

APPENDIX I

"JOINT SYNODAL DECREE FOR PROMOTING UNITY" *between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church*

1. In the service of our Lord and the People of God, we, the bishops of the two branches of the ancient "*Church of the East*," declare that the noble quest for restoring Christian unity remains, for us and for our Churches, a profound Christian obligation. Our Lord's prayer for the unity of His followers prompts in us, today, a deep desire to reach peacefully and fraternally the full communion with all other Christians in the one holy Church of Christ. Seeking to implement the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the scope of our responsibility, we, in our respective Churches, realize that the actual meaning of Jesus' prayer "*that all may be one*" (Jn. 17:21-23) can be fulfilled factually as we strive to restore the unity of the Church of the East, as known by our common forefathers.
2. The basic theological agreement between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, as articulated in the "*Common Christological Declaration*," signed at the Vatican, on 11 November 1994, by Their Holinesses Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV, has cleared the way for the Chaldean and the Assyrian Churches to initiate a process of dialogue and collaboration toward the goal of unity.
3. With the same spirit and purpose in mind, the two heads of our Churches, Their Holinesses Mar Dinkha IV and Mar Raphael I Bidawid met, with their respective delegations, in Southfield, Michigan (USA), on 29 November 1996, inaugurating officially the process of dialogue and collaboration; and, in a "*Joint Patriarchal Statement*," they called upon their churches to rally behind them for the success of this noble purpose, and for their Holy Synods to formulate concrete plans toward the realization of the goal of unity.
4. We, the Fathers of both Holy Synods, wholeheartedly respond to the call of our Patriarchs, which is ultimately the call of the Lord himself, and declare that we join them in this course toward our common destiny, totally endorsing their proposals as formulated in their joint statement. Consequently, we adopt the following measures in the quest for unity:
 - a. Close collaboration in the area of catechesis, particularly in training of catechists and in the development of related teaching material.
 - b. Collaboration in the preparation and printing of liturgical books.
 - c. The establishment of an ecclesial education institute in the Chicago-Detroit region, and possibly wherever members of both communities exist, for the purpose of training future priests, deacons and catechists from both Churches. This institute shall also offer continuing religious education to the active clergy of both Churches. For the fulfillment of the general theological program—in addition to in-house formation program—the institute shall reach a suitable arrangement with appropriate Catholic universities and/or institutions in the locality where the institute exists.
 - d. The formulation of a joint and common attitude emphasizing the usage of the Aramaic mother tongue, in both of its classic and vernacular forms, in liturgical ceremonies as well as in cultural endeavors of both Churches.
 - e. The development of pastoral programs and educational projects as expressions of ecclesial and cultural collaboration between the two churches.

- f. The development of a wide range of other activities and programs through which the faithful of both the Assyrian and the Chaldean Churches will become prepared to accept, as a common enrichment of their "*Church of the East*", the variety of particular practices that have been developed in both Churches during the period of separation. The characteristics of the authentic heritage of the ancient "*Church of the East*" shall be a basis for evaluation and a point of reference in such endeavor. Nevertheless, we shall consider diversity, within agreed and recognized limits, as an enrichment benefitting all the children of this Church.
5. To implement the above approved plan, we hereby decree that a "*Joint Commission for Unity*" (JCU) shall be constituted, according to a special statute approved by both patriarchs, to be composed of twelve members selected from both Churches—six from each side. Since the "*Common Christological Declaration*" (CCD) is the basic foundation for the collaboration between our two churches, all questions related to the areas of dogmatic and fundamental theology shall be reserved to the "*Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue*" (MCTD) that has been formed accordingly between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East.
6. Looking with fraternal understanding to our past and directing our hearts with trust and hope to the future, we commit ourselves and offer public testimony of the shared love and respect between our Churches at the present. Thus, we, mutually and reciprocally, declare that we recognize in each other, as living today in our Churches, the same apostolic succession, sacramentality and Christian witness. Therefore, we call upon our clergy and faithful everywhere to interact as brothers and sisters, founding their relationship upon Christian charity and employing evangelical principles of fraternal equality and social justice, in and throughout the testimony of their individual and communal lives.
7. Recognizing in both of our Churches the binding unity of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, that we share, as well as our common liturgical and theological heritage, taking pride in the same Fathers, Doctors of the Church, acknowledging the same shared ancestry and culture, we nevertheless recognize the existence of actual differences between our churches that have been formed during the period of separation. Therefore, for the sake of being truthful with each other and toward our people, we respectively declare our basic intents and together formulate the following principles for dialogue:
 - a. Whereas the Assyrian Church of the East sees that
 - i. the preservation of her ecclesial identity as expressed in her liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary patrimony as well as her Mesopotamian-Aramaic culture and
 - ii. the recognition of her freedom and self-governance are principles that must be preserved continuously throughout the process of dialogue and in any achieved model of unity; and
 - b. Whereas, in like manner, the Chaldean Catholic Church sees that
 - i. while the preservation of the same above-mentioned ecclesial identity as expressed in her liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary patrimony as well as her Mesopotamian-Aramaic culture must be maintained, the adaptation of that patrimony to existing regional and cultural conditions and
 - ii. the preservation of her full communion with the Roman See must be basic principles continuously maintained throughout the process of dialogue and in any achieved model of unity.
 - c. Therefore, since some of our basic stands are distinct, both Holy Synods ratify the need for further dialogue and more involved collaboration between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church, and, in due time and manner, between them jointly and the Roman See, in order to bring about unity between the Assyrian and the Chaldean Churches.
8. We sincerely hope that the "*Church of the East*", restored to its historic fullness in faithfulness to the Lord, shall be an instrument for spiritual renewal, social harmony and cultural renaissance among her faithful, prompting them, once again, to bring the Good News of the Gospel to the four corners of the world for the glory of God's name.

