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The Romanian Greek-Catholic Church

SERGE KELEHER

Historical Background

The Romanians are very proud of their Latin heritage and traditions; as the name implies, their language belongs to the 'romance' or neo-Latin family, and some historians have even argued that Romanians are descendants of a Roman garrison stationed in Dacia. However, they received the Christian faith from Constantinople in the Eastern Orthodox form.

After Latin, the Slavic languages exercised an important influence on Romanian culture. For centuries the Romanian Orthodox Church conducted divine services in Church Slavonic. Even after adopting vernacular Romanian for use in scripture and liturgy, the Romanians continued to use the Church Slavonic alphabet for ecclesiastical purposes. One can still find icons with the inscriptions written in Romanian but in Church Slavonic letters, and even as late as the early nineteenth century Orthodox service-books were sometimes printed in vernacular Romanian with Church Slavonic letters.¹ Philologists often estimate that 80 per cent of the vocabulary of vernacular Romanian consists of words of Latin origin, while the remaining 20 per cent consists of words of Slavic origin.

Like everyone else in the region, the Romanians were conquered by the Muslim Turks; but the Romanian princes, the *hospodars* of Wallachia and Moldavia, succeeded in retaining some autonomy within the Turkish empire, and thus provided the nucleus of the modern Romanian state. However, a very substantial proportion of the Romanian people lived not in those principalities, but in Transylvania. After the Turks were eventually pushed back towards Anatolia, Transylvania became part of the Habsburg dominions, and was formally incorporated into the Kingdom of Hungary under the 'Dual Monarchy' arrangement of Austria-Hungary in the nineteenth century.

The Protestant Reformation was influential in Transylvania; there is still a substantial Reformed Church in the region, tracing its inspiration to Calvinism, and it made significant inroads into the Eastern Orthodox community. The Calvinist challenge is believed to have been the decisive factor in the Romanian Orthodox move to translate the divine services into the vernacular, since the ordinary faithful (and even the lower clergy) could not understand Church Slavonic. According to oral tradition, these translations appear to have been accomplished by the end of the seventeenth century; no doubt they were circulating in manuscripts much earlier. The effort succeeded: the balance between the Orthodox and the Protestants stabilised, and rather in favour of the Orthodox.

Union with Rome

Another question then arose in Transylvania: the possibility of a religious union with Rome of all or part of the Romanian Orthodox community, roughly along the same lines as the Union of Brest in Ukraine and Belarus (concluded in 1596 between the Papacy and the Metropolitanate of Kiev) and, still closer, the Union of Uzhhorod (Ungvar) in Transcarpathia in 1646, involving the largest Orthodox diocese in the Carpathian mountains, very near Transylvania. There were abundant contacts between the Orthodox Christians of Transylvania and the 'Greek-Catholics', as the Orthodox who accepted union with Rome came to be called, in Transcarpathia and elsewhere in western Ukraine, leading to much discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the union arrangements.

Briefly, the substance of such a union was this: the Orthodox Church or community entering upon such a union retained its liturgical, disciplinary, spiritual and theological tradition (identical to that of Eastern Orthodoxy in general), while accepting full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. At least, that is what was supposed to happen. What really happened in every case was another matter, arising from the different perceptions of the union among the Orthodox (who became 'Greek-Catholics'), the Vatican, the local Roman Catholics and the governments involved.

At the end of the seventeenth century the Habsburgs practised religious toleration according to the ideas of the period, but the Roman Catholics were definitely in a privileged position, so the Greek-Catholic arrangement looked attractive. From 1698 onwards several Romanian Orthodox bishops and communities accepted this union with Rome, and eventually the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church was organised into a Metropolitan Province, headed by the Archbishop of Alba Iulia, Făgăraş and Blaj (where the actual seat of the Archdiocese was), with dependent dioceses located at Oradea Mare, Lugoj, Cluj and Baia Mare (Maramureş) and a vicariate in Bucharest. But the acceptance of the Greek-Catholic arrangement was not unanimous. A substantial Romanian Orthodox presence remained in Transylvania; in the early twentieth century the two churches in Transylvania had about the same number of adherents.

