the Eastern Catholic Churches also participated prominently in the funeral, reciting memorial prayers and chanting in the Byzantine fashion, with the singing led by Melkite Patriarch Gregory III. The funeral was truly an indication of Pope John Paul's many attempts at not only healing the wrongs of the past, but of also repairing the bridges for the future generations. He made significant steps towards solidifying the bond that unites East and West.

Pope Benedict XVI has proclaimed that his pontificate will be one of unity and unifying Christians, and prayed that the Lord might "help us to be servants of unity."<sup>154</sup> His meetings with Orthodox and Eastern Catholic authorities provide a positive indication of Pope Benedict's future intentions.

#### **4.3 The Thought of Archbishop Elias Zoghby in Comparison with *Ut Unum Sint***

In view of the fact that the 1995 Zoghby initiative coincided with the publication of John Paul II's encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* it will be instructive to compare Archbishop Elias Zoghby's views with the ideas found in the latter encyclical. Pope John Paul II wrote *Ut Unum Sint* as his twelfth encyclical in order to communicate his commitment, as well as the commitment of the Roman Catholic Church, to the Ecumenical Movement. He argues that ecumenism is not something added to the conventional activities of the Church, but "an organic part of her life and work, and consequently must pervade all that she is and does" (No. 20). This encyclical examines the pontiff's role as a "visible sign and guarantor of unity" recognizing that the Roman pontiff's position as Bishop of Rome "constitutes a difficulty for most other Christians, whose memory is

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<sup>154</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, Sunday 24 April 2005: Mass for the inauguration of the Pontificate. <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/homilies/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20050424\\_inizio-pontificato\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20050424_inizio-pontificato_en.html)> [Accessed on May 1, 2005].

marked by certain painful recollections” (No. 88). Pope John Paul II discusses many things that are in agreement, as well as some in which the views of the two men differ, with Archbishop Elias Zoghby’s ecumenical beliefs, namely the history of ecumenism, sacramental sharing, common prayer, and joint service as well as other relevant matters.

In comparing the two men and their views, we will distil certain major ideas from *Ut Unum Sint* and examine how Kyr Elias’s notions either agree or disagree with what Pope John Paul II has written, looking for areas where Kyr Elias’ contribution could be seen as contributing positively to the ecumenical movement, but at the same time looking for areas where the grounding of Kyr Elias’s exposition in the practical reality of his own Church opens up additional ways of understanding the relationship between the Churches and thus complements in crucial ways an encyclical intended for all Christians.

#### 4.3.1 Trinitarian Basis of Church Unity

Pope John Paul II asserts that the basis of unity is Trinitarian. Archbishop Zoghby would agree. In essence, we are one with Jesus through baptism, which introduces us to the life and unity of the Trinity. Furthermore, the Pope affirms, “the faithful are *one* because, in the Spirit, they are in *communion* with the Son and, in him, share his *communion* with the Father.”<sup>155</sup> Kyr Elias looks to the Holy Trinity as a perfect example of unity. Consequently, he insists, “unity among Christians depends on union of each Christian with Christ.”<sup>156</sup> He continues, “The Trinity in God is constituted by the fact that each Divine Person is a *relation* to the others. The Father is entirely ordered to the Son; the Son entirely ordered [...] to the Father” and “the Holy Spirit is

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<sup>155</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 9.

<sup>156</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *A Voice from the Byzantine East*, trans. R. Bernard, (Educational Services Newton: Diocese of Newton, 1992), 11.

the emanation of the Father through the Son” and this should be a Divine example to us.<sup>157</sup> Kyr Elias, additionally, consistently maintained that Christian unity is linked to the “unity of the Divine persons, which is not only the model for Christian unity, but is equally its source.”<sup>158</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Church Unity as Willed By God