9. Therefore, we call upon all of our sons and daughters to raise fervent prayers for the purpose of achieving our full ecclesiastical unity, through the patronage of the Virgin Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and our own blessed mother and the intercessions of the Apostles of the East, Mar Toma, Mar Addai and Mar Mari.
10. By the authority granted to us by the Holy Spirit, we declare that this "*Joint Synodal Decree for Promoting Unity*" effective for both Churches from this date, the fifteenth day of August 1997, the Feast of the Blessed Virgin. As a confirmation to this historic occurrence, we list our names under the names and signatures of our two venerable Patriarchs.

† Mar Raphael I Bidawid
*Catholicos Patriarch Catholicos
Chaldean Catholic Church*

† Mar Dinkha IV
*Patriarch Assyrian
Church of the East*

Members of both Holy Synods

I. CHALDEAN

1. Mar Emmanuel Delly,
Patriarchal Auxiliary
2. Mar Andre Sana,
Archbishop of Kerkuk
3. Mar Abdulahad Sana,
Bishop of Alqosh
4. Mar Youhanna Issaye,
Retired Archbishop of Tehran
5. Mar Stephane Babaca,
Retired Archbishop of Arbil
6. Mar Hanna Kello,
Bishop of Amadia & Zakho
7. Mar Paul Karatas,
Archbishop of Diarbakir
8. Mar Hanna Zora,
Archbishop of Ahwaz
9. Mar Abdulahad Rabban,
Bishop of 'Aqra
10. Mar George Garmo,
Archbishop of Mosul
11. Mar Ibrahim Ibrahim,
Bishop of the USA
12. Mar Yousif Sarraf,
Bishop of Cairo
13. Mar Youssif Thomas,
Archbishop, Bishop of Beirut
14. Mar Thomas Meram,
Archbishop of Urmia & Salmas
16. Mar Antoine Audo,
Bishop of Aleppo
17. Mar Ramzi Garmo,
Archbishop of Tehran
18. Mar Gabriel Kassab,
Archbishop of Basra

II. ASSYRIAN

1. Mar Narsai Debaz,
Archbishop of Lebanon, Syria Tehran &
Europe and Patriarchal Vicar
2. Mar Timotheos,
Patriarchal Rep. in India
3. Mar Aprem,
Archbishop of India
4. Mar Gewargis Sliwa,
Archbishop of Iraq & Russia
5. Poulouse Mar Poulouse,
Bishop of Trichur
6. Mar Aprim Khamis,
Bishop of Eastern USA
7. Mar Bawai Soro,
Bishop of Seattle,
General Secretary of CIRED
8. Mar Meelis Zaia,
Bishop of Australia &
New Zealand, & Sec. of Holy Synod
9. Mar Emmanuel Emmanuel,
Bishop of Canada
10. Mar Odisho Oraham,
Bishop of Europe