

Barekmor

“Everyone must obey state authorities, because no authority exists without God's permission, and the existing authorities have been put there by God”. Romans 13:1

The word *politics* comes from the Greek word Πολιτικά (*politika*), modelled on Aristotle's "Affairs of the City", the name of his book on governing and governments, which was rendered in English in the mid-15th century as Latinized "*Polettiques*". Thus it became "politics" in Middle English by c. 1520. The singular *politicis* first attested in English in 1430 and comes from Middle French *politique*, in turn from Latin *politicus*, which is the Latinised version of the Greek πολιτικός (*politikos*), meaning amongst others "of, for, or relating to citizens", "civil", "civic", "belonging to the state", in turn from πολίτης (*polites*), "citizen" and that from πόλις (*polis*), "city".¹

Human Government

It is impossible for a believer to be a good Christian and a bad citizen at the same time. As children of God our responsibility to human government is three fold

a) *We are to recognize and accept that the powers are ordained by God*

"Let every soul be subjected to the human governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God Rom13.1. This truth applies even to atheist human government unless of course, the law is anti-scriptural. In that situation the believer must obey God rather than man. Acts4.18-20 "So they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard." In fact when Paul wrote those words in Rom 13.1, the evil Emperor Nero was on the throne.

b) *We are to pay our taxes to human government*

Matt17.24-27 "When they reached Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the temple tax?" He said, "Yes, he does." And when he came home, Jesus spoke of it first, asking, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their children or from others?" When Peter said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the children are free. However, so that we do not give offense to them,

¹ Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. 29 August 2013. < [http:// en.wikipedia.org/wiki](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki).>

go to the sea and cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin; take that and give it to them for you and me.”

Rom 13.7 says “That is also why you pay taxes, because the authorities are working for God when they fulfil their duties. Pay, then, what you owe them; pay them your personal and property taxes, and show respect and honour for them all”.

c) We are to pray for the leaders in human government

1 Timothy 2.1-3 “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men for kings and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour”.

The Biblical Basis for Christians in Politics

- Genesis 9:1-7, God makes Covenant with Noah after the flood how to live on earth
- Exodus 20,21,22 tells about The Ten Commandments, The Treatment of Slaves, Laws about Violent Acts, the Responsibility of Owners, Laws about Repayment, Moral and Religious Laws, Justice and Fairness
- Exodus 18:21 “But in addition, you should choose some capable men and appoint them as leaders of the people: leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. They must be God-fearing men who can be trusted and who cannot be bribed.”
- Leviticus 13, 20 addresses issues such as public health laws and homosexuality.
- Deuteronomy 17-28 gives instructions concerning a King, Warning against Pagan Practices, Ancient Property Lines, Concerning Witnesses, Concerning War, Concerning Unsolved Murders, Concerning Women Prisoners of War, Concerning the First Son's Inheritance, Concerning a Disobedient Son, Laws concerning Sexual Purity, Keeping the Military Camp Clean, Divorce and Remarriage, Duty to a Dead Brother
- Psalm 75:6-7 “States that judgment does not come from the east or from the west, from the north or from the south; it is God who is the judge, condemning some and acquitting others”.
- Proverbs 21:1 “States that the Lord controls the mind of a king as easily as he directs the course of a stream”.
- Matthew 22:15-21 talks about the Question about Paying Taxes

- Romans 13:2-6 “Whoever opposes the existing authority opposes what God has ordered; and anyone who does so will bring judgment on himself..... For this reason you must obey the authorities—not just because of God's punishment, but also as a matter of conscience”.

From the above reading of the scripture we can know that the social world is not away from the spiritual world and there are no two worlds. The world created ex nihilo was seen by God as good. Hence a Christian cannot run away claiming that the world is not for the Christian.

