



STANDING CONFERENCE OF ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN AMERICA

December 4, 2014

Reverend Fathers and Beloved Leaders of Campus Ministries,

As you are hopefully well aware, for many years, the Armenian, Coptic, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Syriac, and Malankara-Syrian Orthodox Churches have come together under the auspices of the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches to proclaim the Gospel of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ and to tend to the collective needs of our respective flocks here in North America.

Recognizing the need for a spiritual support system for young Orthodox Christians during their crucial college years, we, the hierarchs of the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches, are happy to impart our paternal blessings to the chaplains and servants of our official campus fellowship – Orthodox Christian Campus Ministries (OCCM) – so that they might begin the work of uniting our Oriental Orthodox youth under one banner where they can come together to meet, pray, learn from one another, enjoy Christian fellowship, and most importantly, build a common identity based not on ethnic culture or custom, but rather on the sacred Orthodox faith which our ancient churches hold in common.

It is a well documented fact that many young Christians lose their faith during their college years. This is especially true here in North America where our youth face many serious challenges to the traditional Orthodox Christian outlook and way of life shared by our communities. Drawing strength from our well-established unity of faith, it is time that we begin moving towards a unity of action. To this end, Orthodox Christian Campus Ministries will not only serve to unite our disparate campus youth organizations in places where such might already exist, but also to create new campus fellowships in places where our youth are not being served at all. The ministries of the organization will include but not be limited to retreats, Bible studies, fellowship, evangelistic outreach, spiritual days, Christian education, prayer meetings, liturgy and worship, and community service. Further, the organization will actively seek out Oriental Orthodox college students on a given campus, drawing them into the life and activities of the local Oriental Orthodox parishes, regardless of their jurisdiction, thereby feeding their souls while simultaneously strengthening our unity in diversity and the ties which bind our churches together for future generations.

Fathers and Youth Leaders, we are writing to you to encourage you to assist in these efforts and the ministry of OCCM by whatever means possible. Specifically, we ask that you promote OCCM among the youth and young adults of your parishes, that you encourage existing fellowships to join their efforts to this initiative, that you inspire your youth to create new fellowships under this banner on campuses where such do not exist, and that you volunteer your services as both visiting pastors and permanent chaplains as your schedules permit.



We, the hierarchs of the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches, are committed to bringing our young people together as a single family, and we pray that the Lord will bless this effort abundantly. We urge you to investigate Orthodox Christian Campus Ministries at [www.occministries.org] and the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches at [www.scooch.org].

With Prayers and Blessings,

H.H. Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II
Patriarch of Antioch and all the East

H.E. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)

H.G. Bishop Anba David
Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of New York & New England

H.E. Archbishop Abune Zekarias
Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Diocese of New York, the Northeast, Southeast, & Central USA

H.E. Archbishop Mor Titus Yeldho
Archbishop of the Malankara Archdiocese of the Syriac Orthodox Church in North America



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H.G. Bishop Abune Makarios

Bishop of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church Archdiocese of North America

Karas

H.G. Bishop Anba Karas

General Bishop and Patriarchal Exarch of the Coptic Orthodox Archdiocese of North America and
Representative of H.H. Pope Tawadros II, Pope and Lord Archbishop of the Great City of Alexandria and
Patriarch of the See of St. Mark

Silvanos Ayub

H.E. Mor Silvanos Ayub

Archbishop of Knanaya Churches in America, Canada, and Europe