Pope John Paul II maintains that the return to unity of divided humanity is the will of God.<sup>159</sup> Both Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Zoghby emphasize that Jesus prayed that, “they may be one as We are One” (John 17:22) and this clearly demonstrated unity as the will of God. John Paul II would add that “this unity, which the Lord has bestowed on His Church and in which he wishes to embrace all people, is not something added on, but stands at the very heart of Christ’s mission [...] and belongs to the very essence of this community.”<sup>160</sup> Kyr Elias maintained that “all men, coming from the hand of God, should always be able to know and love one another, so that the human family might always be united, always one, *in fact as well as in theory*.”<sup>161</sup> John Paul II quotes *Unitatis redintegratio* which states that division “openly contradicts the will of Christ.”<sup>162</sup>

#### 4.3.3 The Dialogue of Love and the Dialogue of Truth

Significant in the dialogue between whom John Paul II refers to as “Sister Churches” – the Eastern Catholic and the Orthodox Churches – is that “it has become evident that the method to be followed towards full communion is the dialogue of truth, fostered and sustained by the

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

<sup>158</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *Ecumenical Reflections*, trans. Bishop Nicholas Samra, (Fairfax: Eastern Christian Publications, 1998).

<sup>159</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 6.

<sup>160</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 9.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>162</sup> *Unitatis redintegratio*, 1.

dialogue of love.”<sup>163</sup> The Dialogue of Love and the Dialogue of Truth are important elements on the path to reconciliation and, although they encompass separate features, they also complement each other to a great extent. The Dialogue of Love refers to a series of physical gestures made between various popes and patriarchs (of Constantinople). The Dialogue of Truth encompasses the examination of what each Church teaches in their doctrine and dogma. Pope John Paul II also mentioned that these theological discussions and prayers have been reinforced by pastoral visits which greatly improve mutual knowledge and increase fraternal charity.<sup>164</sup>

Archbishop Zoghby would argue, however, that the Dialogue of Love has already been in place for some time because of the lived communion amongst the faithful of the Patriarchate of Antioch. This is a common theme in his writings, and he also reiterated this fact several times orally when interviewed.<sup>165</sup> This is what makes this particular “schism” so painful for him and the people of Antioch. Kyr Elias’s pastoral practices are evidence of this. His pastoral initiatives of love and of charity between the separated Churches of Antioch do not distinguish between Catholic and Orthodox; he serves both. Archbishop Zoghby would thus agree with the Pope that, as John Paul II acknowledged “dialogue does not extend exclusively to matters of doctrine but engages the whole person; it is also a dialogue of love.”<sup>166</sup>

#### **4.3.4 Prayer and Love as Tools for Christian Unity**

Prayer and love, these basic Christian values, are tools in which the foundation of Christian Unity is based. According to Pope John Paul II, this love, which builds communion, is the great undercurrent which gives life and adds vigor to the movement for Christian unity. This love, in

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<sup>163</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 60.

<sup>164</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 71.

<sup>165</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, telephone interview by author. November 14, 2004. CD Recording available at the Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, Saint Paul University, Ottawa. Interview conducted in Arabic.

<sup>166</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 47.

consequence, finds it most complete expression in common prayer.<sup>167</sup> Common prayer brings separated Christians together because Christ is present with them, and, “if Christians, despite their divisions, can grow ever more united in common prayer around Christ, they will grow in the awareness of how little divides them in comparison to what unites them.”<sup>168</sup> John Paul II also maintains that prayer is essential to dialogue and makes it more fruitful. Dialogue depends on prayer and prayer also becomes the ever more mature fruit of dialogue.<sup>169</sup> Archbishop Zoghby asserts, also, that communion is born in love and linked in love. He maintains that love is essential to communion because of three points – firstly, Trinitarian (the unity of the Holy Trinity is a unity of love); secondly, Eucharistic (the Eucharist is a Sacrament of Love); and thirdly, that communion in faith lived without love is truly meaningless.<sup>170</sup>

#### **4.3.5 The Reality of Partial Communion between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches and the Possibilities Which Flow from It**

A main component of ecumenism, asserts Pope John Paul II, is “directed precisely to making the partial communion existing between Christians grow toward full communion.”<sup>171</sup> Furthermore, he states, that relations between Christians call for “every possible form of practical cooperation at all levels: pastoral, cultural and social, as well as that of witnessing to the Gospel message.”<sup>172</sup> He goes on to quote *Unitatis Redintegratio* affirming, “cooperation among all Christians vividly expresses that bond which already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant.”<sup>173</sup> This is present in the informal communion being lived among

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>170</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *Ecumenical Reflections*, trans. Bishop Nicholas Samra, (Fairfax: Eastern Christian Publications, 1998), 21.