“Politics and Christian Faith”

In the modern world politics and Christianity seems to look like a diverse topic. There is a large gap between the state and church. A dichotomous mentality underlines here. Evangelization and civilization, transcendence and immanence, gospel and law, religion and politics seem to be very distinct and separate entities. This mentality minimizes the way that God’s grace operates in social and political life and the way the gospel should penetrate the institutional aspect of human life, it thus makes the goodness of the kingdom of God to few when it is in fact meant for all.

Whether we like it or not we are the part of politics and its decisions affect our daily affairs and we can’t run away from this reality. Thus we have to stand for it as justice is the mission of the government and Christianity. Peace for all is the mission of both, like this the mission of the state and church have mission in common. It is commonness which creates oneness, so we have to be in unity as united we stand divided we fall. We should not grow like two entities as state authority and church authority it leads to two political situations [like the Roman Empire in the past] which will end up in wars. So the “Task of the church is to convert the world, by the power of the Holy Spirit into the reality of God’s kingdom, which signifies the ultimate humanization of the world. All political ideologies and actions, give rise to human alienation and suffering. The task of the church is to unveil the suffering and alienation that ideologies have caused and simultaneously urge the world to move beyond them by offering itself as a model of how the world should be in true nature”.²

If Christians do not become the voice of the voiceless it loses its prophetic role. The church should address its flock to be true Christians by its praxis and not just words.

² Emmanuel Clapsis, *Orthodox in conversation*(Geneva:WCC publication, 2000)223.

The social values of Christianity in the area of politics

Christians play a very important role or can play a very important role in politics. They need not stand back and say that politics is evil. They can come forward and show responsibility of Christian leadership

1. Democracy: For the people by the people and of the people is the corner stone of democracy where people elect their government and a person with Christian responsibility can dispose his duties justly as he fears the living God as the fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom.
2. Manna economy: Equitable distribution of resources where each one gets according to his want and there is no power in the hands of few.
3. Last and least : This is a Christian principal as Jesus came for the least last and lost, so it is Christian value where the poor is not neglected the weak is not forgotten as the sin of omission is reminded in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus so in Christian politics it will enrich the people to care for the least and the lost.
4. Today: Today is very important and not tomorrow as tomorrow never comes so today what we can do we have to do today, Jesus says in the parable of the rich fool who told enjoy rejoice I have lots of grains in store in the barn.....today if I demand your life what will you do, so daily duty will be done.
5. Christian mission: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people.”
6. Too much is too bad: When the tax collectors approached John the Baptist He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” (Lk 3.13)
7. Mercy: Galatians 6.1-5 “My friends if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbour’s work, will become a cause for pride. For all must carry their own loads”.

8. Keeper of God's law: When he becomes king, he is to have a copy of the book of God's laws and teachings made from the original copy kept by the Levite priests. He is to keep this book near him and read from it all his life, so that he will learn to honour the Lord and to obey faithfully everything that is commanded in it. This will keep him from thinking that he is better than other Israelites and from disobeying the Lord's commands in any way. Then he will reign for many years, and his descendants will rule Israel for many generations. Deuteronomy 17:18-20

Christianity is essentially a social religion. Christian worship is also a corporate worship '*publica et communis oration*' in the phrase of St. Cyprian. So to build up a church means, therefore to build up a new society. There was always a strong emphasis on unanimity and life in common. One of the earliest names for Christians was simply "brethren". The church is to be the image of the Divine pattern. Three persons yet One God. Accordingly in the church, many are to be intergraded into one body. This is the common heritage of the whole church; its emphasis has been stronger in the eastern tradition and does still constitute it in spite of all historical problems and draw backs. The early church was not only a religious association, even the monasteries were not only a worshiping community but also a working community, and the work was for the uplifting of the broken classes of the society. St Basil of Caesarea (ca. 330-379) was deeply concerned about social works. He criticized monks who spend their full life in desert saying "fishes are to the water and monks are for the desert". He started a new monastic community (coenobitical) which worked in the helping for rebuilding the society. Even St. John Chrysostom appreciated and stood for coenobitical pattern saying "possession is justified only by its proper use". Church is not a museum of saints but a home for the last, least and lost, where anyone can knock its door for justice and brotherly love. Fr Rozoumouisky of Moscow says "as the body and soul are one, church and the state go hand in hand".