Greek-Catholic and Romanian Culture

In the nineteenth century Transylvania was the most important centre of the Romanian national and cultural revival, and the Greek-Catholics had an important edge because they had greater access to higher education, both in the Dual Monarchy and elsewhere. Thus in Romanian society as a whole the Greek-Catholic Church became well respected, and a recognised element in Romanian life.

Attempts at Magyarisation

On the other hand, particularly after the creation of the Dual Monarchy (which gave considerable autonomy to Hungary), the Hungarians began to press for magyarisation. Numerous Romanian peasants had moved into the central Hungarian plain, seeking agricultural work; eventually Greek-Catholic parishes were organised for these people. What education was available for the children of such farm workers was exclusively Hungarian, and during the nineteenth century the divine services were translated into vernacular Hungarian for use in these parishes.

This was not altogether spontaneous: the sons of the priests, who studied in Budapest and often became priests themselves,² began to feel that the dominant Magyar culture was 'superior', and became active promoters of the movement to have sermons and divine services in Hungarian rather than in Romanian, even in places where the parishioners did not want this innovation.

The Hungarian government soon saw the possibilities in this movement, and in turn began pressing the Vatican (through Emperor Franz Josef, the 'Apostolic King',) to create a separate Hungarian Greek-Catholic diocese to serve magyarised Romanian and Ukrainian elements in Hungary. The new Diocese of Hajdúdorog was erected in 1912,³ and 80 parishes were detached from the Romanian dioceses in favour of the Hungarians. The Romanians were furious, and when many of these parishes found themselves in the expanded Romanian state following the Treaty of Trianon (which established the borders between Romania and Hungary following the First World War) the Romanian Greek-Catholic bishops lost no time in repossessing their parishes and reimposing the Romanian language.⁴

This turnabout was to create more problems. Hungary, defeated in the First World War, lost the whole of Transylvania to Romania, including a substantial number of ethnic Magyars (particularly the Szeklers), and a significant number of Hungarian-speaking Greek-Catholics, who by this time could no longer speak or function comfortably in Romanian. The Romanian Greek-Catholic bishops expelled the Magyar-speaking priests, and then found that they had no clergy to serve these faithful.

To add to the ethnic confusion, there are several parishes of Ukrainian-Rusyn⁵ Greek-Catholics in Romania, particularly in the Maramureş diocese (in the Carpathian Mountain region bordering on Transcarpathia) and in the Romanian part of Bukovyna. The Greek-Catholic bishops also had to provide for these communities. Fortunately they had good relations with Metropolitan Andrei (Sheptyts'ky) in L'viv, and had no difficulty obtaining priests who knew Ukrainian and Church Slavonic.

Between the Wars

During the interwar period the Romanian Greek-Catholic church under the leadership of Metropolitan Vasile Hossu was functioning well and had a friendly relationship with the Romanian Orthodox Church (which became a patriarchate in 1925). The Romanians of Transylvania seem to have been relatively satisfied with their situation in general; while there was some Romanian emigration to America, it was nothing like the exodus from Ukraine. As a result there are a small number of Romanian Greek-Catholic parishes in the United States, and even fewer elsewhere. In Romania at the end of the Second World War there were about 1,500,000 Romanian Greek-Catholic parishioners.

Stalin and the Greek-Catholics

Stalin had a particular distaste for the Greek-Catholic churches, and efforts were made to suppress them wherever the Soviet occupation went. The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church was outlawed in 1946 and the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church in 1948. None of the Greek-Catholic bishops accepted the forced 'conversion' to Romanian Orthodoxy, but a small gathering of priests was coerced into signing a 'reunion' document, on the basis of which the Romanian communist regime issued a decree (1 December 1948) withdrawing government recognition from the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church and transferring all the properties of that body to the

Romanian Orthodox Church. The Greek-Catholic bishops and leading clergy were all imprisoned; the faithful resisted as best they could.