<sup>171</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 14.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>173</sup> *Unitatis redintegratio*, 12.

many Catholic and Orthodox communities and it is essential that one must not forget the “ecclesiological implication of sharing in the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.”<sup>174</sup>

Archbishop Zoghby would insist that informal communion and sacramental sharing is already a reality and present among the faithful of Antioch, so it should simply be formalized. He would argue that the lay people are more ecumenically advanced while the hierarchies are holding back. Kyr Elias states that “those people of God who are not nourished by political or confessional interests are better prepared to return to communion than the senior clergy, who are held back by juridical and administrative scruples which are not shared by the faithful.”<sup>175</sup> He maintains that the people of God want unity and try to live it. He affirms that “Catholics and Orthodox among us are related to one another, and frequently live under the same roof. They participate in the same Divine Office, they share the same Divine Liturgy, and they have the same customs. They show no difficulties in intermarrying among themselves and they receive the nuptial benediction from the Church in which they are married, whether Orthodox or Catholic.”<sup>176</sup>

#### **4.3.6 The Role of Entire Communities, Especially the Eastern Catholic Churches, In Fostering Church Unity**

Pope John Paul II asserts the duty of Christian communities, as a whole, to cultivate an environment of unity. There is a call for *personal* as well as *communal* conversion.<sup>177</sup> There also has to be a call to repentance for transgressions carried out that harmed “fraternal charity, of certain refusals to forgive, of a certain pride, of an unevangelical insistence on condemning the “other side,” of a disdain born of an unhealthy presumption.”<sup>178</sup> Therefore, there is a need for internal conversion. In this quest for a peaceful unity, John Paul II emphasizes the recognition

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<sup>174</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 58.

<sup>175</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *We Are All Schismatics*, trans. Philip Khairallah (Newton: Educational Services, 1996), 107.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>177</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 15.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

that the Eastern Catholic Churches should live out their own apostolate and promote a “true fraternal mutual esteem between Orthodox and Catholics living in the same territory,” but all “foster their joint commitment to work for unity.”<sup>179</sup> He continues that the Eastern Catholic Churches “will play a constructive role in the dialogue of love and in the theological dialogue at both the local and international levels, and thus contribute to mutual understanding and the continuing pursuit of full unity.”<sup>180</sup> However, one does not really see the Eastern Catholic Churches, as such, permitted to be involved in the international Orthodox-Catholic dialogue. Archbishop Zoghby certainly agrees that Eastern Catholic Churches should have a greater role to play in Catholic-Orthodox dialogue. He also stresses that “if charity can bring hearts together, only humility allows charity to unify them, because it alone gives way to leaving the place to the other, free and available.”<sup>181</sup>

Kyr Elias also stresses that the Eastern Catholics are not a free people; they are subjected to the Roman Church.<sup>182</sup> He continues that Eastern Catholics are subjected to the Roman Pontiff “as simple soldiers. They are not treated as brothers, but as docile subjects to both his orders and to the directives of the Roman Congregations [...] everything must be carried out according to the whims of the Roman Congregations.”<sup>183</sup> He continues, “the Melkite patriarchate, archdioceses, and eparchies are all *dependent upon* the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, and submitted to their [sic] jurisdiction. In other words, the Eastern Catholic patriarchs and

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid; see also *Unitatis redintegratio*, 17.

<sup>181</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *Ecumenical Reflections*, trans. Bishop Nicholas Samra (Fairfax: Eastern Christian Publications, 1998), 9.