During the past in Orthodox countries church and state have usually been closely linked. People think church is a worldwide organization but St. Ignatius says "local community is the church". The life of byzantine formed a unified whole and there was no rigid line of separation between religion and secular. Church and state was seen as a single organization even thou it was one organism with two distinct elements i.e. priesthood and imperial power; between the two there was symphony and harmony

Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy(I.A.O)

The Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy is a religious assembly but political in nature, it is the praxis of liturgy after liturgy. I.A.O calls the Orthodox Church to stand for the need of the hour. I.A.O composes of members of Parliaments, who are Orthodox Christians from around the globe with its headquartered in Athens.

The key pillars are two: Greece and Russia, countries with a long and fruitful Orthodox Christian tradition. Objectives are noble, altruistic and crystal clear. I.A.O highlights the role of the Orthodox Christian faith, the principles and the central core of its teachings. I.A.O seek to bring out the principles of peace, unity, reconciliation, approach, understanding, tolerance, respect for the personality and the diversity of the other human beings, brotherhood and altruism and with those as tools I.A.O work for a better world I.A.O are neither naive, nor romantic, or unreasonable. I.A.O pursue to overcome any extreme nationalistic, religious and confessional rivalries, the protection of the Orthodox Christian belief, but also I.A.O seek to care for the Christians themselves, protect them from persecutions, expulsions and exclusions. I.A.O struggle for the defence of human rights and the people's religious freedom.

To achieve I.A.O purpose it has made dozens of representations, which tend to be along these lines: resolutions, proclamations, meetings, contacts, visits, conferences, proclamations, publications, collaborations with international organizations, are some of the means I.A.O have used, up to now.

Inception of Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy

"Orthodoxy in the New European Reality" The changes which took place in Eastern and Western Europe, including the Maastricht Treaty, should be understood and expressed in new ways and in unified political and cultural terms. In analyzing those new realities, ways was sought by which the European Union can show itself capable of turning Orthodoxy to advantage as another cultural expression. In any case, the institutional framework on which the existence of the European Union is based leaves the widest possible scope for the inclusion of varied cultural expressions of a historical, religious and theological character.

Extracts from the resolution of the conference held in Chalcidice in 1993 on the initiative of the Greek Parliament to discuss:

The Conference called upon the Orthodox peoples to make the fullest use of the ability of Orthodoxy to overcome any trends towards nationalism and complacency, and by its unity and

universality to stress the individual identity of the Balkans and Eastern Europe within the pluralism of the shared European home and to seek ways in which it will contribute to the building and establishment of peace and justice in the new Europe.

The Conference, on the basis of the Orthodox tradition which attaches supreme value to the human being, proposes a widening of the contribution of Orthodoxy in the quest for solutions to the problems which are of concern to the contemporary European citizen (ecology, social issue, mental illnesses individual particularities, racism, etc.)

Founding Act of the “European Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy”

In Article 3, in pursuance of a 1993 order of the Congress of Chalkidiki, Greece and after an initiative of the Parliament of Greece, on November of 1994, in Athens and at the premises of the Greek Parliament the representatives of 20 European Parliaments met, composed and signed the founding Act. The objectives of the organization are as follows:

- a. The recording and evaluation of the changes taking place in Europe.
- b. The enhancement of the role of Orthodoxy within the framework of the European Union and the consolidation of Orthodoxy as an important and necessary political, cultural and spiritual entity geared towards the shaping of a new European reality.
- c. The contribution of the ecumenical and unifying spirit of Orthodoxy both towards the transcendence of extreme nationalistic, confessionary and religious contradictions and the discovery of effective means for the protection of ethnic or religious minorities.
- d. The cooperation with international organizations aiming at upholding respect for the cultural and religious map of Europe and guarding against any form of proselytism, as well as averting phenomena of confessionary or religious antagonism or conflictive activities or attacks against social or political morality, which engender religious intolerance and ethno-racial fanaticism in Europe.
- e. The support of the role of Orthodox culture as a unifying force in Eastern Europe and as a bridge for Europe in its relationships with the other cultures.
- f. The support of human rights and religious freedoms not only of the Christians, but also of the adherents of other religions, both in the European countries and throughout the world, through interventions made to international organizations and to local State authorities.