At the time, the Romanian Orthodox patriarchate did make at least a faint protest against this obvious violation of religious freedom, but the government soon quashed these scruples, and thereafter the Romanian Orthodox spokespersons insisted that what had been done was no more than right and proper.

As one may imagine, the problem did not go away. The Ceaușescu regime was notorious for abusing the population in many ways, but the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church continued to function as an illegal underground body (whose first bishops had been consecrated by the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop O'Hara, before his expulsion from the country). In addition, as happened also in Ukraine and Slovakia, an indeterminate but large number of nominally Romanian Orthodox clergy and parishes were 'crypto-Catholics', who often let the secret slip.

The problem of the Hungarian Greek-Catholic communities in Romania also remained. These people were included in the forced aggregation of the Greek-Catholics to the Romanian Orthodox Church, but the Romanian Orthodox hierarchy was even less equipped to serve them than the Romanian Greek-Catholic hierarchy had been. One result was the publication of a bilingual Orthodox prayer book, with Romanian on one page and Hungarian on the facing page, presumably to enable the Hungarian-speakers to follow the service in Romanian.⁶ Numerous contacts continued with the Greek-Catholic Church in Hungary, and strengthened the Greek-Catholic awareness in Transylvania.

Ceaușescu attempted to introduce and enforce drastic demographic changes in Romania, and undoubtedly he succeeded in achieving some important population shifts. One result is that there are now many more Greek-Catholics in the Old Kingdom as well as in Transylvania. Ceaușescu also prohibited both abortion and birth control in a deliberate and successful attempt to increase the Romanian population. As a result, the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church may now have as many as 2,500,000 members.

The Ceaușescu government had maintained a certain distance from Moscow (as had previous Romanian communist governments, at least since the Sino-Soviet split), and in the mid-1980s Bucharest seemed quite uninterested in the *perestroika* programme then in vogue in what was still the Soviet Union. There was certainly an ethnic problem in Transylvania; Hungarian refugees were coming from Romania into Hungary in sufficiently great numbers to cause international concern, with unpleasant reports of ethnic discrimination in Romania. The Romanian economy was in serious trouble (even the most basic foodstuffs were in short supply), but there were few visual signs of an incipient revolution.

Observers in the West concerned with the persecuted Greek-Catholics in Eastern Europe were giving most of their attention to the situation in Ukraine, where the Greek-Catholics were increasingly vociferous in demanding the restoration of legal rights, and where the *perestroika* policies seemed to offer an opening.⁷ Those who were interested realised that the Greek-Catholics in Romania would be 'next on the list', so to speak, but were not prepared for the fast pace of events.

The Greek-Catholic Church Regains Legal Existence

Less than a month after the formal restoration of legal rights to the Greek-Catholic Church in Ukraine, the Ceaușescu regime was deposed, and a Greek-Catholic bishop was permitted to offer greetings to the Romanian people over Radio Bucharest. The

new Romanian government revoked the degree depriving the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church of legal rights, and the Romanian Orthodox Church spontaneously announced that the Orthodox would return to the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church all properties which had belonged to that church in 1948. The Romanian Orthodox Patriarch Teoctist, who had been strongly linked to the Ceaușescu regime, resigned his office.

The Question of Church Buildings

The euphoria was ephemeral. The 1948 decree was revoked, and legal rights were restored to the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church, led by Metropolitan Alexandru Todea; in short order all the vacant dioceses were provided with bishops. However, the Romanian Orthodox Church adamantly refused to return the Greek-Catholic properties, and Patriarch Teoctist speedily withdrew his resignation. There is overwhelming evidence of continuing government discrimination against the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church. In most districts, services must be conducted in the open air, despite the inclement climate of Transylvania. In many villages, towns and cities the Romanian Orthodox Church possesses its own historic religious buildings in close proximity to the Greek-Catholic places of worship which passed to the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1948; the Orthodox Church refuses to relinquish these Greek-Catholic places of worship, even though the Orthodox congregations are far too small to require such a number of church buildings. This question of the restoration of ecclesiastical properties affects every aspect of Romanian Greek-Catholic church life.