<sup>182</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *We Are All Schismatics*, trans. Philip Khairallah (Newton: Educational Services, 1996), 105.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 53.

synods only enjoy a delegated jurisdiction, delegated by the Super-Patriarch of Rome, namely the aforementioned Oriental Congregation.”<sup>184</sup>

#### 4.3.7 Working for Christian Unity is an Obligation for Every Christian

Pope John Paul II stresses that Christian unity is the duty and responsibility of all who have been baptized.<sup>185</sup> Moreover, he lays emphasis on the fact that the Catholic Church’s commitments to ecumenical dialogue, “far from being the responsibility of the Apostolic See alone, is also the duty of individual local or particular Churches.”<sup>186</sup> Archbishop Zoghby would argue that Rome has the primary responsibility both for rupture and for reunion. He states “the Church of Rome, being head of all the Churches, and by this fact, having the primary responsibility for the schism, also has the primary responsibility for this ecclesiastical communion.”<sup>187</sup> However, we do see Kyr Elias not hesitating to offer his own solution, presenting his project of Double Communion.

#### 4.3.8 Church Unity and Legitimate Diversity

Although the Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II maintains, there are elements of sanctification and truth existing in other Christian Churches.<sup>188</sup> He also upholds that the “vision of the full communion to be sought is that of unity in legitimate diversity.”<sup>189</sup> Archbishop Zoghby would agree that there must be unity in diversity and that each tradition must retain their traditions and identity. Quite simply he stresses that “to refuse

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<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>185</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 6.

<sup>186</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 31.

<sup>187</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby. *We Are All Schismatics*, trans. Philip Khairallah (Newton: Educational Services, 1996), 75.

<sup>188</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 10; see also *Lumen Gentium*, 8.

<sup>189</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 54.

diversity is to refuse unity.”<sup>190</sup> He argues, “it is because of not having admitted legitimate diversity that the Roman and Orthodox Churches still do not live in communion.”<sup>191</sup> Kyr Elias maintains that “unity must respect diversity and universality. This universality is three-fold: universality of peoples, of traditions, and of the governmental systems.”<sup>192</sup>

#### 4.3.9 Importance of Humility and Repentance in the Ecumenical Task

According to Pope John Paul II, “the commitment to ecumenism must be based upon the conversion of hearts and upon prayer, which will also lead to the necessary purification of past memories,” as well, Christians “are called to re-examine together their painful past and the hurt which that past regrettably continues to provoke even today.”<sup>193</sup> He insists that Christian unity is possible provided there is a humble consciousness of having sinned against unity and a conviction of the need for conversion; in turn, there must also be forgiveness for past sins.<sup>194</sup> John Paul II himself asks forgiveness for any painful memories that are present.<sup>195</sup> Archbishop Elias vehemently agrees that those who caused the Schism in the past have created much damage. He also highlights the fact that “charity brings us together, humility will unite us.”<sup>196</sup> He quotes Cardinal Bea as saying “the door to unity can only be crossed on bent knees.”<sup>197</sup> Kyr Elias does say that “division [...] is the price of sin and unity is a gift that God grants to humble and contrite hearts, to the poor in spirit and in deed.”<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *We Are All Schismatics*, trans. Philip Khairallah (Newton: Educational Services, 1996), 46.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>192</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *A Voice from the Byzantine East*, trans. R. Bernard (Educational Services Newton: Diocese of Newton, 1992), 22.

<sup>193</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 2.

<sup>194</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 34.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>196</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *We Are All Schismatics*, trans. Philip Khairallah (Newton: Educational Services, 1996), 74.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>198</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *Ecumenical Reflections*, trans. Bishop Nicholas Samra (Fairfax: Eastern Christian Publications, 1998), 10.