g. The better utilization of the role played by Greece and Russia in the European Union and in the United Nations Security Council respectively, for the upgrading and affirmation of the significant unifying role of Orthodoxy.

h. The encouragement of contacts between parliamentary, political, ecclesiastical, academic and spiritual figures, or institutions, geared towards the development of an Orthodox cultural heritage and their contribution to the contemporary global dialogue on human rights and the peaceful coexistence of peoples.

i. Promoting solutions to the critical problems of contemporary European society and the ecological environment.

The achievements of Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy

Through representations, resolutions, proclamations, meetings, contacts, visits, conferences, proclamations, publications, collaborations with international organizations up to now.

Founding Assembly | Ormylia, Chalkidiki , Greece | 1993

"Orthodoxy in the new European Reality"

1st Assembly | Athens, Greece | 1994

"The Interparliamentary Committee of Orthodox Members of Parliaments of the European Countries and its mission in the new European reality"

2nd Assembly | Moscow , Russia | 1995

"The Cultural and Enlightenment Tradition of Orthodoxy"

3rd Assembly | Sofia , Bulgaria | 1996

"The Social Dimension of Orthodoxy."

4th Assembly | Chalkidiki, Greece | 1997

"Orthodoxy in the context of the European civilization- history and future"

5th Assembly | Warsaw , Poland | 1998

"The problems of the novel heresies (sects) in the E.I.A.O. countries and effective ways of dealing with them"

6th Assembly | Moscow - St.Petersburg | 1999

"Ways of legal protection of the traditional family as a diachronic value of society"

7th Assembly | Jerusalem , Israel | 2000

"What do people say about the Son of Man (Mat. 16, 13) in the year 2000 AD?"

8th Assembly | Patmos, Greece | 2001

"The contribution of Orthodoxy in the enlarged European Union."

9th Assembly | Bucharest, Romania | 2002

"Globalisation and Orthodoxy"

BIOETHICS BASED ON THE ORTHODOX TRADITION

- The Orthodox Christian tradition is characterized by an anthropology -namely, a theory on man- which is unique and very important, since it regards every human being as an image of God and recognizes as its destination the "likeness" and union of man with God
- **Respect for time.** We should not move to applications involving human cloning and the in-vivo alteration of the human genetic material, before we acquire all the necessary knowledge regarding these processes.
- **Respect for God's creation.** Knowledge and curiosity are so essentially and deeply bound with the nature of man, that the danger of not limiting ourselves to therapeutic applications but proceed to the correction of what some may regard as "natural imperfections" is apparent. Consequently, along with gene therapy approaches, we may also provoke disastrous changes in human social conduct and relationships leading, perhaps, to genetic discrimination. Scientists must not forget that they are part of nature and not its ruler.
- **Respect for human variability,** "imperfections" and disabilities. The possibility to intervene in the quality and shape of our characteristics for reasons other than diagnostic, preventive or therapeutic opens the way to a society characterized by genetic discriminations, racism and eugenics; a society in which there will be room only for healthy and strong people, people with predetermined specifications. Societies should consider among their priorities not only research but also the protection of human variability and the amelioration of the conditions of the disabled.
- **Respect for human life.** From its conception until the moment of death. Every political resolution or legislative adjustment which refers to matters of biomedicine, medical technology, biotechnology and genetic engineering should necessarily respect the fact that every human being from his/her conception until his/her last breath constitutes a

unique irreplaceable and unrepeatable being, that has by nature free will, is sacred and transcendental in his/her essence and perspective, and forms a social entity with rights and obligations.

