

## STANDING CONFERENCE OF ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN AMERICA

November 1, 2009

Reverend Fathers,

As you know, for many years the Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Syrian and Syrian Malankara Orthodox Churches have enjoyed fruitful collaboration and fellowship under the auspices of the *Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches*. The mission of the *Standing Conference* is to proclaim and witness to the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as a fellowship of apostolic churches affirming the unity of the Orthodox Christian faith, demonstrating their solidarity as Oriental Orthodox; sharing and learning from the particular experiences of the member churches; and strengthening the spiritual and moral lives of their own communities.

We are very eager for our Oriental Orthodox youth to come together to meet, pray, learn from one another and to enjoy Christian fellowship. **We are calling on the parish priests and youth leaders of our sister churches to make every effort to organize opportunities to bring our Oriental Orthodox young people together.** We believe that doing so will strengthen our young people in their Christian faith and life, especially here in the United States, where our youth face many serious challenges to our traditional Christian outlook and way of life.

Here are some suggestions for bringing our young people together:

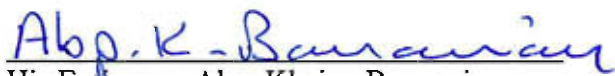
1. As a matter of routine, always invite youth representatives from our sister churches to all youth activities and events organized in your parish or region.
2. Organize special youth gatherings where you will invite the youth from a nearby sister church to visit your parish.
3. Invite youth from a nearby sister church to participate in the Divine Liturgy on a given Sunday.
4. Organize a retreat, Bible Study, or other activity with youth from a nearby sister church.
5. Invite youth from a nearby sister church to participate in celebrations and liturgical services that are unique to your own tradition (for example, the commemoration of a patron saint, a national feast day or other holy day).
6. Seek out any Oriental Orthodox college students that are in your area for college and draw them into your parish's activities and life.

7. Encourage the college students in your parish to seek out and become involved in Oriental Orthodox campus ministries.

Attached please find a list of contact persons from each of the sister churches who are ready to assist you in any way.

We, the hierarchs of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, are committed to bringing our young people together, and we pray that our Lord richly bless our efforts.

Prayerfully,



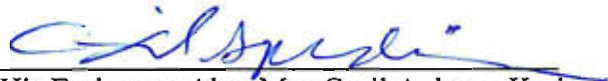
His Eminence Abp. Khajag Barsamian  
Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)



His Grace Bishop Anba David  
General Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Church



His Eminence Abp. Abuna Zacharias  
Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church New York, Northeast, Southeast,  
Central United States of America



His Eminence Abp. Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim  
Archbishop and Patriarchal Vicar of the Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese for the Eastern United  
States



His Eminence Abp. Titus Yeldho  
Archbishop of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America