In Bucharest at the time of writing (late 1993) there are five Greek-Catholic parishes. One has a church building. Three others are able to hold services in Roman Catholic churches, and the fourth uses a cemetery chapel on Sundays. In Baia Mare the Greek-Catholic diocese had 255 parishes with 356 church buildings in 1948. Now 77 recognised parishes function; 29 of these have church buildings. The diocese has 111 seminarians and about 300 catechists. On a normal Sunday at least 10,000 faithful attend the open-air Greek-Catholic liturgy in the park in Baia Mare itself, despite weather conditions which have frozen the wine in the chalice on the makeshift altar. The six Greek-Catholic church buildings in Baia Mare, including the Cathedral, remain in Orthodox hands. In the parish of Sighet, to give only one example, there are 7,000 declared Greek-Catholic faithful, with four priests and no church building. In Cluj, the Greek-Catholic diocese had 463 parishes in 1948 with 573 church buildings. In the city itself there is now not one church building in Greek-Catholic hands. The liturgy must be served out of doors, despite the freezing winters in the Carpathian Mountains. Bishop Gutiu has lost all confidence in dialogue with the Orthodox, and plans simply to construct new churches.

Anti-Catholic Propaganda

In addition to these problems the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church is subjected to a smear campaign from both the government and the Romanian Orthodox Church. Romanian Greek-Catholics are castigated as unpatriotic and foreign (despite the important role of this community in the Romanian national revival), and the Greek-Catholic Church is attacked as a foreign body, forced on the Romanian people against their will.⁸ Local officials (most of whom are left over from the Ceaușescu period) place enormous pressure on people not to declare themselves Greek-

Catholics. At a time when there is already terrible deprivation in Romania these pressures can be deadly serious.

High-ranking public officials echo these attacks. On 3 May 1993, for example, a leader of the ruling political party in Romania accused the Vatican of launching ‘a major offensive against Orthodoxy and the states which support it’, claiming that during his visit to Hungary the pope proclaimed a war against Serbia, and that it is the pope’s wish that Transylvania be given to Hungary.

As a church just emerged from the catacombs, the Romanian Greek-Catholics have nowhere near enough clergy and monastics to look after the needs of their own communities, let alone evangelise others. The Romanian Orthodox Church keeps spreading reports that huge numbers of Romanian Greek-Catholic clergy ‘from Italy’ have entered Romania to proselytise the Orthodox faithful; in fact there is not even one Romanian Greek-Catholic parish in Italy and there are probably not two dozen Romanian Greek-Catholic priests anywhere in the world outside Romania. If all two dozen of these clergy were suddenly to leave their parishes and move en masse to Romania, they would not even suffice for the existing parishes. Ordinary evangelism in society is virtually out of the question for the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church at present.

Religious Instruction in Schools

School children may receive Greek-Catholic religious instruction provided that a sufficient number of parents in a given school request this. In Baia Mare and Cluj there are special evening classes for religious education teachers run by the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church. As yet, only a limited number of schools have proved to be accessible for this programme.⁹

Education of Future Priests

Romanian Greek-Catholic seminaries have been opened in Blaj, Baia Mare and Cluj, with a total of rather fewer than 300 seminarists pursuing a four-year course of studies. There is also a group of theological students studying informally in Oradea Mare. The seminaries are desperately poor, often lacking even the bare necessities of life (food, soap, electricity and water), to say nothing of educational supplies. The libraries confiscated in 1948 have not been returned, and of course theological studies have developed greatly since that year.