- New knowledge should be used only for the benefit of humanity and not enriching the world's weaponry. Prohibition of "biological weapons" should become a common conscience

10th Assembly | Vilnius, Lithuania | 2003

"War - Poverty. The Orthodox viewpoint"

- Expresses its concern at the deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian territories and at the consequences this deterioration brings upon the Palestinian and Israeli people.
- Condemns the tactic of reciprocal revenge.
- Condemns the confinement of movement of the legally elected political leaders.
- Supports the dispatching of an international observer force to the Palestinian and Israeli territories in order to prevent further bloodshed.
- Calls upon the two sides to support the peace process and to work consistently towards a just solution of the Palestinian-Israeli issue on the basis of the pertinent UN Resolutions

11th Assembly | Kiev, Ukraine | 2004

"Security with freedom"

- I.O.A was willing to contribute with a delegation of its own, for the detention of the situation in the Palestinian and Israeli territories.
- I.O.A, expressed its deep concern, regarding the events that took place in Kosovo and Metoxi, which violated the basic human rights and declares that peace in the autonomous region of Kosovo and Metoxi is constantly under threat.
- I.O.A condemns any form of genocide and persecution of people, regardless of their origin and religion, the destruction of temples of different religions, cultural values.
- I.O.A Calls on the Secretary General of the UN, of UNESCO and the Council of Europe to send their representatives in order to clear up the situation and give a just and humanistic solution to the conflict taking place in the centre of Europe.

12th Assembly | Geneva , Switzerland | 2005

"Christianism before the challenges of the modern era"

- Affirms a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with international law
- Calls upon Israel to cease its settlement activities and its construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in compliance with its legal obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, as mentioned in the Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice, and in compliance with relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions;
- Demands that Israel ensure the freedom of access to the Holy Places in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and respect the right to worship by all Palestinian civilians without restrictions;
- Affirms the need for the Gaza withdrawal to be full, including the crossing into and out of the Gaza Strip.
- The period June 2004-May 2005 can be characterized as a year during which the International Assembly on Orthodoxy (I.A.O.) developed significant activities. The decisions made by the General Assembly of 2004 in Kiev, Ukraine, and then implemented by the I.A.O. International Secretariat, are characterized as essential and with a significant political weight. Decisions that contribute to the promotion of the Orthodox Tradition, as well as to cooperation and mutual understanding with peoples and religions. For example, the cooperation with the (P.U.I.C.), and the visit of its Secretary Mr. IBRAHIM AHMED AUF in Athens, at the seat of the I.A.O. International Secretariat.
- International Political Conference “Nation, Religions – Orthodoxy and The New European Reality” (Athens, 17-19 April 2005) President of the Hellenic Republic Mr. KAROLOS PAPOULIAS stressed “...In the dawn of the new millennium, our world seems extremely complicated. Even the most traditional features of human life are refuted or are changing very rapidly. Childhood, adolescence, motherhood, fatherhood, family, work, recognition, retirement, even death itself, takes on a new meaning... In modern Europe, the Orthodox Church is called upon to testify the bravery of the Gospel’s message: that is, tolerance and castigation of any form of fanaticism. The Orthodox Church is able to enrich the European contemplation of the world, through its respect for the other...”

13th Assembly | Venice, Italy | 2006

"The contribution of the Orthodox culture to the construction of the New Europe"