#### 4.3.10 The First Millennium as a Normative Model for Future Church Unity

Pope John Paul II asserts that there was unity between the Churches of East and West during the first millennium. He states that “if today at the end of the second millennium we are seeking to restore full communion, it is to that unity [...] which we must look.”<sup>199</sup> The meetings that have taken place between the Popes and the various Patriarchs of the East “mapped out the path of rapprochement between the Church of the East and the Church of the West, and of the re-establishment of the unity they shared in the first millennium.”<sup>200</sup> Time and time again, Archbishop Zoghby insists that we must return to the first millennium as a representation and prototype of communion. He states that “communion with Rome forms part of the Orthodox patrimony, provided that Roman primacy is kept within the limits it had during the first millennium.”<sup>201</sup>

One of the primary statements of Kyr Elias’ project of Double Communion is based on this premise. He avows that he is “in communion with the Bishop of Rome, in the limits recognized to the first among the Bishops by the Holy Fathers of the East during the first millennium, before the separation.”<sup>202</sup> In an earlier writing Kyr Elias affirms “the fact that the Church lived in communion for a thousand years, with the saints and Fathers of the Eastern Churches being venerated by the Roman Church herself is a powerful argument for unity.”<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 55.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>201</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *Ecumenical Reflections*, trans. Bishop Nicholas Samra (Fairfax: Eastern Christian Publications, 1998), 67.

<sup>202</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *Orthodoxe Uni? Oui! Uniate Non!* (Unpublished original manuscript) (NP).

<sup>203</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *A Voice from the Byzantine East*, trans. R. Bernard (Educational Services Newton: Diocese of Newton, 1992), 71.

#### 4.3.11 Church Unity Needs to be Built on the Foundation of the Catholic Church and the Mission of Peter

The Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church, according to Pope John Paul II.<sup>204</sup> It is evident in the New Testament that the apostle Peter has preeminent place because he appears as the leader and spokesman of the apostles on many occasions. His place is based on the words of Christ himself.<sup>205</sup> The Pope, as successor of Peter, is heir to the mission of Peter and “the Bishop of Rome is the Bishop of the Church which preserves the mark of the martyrdom of Peter and of Paul.”<sup>206</sup> Archbishop Zoghby would certainly disagree with regard to certain notions of the pre-eminence of Rome. He feels there should be a decentralization of power, namely that held and exercised by the Roman Pontiff – especially when it comes to relations with the Patriarchal See of Antioch. Kyr Elias asserts that “the pope has a triple role: he is the Bishop of Rome, the Patriarch of the West and the Primate of the Universal Church. Most of the difficulties arising between the Rome [sic] and the Eastern Catholic Churches proceed from a confusion of these three roles.”<sup>207</sup> He continues, “for the sake of reestablishing communion, it should suspend what it considers to be its rights to the degree it can without betraying a tradition of two millennia.”<sup>208</sup>

#### 4.3.12 The Necessity of Avoiding Facile or Reductionist Approaches

According to Pope John Paul II, all forms of reductionism or facile agreement must be avoided. He continues that “serious questions must be resolved, for if not, they will reappear at another time, either in the same terms or in a different guise.”<sup>209</sup> John Paul II also asserts “full communion, of which the Eucharist is the highest sacramental manifestation, needs to be visibly

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 90 & 92.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>207</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *We Are All Schismatics*, trans. Philip Khairallah (Newton: Educational Services, 1996), 40.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>209</sup> *Ut Unum Sint*, 36.

expressed in a ministry in which all the Bishops recognize that they are united in Christ and all the faithful find confirmation for their faith.”<sup>210</sup> Certainly, Archbishop Elias Zoghby’s project of Double Communion comes to mind. It is precisely this project which has been criticized as a facile approach. This project declares that Antioch can be in communion with Rome and Orthodoxy at the same time and this would be an acceptable structure for a unified Antiochian Church. This project of Double Communion would “allow the Melkite Greek Catholics of the Patriarchate of Antioch to [...] rejoin the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch from whom they were separated without sufficient reason; but also without rupturing their communion with the Bishop of Rome, a communion which was inspired by the situation that existed during the first millennium.” He continues “such an experience in a specific local Church, such as that of Antioch, would allow the Roman and Orthodox Churches to furnish proof that this coexistence may help them in their search for unity.”<sup>211</sup> This is perhaps the area of greatest disagreement between Archbishop Zoghby and Pope John Paul II.

