

Opening remarks of Bishop Basil (Losten), First Stamford Consultation of the Kievan Church Study Group, October, 1992

Підсумок

Нижче поданий текст, це привітальне слово Кир Василя (Лостена) виголошене на початку (першої) стемфордської сесії Студійної Групи Київської Церкви. Владика представляє дещо з генези Групи, як також і перебіг подій, які відбулися на першій сесії в Оксфорді. Він описує, як то можливість таких екуменічних зустрічей була темою розмов між ним та владикою Всеволодом. Згодом о. д-р Андрій Чировський нав'язав контакт з владикою Каллістосом в тій справі, і при допомозі о. архимандрита Сергія устійнено пляни про першу зустріч в Оксфорді. Владика зі задоволенням твердить, що під час дискусій в Оксфорді, учасники ніколи не ділилися на «конфесійні табори». Однак, рівночасно не пропонувалося фальшивого консенсусу, чи «компромісів». І католики і православні щиро представляли мислення своїх Церков, що послужить для розвитку спільної візії Церкви тепер і в майбутньому. Як основний принцип праці Групи, учасники прийняли засаду, що Православна і Католицька Церкви, це Церкви по-сестри, та що основа для евентуального поєднання це джерела з першого тисячоліття—а саме, сім Вселенських Соборів, отці Церкви, та досвід Церкви з часів перед роздором.

Решта деталей зі слова Кир Василя, це інформації, які наявні в цьому та попередньому числі *Logos*-у, наприклад, теми рефератів, тощо.



It is a pleasure to welcome the Kievan Church Study Group to the Diocese of Stamford, both those who were with us for the Oxford consultation and those who are joining us now. In our final session at Oxford we decided to

begin this present consultation with a review or synopsis of what was accomplished in Oxford. Naturally, everyone should read the actual papers from Oxford attentively; even those who were present will find points that were missed during the discussions, and those who were not present will gain a more thorough understanding of what happened. My comments this morning are based on my own notes and my own memory, and I trust that those who were in Oxford will add points that I may omit, and that questions from those who were not in Oxford will lead to a further development.

The Oxford consultation came about on the initiative of several persons. Bishop Vsevolod and I had thought of such a meeting two or three years ago. Then Father Andriy Chirovsky travelled to Oxford for the International Patristic Conference in the summer of 1991, where he had an opportunity to discuss the idea with Bishop Kallistos. Meanwhile Keston College moved from Kent to Oxford, so that Father Archimandrite Serge, who works for Keston, is in frequent contact with Bishop Kallistos. The proposal for a consultation took shape in the late autumn and winter of 1991, and by the spring of 1992 the dates were set and we had agreed to meet in Oxford itself, in the House of Saint Gregory and Saint Macrina, attached to the Orthodox Church in Oxford.

Originally, we planned an informal, private gathering. But in May 1992 the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Synod, meeting at Saint George's Cathedral in L'viv, welcomed Bishop Vsevolod as our most honoured guest, and gave an official blessing to the Oxford consultation. In response, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios of Constantinople also gave his personal blessing to the consultation. While these marks of approval were certainly welcome and encouraging, they also aroused greater public interest in our work and moved all of us to give our preparation careful attention.

Just before the Oxford consultation, the Fellowship of Saints Alban and Sergius held its annual conference at High Leigh, and devoted its attention to the situation of the Church in Eastern Europe. Several of our participants were also involved in this conference: Bishop Kallistos gave a paper on the role of the Greco-Catholics in the dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church; Father Serge Keleher spoke on the revival of our Church in Ukraine, and Bishop Vsevolod both chaired the session at which Father Serge spoke, and served Pontifical Divine Liturgy for the conference on Saturday morning. Father Graham Woolfenden and Hieromonk Elias (of the Carmelites), who gave our consultation important practical help, were also

active participants in the Fellowship conference. So that conference led directly into our Oxford consultation.

In Oxford, the hospitality of the House of Saint Gregory and Saint Macrina was exemplary, with comfortable accommodations and remarkably good meals—I hope that our kitchen here in Stamford will be able to match this high standard. We arranged a chapel in the library for the days of the consultation, and served Divine Liturgy there each morning. Father Peter Galadza ably led the chanting for all our services.

On the first morning, after breakfast, Bishop Vsevolod led us all in the *Moleben* for the grace of the Holy Spirit. Bishop Kallistos then gave the first paper, on ecclesiology.

The bishop's paper set the ground for our entire discussion. There was never a moment during our Oxford session when the conversation broke along denominational lines, and much of the credit for this achievement belongs to Bishop Kallistos. With courageous honesty, the bishop acknowledged the wrong that was done to the Greco-Catholics in the persecution, and stressed the need to ask and extend mutual forgiveness and pardon. This cleared the air at once. The bishop's paper and the ensuing discussion spurred by Fr. Chirovsky's response readily agreed that we accept the same sources: the Seven Councils, the Holy Fathers, and the normative quality of the first millennium of the Church. With such a thorough and solid foundation, it was possible to seek a consensus.

At the same time, there was no hint of compromise from anyone. From the first moment, we were all aware that any compromise would be irresponsible and unproductive, and that only a *genuine* consensus would be fruitful. We all wanted such a consensus; the effort to reach it meant that, as all the participants mentioned, this was one of the most intense, hard-working theological meetings that any of us had ever attended.

In view of what has been accomplished by the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, we accept and base ourselves upon the *ecclesiology of communion between Sister Churches*. This understanding impels us to make every effort at a positive appreciation of developments in the Sister Churches during the second millennium, viewing each other no longer as enemies, as heretics, or as schismatics, but as estranged brothers whose mutual reconciliation is required by God and by our common Faith.