

Statement of the Holy Synod of Antioch

Concerning the Current Developments in the Orthodox World

The Holy Synod of Antioch met in Our Lady of Balamand Patriarchal Monastery, Lebanon, (October 3-6, 2018) and made the following statement:

The fathers examined the general orthodox situation. They stressed that the Church of Antioch expresses Her deep worries about the attempts to change the boundaries of the Local Orthodox Churches through a new reading of history. She considers that resorting to a unilateral reading of history does not serve Orthodox unity; rather such a change contributes to the fueling of dissensions and quarrels within the one Church. Thus, the Church of Antioch refuses the principle of establishing parallel jurisdictions within the canonical boundaries of the Patriarchates and the Autocephalous Churches, as a way to solve conflicts, or as a de facto situation in the Orthodox World.

The fathers of the Church of Antioch emphasize that any approach for granting the autocephaly of a certain church must be in accordance with Orthodox ecclesiology and the principles agreed upon by the Autocephalous Churches in a conciliar way as it was in recent years. These principles for granting autocephaly necessitate obtaining agreement of the Mother Church of the questioned lands and acknowledgement of all the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches. The Church of Antioch affirms the necessity to resort to the principle of unanimity concerning such common Orthodox work and such controversial issues in the Orthodox world. This unanimity is a true safeguard for Orthodox Unity.

The Church of Antioch warns our sister Autocephalous Churches of the dangers of involving the Orthodox world in international political conflicts and the resulting harms which come from approaching the issues facing the Orthodox Church on the basis of politics, ethnicity, and nationalism.

The Church of Antioch calls upon His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch to call for an urgent Synaxis for the primates of the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches, in order to discuss the current developments that the Orthodox world is facing regarding the issue of granting autocephaly to new Churches, in the effort to find acceptable solutions to all before taking any final decisions about this issue.

The Church of Antioch highlights the necessity of spiritual vigilance in this critical period of history, and the importance of preserving the peace and unity of the Church, and to be watchful not to fall into the trap of political entanglement which history has proven to weaken the united witness in the world of the Orthodox Church.