Owing to poverty and currency restrictions, only a small number of students have been sent to seminaries abroad (including one young man in Birmingham), but Cardinal Todea has recently been able to regain possession of the Romanian Greek-Catholic seminary in Rome (which was used as a clergy hostel for the past several decades) and is sending seminarians to Rome for studies. This will of course represent a serious expense.

Communications Media

All radio and television broadcasting in Romania is controlled by the government; the few interviews broadcast with Cardinal Todea or other spokespersons for the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church have been severely edited.

However, the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church does have a printing house in Cluj, shared with the Hungarian Roman Catholics in Romania, and a Romanian

Greek-Catholic newspaper appears on a monthly basis. There is a drastic need for books of the divine services and prayer-books for the laity as well as catechetical materials; so far it has not been possible to print these books in Romania.

Aid from the West

Despite the frequent allegations of massive aid coming from Catholic organisations in the West, in fact there has been precious little assistance from Catholics abroad, and virtually nothing from anyone else. The cause is not glamorous, and many parts of the world are calling out for help. In the current ecumenical climate many Roman Catholics seem to regard the Greek-Catholics as an embarrassment, and are therefore reluctant to become involved even through humanitarian assistance.

Ecumenical Relations

Surprisingly, in Romania itself the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church gets on well with the Reformed Church, and reasonably well with the Roman Catholic Church. Relations with the Romanian Orthodox Church are abysmal; the only conciliatory Orthodox leader is Metropolitan Nicolae Corneanu of Timișoara. On 19 June 1992 at a meeting in Vienna sponsored by the *Pro Oriente* foundation in Austria, Metropolitan Nicolae for the Romanian Orthodox Church and Bishop Vasile Hossu of Oradea Mare for the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church signed a 14-point protocol setting out the path for reconciliation. One watches with interest to see how effective this will prove to be. The text is attached as an appendix to this article.

In this context, one can understand, although not condone, the attitude of the Romanian Greek-Catholics to ecumenical relations with the Eastern Orthodox Church. In June 1993 the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church met at Balamand, Lebanon, and agreed a document on the difficult question of the Greek-Catholic Churches.¹⁰ In Ukraine, Cardinal Lubachiv's'ky (the leader of the largest Greek-Catholic Church) issued a letter recognising this statement and undertaking to implement its practical recommendations.¹¹ In Romania, however, Bishop Gutiu (auxiliary to the ailing Cardinal Todea) issued a letter to the pope in the name of all the Romanian Greek-Catholic bishops repudiating the Balamand statement and virtually all the ecumenical accords between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church.¹²

In Bucharest, many Orthodox come to venerate the graves of Cardinal Hossu and the other Romanian Greek-Catholic bishops who died in the prisons, and many Orthodox are attracted to the Greek-Catholic Church because it is perceived as not having been compromised with the communists. Cardinal Todea estimates that fully 60 per cent of the Orthodox parish priests in his territory are crypto-Catholics, awaiting the propitious moment to bring their parishes back to the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church.

Ethnic Tensions

The problem of the ethnic minorities remains a serious one. Relations between Hungary and Romania continue to be tense, and the position of ethnic Hungarians (including Greek-Catholics) in Romania is not easy. The position of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic villages in Romania is not complicated by state relations; Ukraine and Romania have no apparent outstanding difficulties. However, Ukrainian ecclesi-

astical ambitions are another matter: some Ukrainian Greek-Catholics wish to establish a separate jurisdiction in Romania. One hopes that this will not happen; it would do the Greek-Catholic Church very little good; but the Romanian government might actually favour such a development, so as to weaken the church further.

Future Prospects

The Romanian government obviously does not favour the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church; the immediate goal seems to be to restrict the revival of this church as much as possible, to keep the church confined to certain districts in Transylvania, and to discourage it in the long term. Nevertheless, the president does observe certain formal proprieties, such as sending Christmas greetings and the like to Cardinal Todea. The most important Romanian Greek-Catholic lay activist, Doina Cornea, is a supporter of King Michael and an ardent opponent of the current regime, on the grounds that the regime in power is simply Ceaușescu without Ceaușescu.