- We consider essential to declare, that the European culture constitutes a shared property of humanity; the modern world is founded on its values and ideals, which mostly have been shaped by the Orthodox Christianity; Nowadays these values may contribute substantially in averting the danger of the prevalence of a new pretentious form of mass culture, which denies the traditional values of family, religion and culture in its total.
- Local Orthodox churches collaboration in order to strengthen the influence of spiritual experience of Orthodoxy in the social-public and cultural life, thus restoring the Christian values in social life.
- I.A.O protest on contemptuous and scornful attitude against holy places, which triggers the increase of extremism and fanaticism.
- I.A.O's active participation in the international, political, religious, cultural forum, international organisations, unions, as well as in bilateral cooperation with the social and cultural organisations, aiming at attracting attention to the long standing cultural and spiritual foundations of Orthodoxy, having shaped values and living standards for many populations and countries of the Central and Eastern Europe, as well as their extended proliferation towards the West.
- Readiness to contribute towards promotion and protection the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and liberties of Christian communities, their churches and their religious, political and parliamentary leaders, particularly the Orthodox, in the Middle East and North Africa, to encourage their time-lasting presence in the region, and to promote their role as an institution of dialogue of cultures and values with Islam and Muslims.

14th Assembly | Astana, Kazakhstan | 2007

The Inter-religious dialogue as a factor of peaceful and fair relationships among peoples

- Restore and retrieve Republic of Cyprus religious and cultural treasures
- Calls in particular upon Turkey to show the respect due to this invaluable part of world civilization and to cooperate for its restoration without any political expedience.

- Supports the soonest possible achievement of an agreed, just and functional solution to the Cyprus problem, in the form of a bizonal, bicomunal federation, based on pertinent UN Resolutions and the EU acquiscommunautaire and which will take into account the legitimate interests and concerns of all Cypriots

15th Assembly | Rhodes, Greece | 2008

"The crisis of the global value system as a challenge to Christianity, Orthodoxy, for two thousand years has constituted the solid basis on which, the European and, subsequently, the global value system, have been successfully established, as the foundation of the so called civilized world. On that basis, in the course of the 20th century, societies have managed to achieve great steps of progress, to co-exist in harmony, and to ultimately avert the hazard of a new world war over the last 60 years.

- The need for a more dynamic contribution of Orthodoxy, in preserving those elements of its culture, where the two-thousand year course of mankind has been based, but also in highlighting new ones, always on the basis of its Patristic Tradition, such as emphasizing and further elevating the concept of “creation of Man after the image of God”, marking human existence as a unique and inimitable value.
- The need for furthering the progressive Orthodox spiritual values, for contributing to the transformation of models shaped by modern reality, such as uncontrolled consumption, the unethical pursuit of wealth, greed, and all elements cultivating despicable moral models, and restraining moral culture, as shaped by Christianity and Orthodoxy.
- To further strengthen the interaction between religion and culture, the latter containing universal moral values that may comprise the ideological basis for peoples’ unity.
- Inter-religious dialogue, as an essential element for the evolution of civic society and for overcoming international conflicts must be cultivated.
- The non-violation of legitimate rights of religious minorities must be guaranteed.
- Policies concerning religion and the relations between state and church in each country must be developed within a civilized frame of law.
- Aiming at the solution of these issues, we deem necessary to make full use of the mass media potentials in each country separately, and at a global level as well.

17th Assembly | Yerevan, Armenia |2010

“The contribution of Orthodoxy in the dynamics and development of statehood of the countries of Eastern Christian tradition”

- The choice of the Assembly's topic was not random. It was based on the realization that the political perceptions of modern countries are gradually moving away from the traditional relations between State and Church, the traditional spiritual and cultural values which formed our civilization upon Christian foundations. The followers of traditional – mainly – Christian values consider State as an institution responsible not only for the military-political security and social welfare of society, but also for established moral views, family happiness and high spirituality of the people. Starting from there, they consider Church as partner of the state, an inherent and important part of society, constituting its spiritual and moral foundation.
- In countries where the Orthodox are a minority, particularly in the Middle East, what is obvious is the danger of the state sliding rule to protectionist policies of the dominant religious view, as well as the failure to respect the religious and cultural particularities, which lead to violations of fundamental civil and political rights. Such kind of acts, when Christians are experiencing different kinds of exploitation, violence, exile and killings, cannot be tolerated. Under any circumstance, the state must unswervingly uphold principles of religious freedom and peoples' social values, as well as their civil, political and cultural rights in the context of a functional democracy.

