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INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN  
THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX FAMILY OF CHURCHES AND  
THE WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES

The Oriental Orthodox-Reformed Dialogue  
'Kerk en Wereld', Driebergen, The Netherlands  
September 13, 1994

AGREED STATEMENT ON CHRISTOLOGY

**Introduction**

In our search for a common understanding of differences in Christology that have existed between us, we have thought it appropriate to focus upon the *Formula of Union*, AD 433. This formula represents an agreement reached by Antioch and Alexandria following the Third Ecumenical Council in 431, and, as such, provides a common point of departure for both parties. We find the interpretations in this agreement to be in accord with the Christological doctrines in both of our traditions.

**Agreed Statement**

'We confess our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten son of God, perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, consisting of a rational soul and a body, begotten of the Father before the ages according to His divinity, the Same, in the fullness of time, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, according to His humanity; the Same consubstantial with the Father according to His divinity, and consubstantial with us according to His humanity. For a union has been made of two natures. For this cause we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord.

'In accordance with this sense of the unconfused union, we confess the holy Virgin to be *Theotokos*, because God the Word became incarnate and was made human, and from the very conception united to Himself the temple taken from her. As to the expressions concerning the Lord in the Gospels and Epistles, we are aware that theologians understand some as common, as relating to one Person, and others they distinguish, as relating to two natures, explaining those that befit the divine nature according to the divinity of Christ, and those of a humble sort according to His humanity.' [Based on the *Formula of Union*, AD 433]

The four adverbs used to qualify the mystery of the hypostatic union belong to our common Christological tradition: 'without commingling' (or confusion) (*asyngchtos*), 'without change' (*atreptos*), 'without separation' (*achoristos*), and 'without division' (*adiaretos*). Those among us who speak of two natures in Christ are justified in doing so since they do not thereby deny their inseparable indivisible union; similarly, those among us who speak of one united divine-human nature in Christ are justified in doing so since they do not thereby deny the continuing dynamic presence in Christ of the divine and the human, without change, without confusion.

Both sides agree in rejecting the teaching which separates or divides the human nature, both soul and body in Christ, from His divine nature or reduced the union of the natures to the level of conjoining. Both sides also agree in rejecting the teaching which confuses the human nature in Christ with the divine nature so that the former is absorbed in the latter and thus ceased to exist.

The perfect union of divinity and of humanity in the incarnate Word is essential for the salvation of the human race. 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' (Jn 3.16 KJV).

**Conclusion**

In offering this statement, we recognize the mystery of God's act in Christ and seek to express that we have shared

the same authentic Christological faith in the one incarnate Lord.

We submit this statement to the authorities of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and to the Executive Committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches for their consideration and action.

*Signatures of Co-Chairmen*

His Grace Metropolitan Bishoy  
General Secretary of the Holy Synod  
of the Coptic Orthodox Church

Rev. Dr Milan Opočenský,  
General Secretary of the  
World Alliance of Reformed Churches