



The Lausanne-Orthodox Initiative



Lausanne-Orthodox Initiative Regional Consultation, Addis Ababa

11-14 October 2016 (1-4 Tikemt 2009)

Statement of Intent

Sixty Orthodox and Evangelical Church leaders, theologians and mission workers gathered in Addis Ababa for a Regional Consultation at the invitation of Ethiopian leaders from both traditions. Over four days, we prayed, discussed, studied and shared meals together and were graciously received during our visit to the Ethiopian Patriarchate. Over half those present came from Ethiopia, with further regional representation from Egypt, Eritrea, India and Kenya. Many Orthodox participants came from the Oriental family of Churches, and were joined by participants from the Eastern Orthodox family of Churches. Evangelical participants came from the Mekane Yesus Church, the Kale Heywet Church, the Meserete Kristos Church the Mulu Wongel Church and the Anglican Church of Ethiopia, as well as Anglicans, Baptists, Independent Evangelicals, Methodists and Presbyterians from other parts of the region and the world.

We wish to express our gratitude to the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and the Evangelical Churches of Ethiopia for hosting our gathering. At the opening session we were encouraged by an inspiring message of greeting from His Holiness Abune Mathias I, Patriarch and Catholicos of Ethiopia, and members of the Steering Committee were warmly received by His Holiness, who encouraged them to continue the work of the Lausanne-Orthodox Initiative (LOI).

From a shared commitment to the historic Christian Faith, we discussed the themes of witness, peace and unity, and explored how we could address these topics together. Among other aspects, we also considered how to better understand and relate to brothers and sisters of other religious traditions in the region, as demonstrated by the work of the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia.

Our time together reinforced our desire to co-ordinate our activities and co-operate with one another in a deeper way, and we wish to renew our commitment to doing so as Evangelical and Orthodox Christians. The Churches in Ethiopia look forward to continuing to work together in this way.

As participants in this historic gathering, and in response to the evident moving of the Holy Spirit amongst us, we go forward from this consultation with a clear commitment to pray for, encourage and empower a deeper fellowship in mission between our respective traditions.

To fulfil this commitment we will endeavour, in the strength of the Holy Trinity, to:

- bear witness daily, in word and deed, to the reconciling love of the Gospel;

- be patient, forgiving, generous and humble towards one another as we struggle with theological, cultural, historical and personal differences that divide us, as well as the historical context of our relationships, always seeking the mercy of God;
- foster continuing engagement between our traditions within the whole region of the Horn of Africa, as in other regions, for the sake of the Kingdom of God - using, where appropriate, the insights, resources and experience of the LOI;
- support those in Ethiopia whose vision is to explore and express more deeply our respective, and joint, participation in the Mission of God for the sake of His glory in this land;
- encourage the “formation of mission-minded leaders” within our respective traditions, and hold in prayer the 2017 LOI consultation on this theme.

In making this commitment we, as participants in this consultation and members of the Lausanne-Orthodox Initiative, draw strength from the prayer of our Lord that we might “be one” in life and in witness, in the spirit of John 17. We draw hope from the experience of divine grace which we have enjoyed together this week in the fellowship of the saints of all ages.

Addis Ababa

14 October 2016

4 Tikemt 2009 (by Ethiopian calendar)