#### **4.4 Evaluative Remarks**

In addition to some of the evaluative remarks made above, allow me to add the following. The Churches of the Orthodox East and Catholic West must find a way to look for the path that leads from schism to unity. This path, although a very rough and difficult one, is one that is filled with much reward. It requires that we look to the Holy Trinity as the archetype of Church unity. This is the perfect example of how the distinct Father, Son and Holy Spirit can nevertheless be united and work with one mind. In the Gospel of John we see Christ praying that “all may be one as we are one” which demonstrates the Unity of the Trinity and the Lord’s desire that His

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>211</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *We Are All Schismatics*, trans. Philip Khairallah, (Newton: Educational Services, 1996), 97.

followers are to be unified as well. As Father Andriy Chirovsky asserts, “this life of love [...] in the image of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their eternal dance of love, is what God wants for us, for you and me.”<sup>212</sup> In addition to looking to the Trinity for inspiration, collective prayer and love build a firm foundation for unity and need to be continued. These points, among others, are areas of clear agreement among those dialoguing for unity; other points such as the role of the Bishop of Rome, however, are still quite contentious issues.

Both the Orthodox East and the Catholic West must work collaboratively on equal footing. It is best stated in Ernst Suttner’s *Church Unity* that

they must do justice to the autonomous dignity and inviolability of each individual Church and to understand each other as equal in rank, and each of them – recalling the gifts of the Holy Spirit which have been bestowed on it, and the earthly defects and inadequacies with which it still must struggle – must understand itself both as the *magistra* and as the disciple of the other Churches.<sup>213</sup>

Here we see one big component that both Archbishop Elias Zoghby and Pope John Paul II consistently allude to – humility. Kyr Elias would go further and say that there must be an equal partnership between Churches in order for true communion to be established. I agree totally with this notion. The basis of unity is also one of equality amongst brothers and sisters. The role of the Bishop of Rome certainly cannot simply be one of prestige, whether politically or religiously based. At any rate, he must fulfil “a mission which is to be exercised in the service of the Church’s unity.”<sup>214</sup> This is his primary responsibility in his role as the successor of Peter. The problem is that the popes of Rome claim universal jurisdiction over the whole world and non-Catholics have usually understood this to be an overstepping of legitimate authority.

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<sup>212</sup> Andriy Chirovsky, “Prayer and the Body of Christ – Prayer and the Body of Humanity”. *Windows to the East: Eastern Christians in a Dialogue of Charity* ed. Jaroslaw Z. Skira and Myroslaw I. Tataryn (Ottawa: Novalis, 2001), 156.

<sup>213</sup> Ernst C. Suttner *Church Unity: Union or Uniatism?: Catholic-Orthodox Ecumenical Perspectives* trans. Brian Mcneil, (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1991), 26.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

Archbishop Zoghby proposed what amounted to a partial union when he put forward his project of Double Communion for the Melkites. Although Pope John Paul II did maintain that one must take the already existing partial communion and cultivate it into full communion, he was against creating further instances of partial communion because of the pain such partial communion caused in the past. Perhaps that is the crux of the problem. Eastern Catholics, whether in the case of the Melkite Double Communion project, or in the case of the Kyivian Church Study Group, are comfortable with partial resolution of the worldwide problem of Christian unity precisely because they do not feel guilty about the unsuccessful attempts at partial union represented by Rome's forays into prosyletism. Rome may well be paralyzed by its guilt just as the Orthodox may be paralyzed by their fears of Roman encroachment. Eastern Catholics do not share in this paralysis.

Kyr Elias's proposal certainly made sense when one considers that the communities he was seeking to unite were already participating in informal communion. Building his version of partial communion would only legitimize what is already going on. When one realizes that Melkite Greek Catholics and Antiochian Orthodox were members of one Church less than three hundred years ago, it makes even more sense to pursue this partial solution. On the other hand, it is understandable that the larger "parent" Churches, the great imperial centres of the Church, would desire a more formal full communion between them before the local Churches participate in unity. This maintains their superiority over the more agile smaller Churches. Moreover, looking toward the first millennium as a prime example does not seem to be the solution. Ecclesiastical unity at that time was often a function of political unity and, even then, was not ideal. I feel that partial communion, as Kyr Elias proposed it, built on foundation of the informal communion of the laity, is a viable step forward for the ecumenical movement, particularly for the Churches of Antioch.