18th Assembly | Paris, France | 2011

“Religious values in the Economic crisis reality”

- Religious values have been the strong foundation, upon which human thought and morality have been built throughout the centuries. Which even today can constitute the place where to seek out constants for overcoming the economic crisis, as well as for establishing rules of social conduct, solidarity and corporate responsibility in the management of human and natural resources?
- Strongly condemns all acts of violence against Christians and other religious communities as well as all kinds of discrimination and intolerance based on religion and beliefs against religious people, apostates and non-believers; stresses once again that the

right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a fundamental human right. Expresses its grave concerns about the abuse of religion by the perpetrators of terrorist acts in several areas of the world. Denounces the instrumentalisation of religion in various political conflicts. Reiterates its support for all initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue and mutual respect between religious and other communities; calls on all religious authorities to promote tolerance and to take initiatives against hatred and violent and extremist radicalisation.

19th Assembly | Prague | 2012

“Challenges for democracy during periods of global economic crisis”.

- This predominant view of our era, being expressed in the name of the markets and the anticipated economic prosperity, deprives Democracy and its institutions of the indispensable oxygen and inevitably forces society into concessions and betrayals of democratic principles which the mankind has conquered in the course of history with respective sacrifices, and which constitute the constants of parliamentarism and participative governance.
- The political world has to clearly assume before the people across the world its own share of responsibility for its inability to stop market fundamentalism and unrestrained capitalism that resulted in the economic collapse. The most powerful and unprecedented forms of private power that have been created away from any social and democratic control, actually revoke people’s sovereignty by undermining its democratic foundations and deconstruct the core of modern democracy, i.e. the essential role of people’s involvement in state-decision making. The political world must immediately undertake the task of defending autonomy of politics and protecting political democracy, as well as of restoring the reliability and prestige of representative institutions, so as for the “parliament” to come back to the centre of political life

The founding statement and article 3 of I.O.A has achieved its fullness as which started as drops has now become an ocean which was the dream of spreading from Europe to the rest of the world

Further more

- Leave from papers, books, halls, rooms to praxis. I.O.A is able to raise its voice for the need of the hour to the needed authorities but it has to **move on to further** plans to be more effective action
- Orthodox as a way of life. it is easy to preach but to put into action is difficult, so orthodox way of life should be a way of living to reach Christ as Arch Bishop Romero said “You are God’s microphone” you need not preach **our action** can be louder than words. If each Christian practice this then the world will be a better one so this should be clearly made known by the activities of I.O.A
- United we stand divided we fall. We have One God One Faith and One Baptism, yet we are separated on the bases of country, caste, creed, acts 4.32 says “the early believers were one in mind and heart” **this oneness has to be regained** between the orthodox churches then the roman catholic and protestant and later between religions so that the racism, fanaticism will not rule the world
- Whatever does not happen locally does not happen in higher levels, that is at **grass root level** so the message and flavour should be give at the grass root itself then only the tree will grow well
- Discerning the signs of times, approach modernity from **a humanistic perspective**. Social justice should go beyond charity, to the dignification of human person that all are one in the sight of God
- The Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO declares that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". so a **psychological approach** has to be there
- **Unlearn** –“no one is born hating other person because of the colour of his skin or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate and if the can learn to hate, they can be taught to love as love comes naturally from the heart” Nelson Mandela

Conculsion

“But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare” Jeremiah 29:7. Orthodox faith and tradition has lot to do in this modern world, great Church Fathers have practiced and handed down a great tradition and moral life if at least few of them can be practised will help to make this world a

better place with peace and harmony. The Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy has strived through the past two decades to keep the faith of Orthodox moving up the graph by calling forth assemblies, seminars, meetings with the international bodies, confrontations, delegations and lot more to help the society to walk hand in hand in universal brotherhood. It is again trying harder to prove itself for promoting peace and harmony in its religious flavour yet not biased in it. It is calling on all to work on humanitarian grounds and not looking on nation, colour, creed as all are made in the “Image and Likeness of God”.

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