

**Christian Presence in the Lebanon  
Fatqa, from 11-14, 2008**

## **"Christian Presence in Lebanon"**

**Final Statement of the Common Session  
by the  
Catholic, Orthodox and Evangelical Churches**

**Fatqa, 14 March, 2008**

At an invitation from the heads of the Catholic, Orthodox and Evangelical Churches in Lebanon, a conference titled "The Christian Presence in Lebanon" was held in Dar Sayedet El Jabal, in Fatqa, Kesrouan, from the eleventh to the fourteenth of March, 2008.

The Conference was presided by the Catholic Patriarchs, the Armenian Orthodox Patriarch, the Representatives for the Orthodox Patriarchs and the Representative for the President of the Evangelical Synod in Lebanon.

The nuncio, bishop Lwigi Gati was present at the opening session. The bishops, fathers superior and mothers superior of the monastic orders in Lebanon, as well as the Presidents of the universities, and a crowd of priests, pastors, monks, nuns and laymen delegated by the bishoprics, have all participated in the works of the Conference.

Through several lectures, the participants dealt with subjects related to the Christians in Lebanon and to the challenges, some of which are shared by their Muslim partners, in the national destiny, that were summarized in the following points:

### **First: The Evangelical Witness and the Present Challenges**

The Christians exercise this witness, in one way or another, freely and with perseverance; but in face of the facts and reality things remain incomplete as long as the political, administrative and security state of affairs is not normal, and particularly with the vacancy taking place in their first position in the structure of the state. For, the election of a president for the Republic, which is the most important position in the State, was obstructed and this is an unacceptable matter and raises a

question mark and a questioning about plans that harm the Christians' presence and their basic role in Lebanon.

### **Second: The Church, Servant of Man and Society**

The Christians carry out the most important services to man and society, and often their institutions take the government's place concerning the schools, universities, hospitals and the various institutions. Doubtless, the Lebanese Society, in general, is indebted to these institutions without favors because the Christians consider this to be part of their witness and mission in the world.

### **Third: Emigration**

It is a bleeding, that increases day after day, of the Christians from the Region and especially from Lebanon, as this Nation is losing productive powers, talents and a variety of capabilities whose absence constitute a danger on its future. This contagion is true for the varied strata of this society.

Emigration may be useful to the individuals but it is harmful, in most cases, to the family, the Church and the society, and if it continues it will bring change to the demographic reality of the Nation and exposes its message and presence to perdition.

It is inevitable to treat this reality so that to know the reasons that led to it, and to find the effective solutions in order to reassure the people concerning their future in their land and nation of their fathers and forefathers.

### **Fourth: The Political Challenges**

These constitute a retrogradation in the participation of the Christians in the policy and administration of Lebanon, and a diminishing of their pioneering and avant-garde role; as their participation in the issues of destiny has decreased, and their decision-making has retrograded due to the selective implementation of the Ta'ef National Agreement.

### **Fifth: Opening-up to the Others**

The Christians are opened-up to all, and their relationship with their Muslim partners in the nation is one of their fixed principles through their continuous exercise of the life dialogue with them, in their various sects and denominations. They consider the Muslims their brothers in the citizenship and partners in the nation, and they work with them and collaborate in all the aspects that serve the man, society and Lebanon. A fact that leads us to participate in dispelling the worries and concerns in

order to feel together that we do belong to a same and final nation called "Lebanon the Message".

**Sixth: Living the Bible**

The participants call upon their Christian brothers in Lebanon and the Diasporas to live their Bible and Christianity and to be always ready to answer for the reasons of hope that God has put in their hearts, and for their young people and new generations to renew the life and to be committed to the heritage of their fathers and forefathers on this blessed land.

**Seventh: The Spirit of Reconciliation**

The participants ask the people in responsible positions and the politicians, regardless of their various levels and posts, to collaborate together in a spirit of reconciliation, to reject the private benefits and to consider the high interest of the nation beyond any interest, thus they establish the principles of justice and peace among the citizen, and everyone will be content for the deliverance of Lebanon from its ordeal, and together we build the future of our generations.

**Eighth: Periodic Meetings**

The participants call upon their spiritual authorities to decide on holding periodic meetings, such as this meeting, and they recommend the formation of follow-up committees of the work of this Conference, the treatment of the issues that were reviewed and the work to find solutions to them.

**Ninth:**

The participants present to the Christians in general and the Chaldean Church in particular and to the Iraqi people their condolences for the absence and martyrdom of the late Mar Boulos Faraj Rahhou, Bishop for the Chaldean Church in Mousol, and his two companions and all the martyrs that were victim of the perfidy of unscrupulous terrorists. May God have mercy on them and compensate the sister Chaldean Church with good pastors, and spread His security and peace in the world, and particularly in this dear Orient.

**Tenth:**

The participants pray God that this Lent be sanctifying to the souls, and call for a day of prayer and repentance for the sake of mutual understanding, unity, stability and peace, and wish for a glorious Easter that brings with it a complete deliverance for the dear Lebanon.