#### **4.5 What the Current Ecumenical Movement Can Learn from Archbishop Elias Zoghby and How His Ideas Can Reshape the Movement and Move it Forward**

What can the current ecumenical movement learn from Archbishop Elias Zoghby? His notion of Double Communion was an innovative way of pushing the ecumenical movement forward. Although it was not widely accepted, this notion motivated many to rethink the relationship of East and West and the role of the Eastern Catholics within this association. Kyr Elias looked to the lived experience of people, and attempted to build a Church free of historical division and artificial distinctions. In addition to this, he focused on the Holy Trinity as the true model of unity. The ecumenical movement needs also to take this example and use it as a focal point in resolving remaining roadblocks.

The central roadblocks of the ecumenical movement and the Catholic-Orthodox dialogue in particular are the issues of the primacy of the Pope and the existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches. Archbishop Zoghby addressed both of these and both were provided with workable solutions. Firstly, in regards to the matter of papal primacy, he suggested that the Churches return to the model of the first millennium when the two Churches were still in union. The Pope was *primus inter pares* or the *first among equals*. In the early Church at the time of the apostles there was collegiality; nonetheless Peter, who was chosen by Christ, was the first among them. He was the most senior of the group of apostles who shared the same rank as he. His was a real primacy which did not, however, require expression in terms of power or jurisdiction. The Ecumenical Patriarch - the Archbishop of Constantinople - is also referred to as the "first among equals" in the Orthodox Communion. But one must keep in mind canon three of the First Council of Constantinople which declared that the Bishop of Constantinople shall have the primacy of honour after the Bishop of Rome, because [Constantinople] is New Rome. It seems

that as the Churches sought out primacies of honour or power they lost sight of primacy of service.

Throughout history, papal primacy was abused at times, particularly by popes of the mediaeval and renaissance period. To be sure, some in the East have also abused primacy at times. However, situations have changed. For example, the anathemas of 1054 were lifted in December of 1965, nearly one year after Pope Paul VI and Bishop Athenagoras embraced in Jerusalem. These events demonstrate a desire to return to the simpler, less juridical relationship of the first millennium. In the early Church, despite their different cultures, the Church of the two halves of the Roman Empire was able to maintain a certain unity. There were divisions, but unity was still maintained among the Pentarchial Churches. Both Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II have called for a return to this brotherhood experienced prior to the Great Schism. As regards the roadblock of Uniatism, Archbishop Zoghby argued, even before Freising and Balamand that Uniatism was not an apt method for future unity and it was a mistake of the past that must be overcome. In fact, his calls for the return of the Eastern Catholic Churches to their proper place within the Orthodox Communion demonstrate a constructive approach to the difficulties posed by “uniatism” in its several meanings.

## Conclusion and Future Development

We began this paper by highlighting Antioch's historical contribution to Christendom as one of great significance. At the same time we considered how Archbishop Elias Zoghby's background and experiences influenced his interest in the ecumenical movement, particularly in relation to the patriarchate of Antioch. We continued by chronologically exploring each of Kyr Elias's writings, that focused on an ecumenical theme, looking for trends and the development of his thinking. Using as a sort of matrix for reflection a variety of reactions from both the Catholic and Orthodox hierarchies to his propositions, as well as Pope John Paul II's *Ut Unum Sint*, we were able to examine more closely the feasibility of Kyr Elias' proposals. We found that Archbishop Zoghby contributed several viable solutions for achieving Church unity at least in a "local" manner and provided an alternative to the current dialogue process which had resulted in a deadlock for many years. Antioch was, and still is a significant member of the Christian community and has been a noteworthy contributor to the ecumenical movement between the Eastern Churches and Western Roman Catholics.

Regardless of Antioch's many years of struggle and persecution, it continues to demonstrate a strong Christian presence in the Middle East and the Diaspora. The lay faithful of the Patriarchate often live in family situations that are true examples of unity. Many do not even care to know the difference between the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches and maintain that all these Churches "are all houses of God." This is not just some facile reductionism. They live their lives connected to both Orthodoxy and Catholicism. This is most evident in the example of intermarriage: nearly every family is a mixture of Orthodox and Catholic religious traditions. This is the ecumenism of the faithful, real lived ecumenism, even if it is experienced and lived

without a consideration of the theological and doctrinal implications that so preoccupy theologians and hierarchs.

This is the milieu within which Archbishop Elias Zoghby grew up and lived out his priestly vocation, ministering to all the Christian faithful. His participation in the Second Vatican Council was integral to the development of his ecumenical contributions. His forthrightness and zeal for the truth was evident not only at the Council but throughout his life, especially in his writings. Throughout his writings he maintained that the more divided the Church was, the more distant the Church was from Christ's truth. Christ ensured his apostles were unified by bestowing upon them the Holy Spirit who drew them together, as He and the Father were unified. Archbishop Zoghby consistently upheld this point, that the perfect model of unity was the Holy Trinity.

Furthermore, Kyr Elias argued that, with mutual respect and understanding, unity can be achieved. Simply put, this must be unity within diversity. This is crucial to overcoming a great number of the obstacles the ecumenical movement is facing. In addition to this point, the Churches must look to the first millennium in order to understand how to achieve this. Although the communities of the early Church were diverse, they also achieved and lived communion. The roadblock concerning different approaches to primacy can be resolved by going back to the model of the early Church and the equality of the hierarchies of the various Churches.

Inspired by his love for the Church and the events during and subsequent to the Second Vatican Council, Archbishop Zoghby introduced the project of Double Communion in which the Eastern Catholics (namely the Melkites) would be in communion with both Rome and Orthodoxy. This was proposed once in 1975 (when it was summarily rejected) and once in 1995 (when it received more attention, but was again rejected). Both Rome and Orthodoxy, although initially enthusiastic about the new relationships established by ecumenical dialogue, maintained

that unity was to be achieved by Rome and all of Orthodoxy before the local Churches could attempt specific expressions of communion. The ecumenical progress in the Church of Antioch from this point onward was stalled; however the relationship between the Eastern Catholics and the Orthodox authorities has continuously been enhanced. This is a positive sign initiated by the vision and zeal of Archbishop Zoghby. Perhaps there is still hope yet, for everything happens in its time; Kyr Elias was conceivably ahead of his time. Because of his words certain things happened, dialogue was initiated and relationships were solidified.

In the course of the Divine Liturgy, during the Great Litany the faithful pray, "...for the union of all let us pray to the Lord." Both the Eastern Catholics of the Byzantine tradition and the Orthodox recite this petition in every Divine Liturgy. There is no reason to believe that this prayer will not be answered. The faithful must continue to pray for the unity that Christ desires and commands. The faithful must also continue to promote unity in their communities, regardless of their ecclesiastical loyalties.

Politics and personal gain have shaped the ecumenical movement for much too long. There should be nothing holding Christians back from obeying the wishes of Christ. This is done through theological dialogue and occasions for joint and mutual prayer. Further research needs to be done in the area of studying the Church of the first millennium, particularly the apostolic Church, for legitimate varieties of leadership style and inter-relationships. The Churches must "go back to basics," learning from Christ and the apostles how to guide the people of God along in the path to and in the direction of true salvation, independent of personal gain and steering clear of any abuse of power. The hierarchies of the Churches must learn from the example of their faithful who co-exist in harmony and love with their brothers and sisters in Christ. The Catholic Church has done much to prove its remorse for the events of the past millennia. The Orthodox Church must also do its part, look at what bridges have been rebuilt and stop focusing

excessively on the past, looking forward instead to a future of unity and communion. Both sides must allow the Holy Spirit to propose solutions, which their human logic has never considered.

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