Romanian society as a whole has not yet experienced the catharsis which is required for the beginning of a national recovery from communism; instead, the general claim is that 'we knew nothing' of what was going on. The Romanian Greek-Catholic Church is often the involuntary focus of much resentment; by its continued existence and the assertion of its rights, it witnesses to the fundamental injustice of those decades.¹³ The present situation is likely to continue until Romanian society changes drastically.

Appendix

The Future Collaboration between Greek-Catholics and Orthodox in Romania Final Communiqué of the 65th Symposium of the Pro Oriente Foundation¹⁴

On 10 June 1992 the *Pro Oriente* Foundation held a symposium in Vienna, Austria, on the theme 'The future collaboration between Greek-Catholics and Orthodox in Romania.' The Foundation was created in 1964 by Cardinal König, Archbishop of Vienna, to contribute to the elimination of the misunderstandings accumulated during centuries between separated churches. Here is the text of the final resolutions of this meeting.

At the 65th symposium of the *Pro Oriente* Foundation, held in Vienna on 10 June 1992, the undersigned bishops from Romania and Austria, as well as the Foundation's representatives, gathered under the presidency of the Archbishop of Vienna Cardinal Hans Hermann Groer, have acknowledged with satisfaction the reports of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan Nicolae Corneanu of Banat, Archbishop of Timișoara, and the Romanian Greek-Catholic Bishop of Oradea Mare, Vasile Hossu, with regard to the ecumenical possibilities of both churches. They are very pleased about the spirit of brotherly understanding prevailing in Romania, which is underlying these reports.

Considering the current situation:

They welcome with joy the recognition of the Greek-Catholic Church, a recognition which, as a result of the revocation of the communist decree of 1 December 1948, has also been the result of the action of the authorities. They are very pleased about the authorisation restored to this church to act as a legal entity.

They are very pleased about the decision taken by the heads of the Orthodox churches, on the occasion of their meeting in Constantinople in March 1992, to con-

tinue the ecumenical dialogue between the sister churches, a decision in which His Beatitude Patriarch Teoctist who has been a protector of *Pro Oriente* since 1987 has shared to a very great extent.

They are very pleased about the declaration of the special Synod of the Catholic Bishops of Europe, held in November and December 1991, where with the participation of the Greek-Catholic Church of Romania the will has been expressed that the Eastern Catholic Churches be 'a constructive element that favours the ecumenical dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church'.

They acknowledge with satisfaction the restitution, in all dioceses, of buildings and churches to the Greek-Catholic Church by the Romanian Orthodox Church.¹⁵

They regret the lack of action on the part of the Romanian state, which has not yet started to restore properties to the Greek-Catholic Church (2,000 parishes, 1,800 churches, cemeteries, chapels and presbyteries, 11 monasteries, five episcopal residencies, three theological seminaries, 20 schools, six hospitals, four orphanages, three retreat houses). This should have been done after the revocation of the decree of 1 December 1948, in order to eliminate the consequences of that decree.

They regret the large-scale absence of direct, personal, friendly and Christian contacts between representatives of the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic Churches, at all levels of hierarchy, of clergy, theologians and lay people.

They recognise the positive role played by theologians of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox, and in the joint Commission.

They appreciate the friendly contacts between hierarchs of the Roman Catholic Church and the Romanian Orthodox Church, as, for example, the recent visits to His Beatitude Patriarch Teoctist in Bucharest of Cardinal Franz König, founder of *Pro Oriente*, in April 1992, of Cardinal Achille Silvestrini, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, in May 1992 and of Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, president of the Pontifical Council for the Unity of Christians, in June 1992.

They see a sign of hope in the visit of the hierarchs of the two Romanian churches to Cardinal Alexandru Todea, Metropolitan of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church, who is currently in the Wels hospital, Austria.

Having thoroughly studied the present possibilities, we want to assert our conviction that all difficulties can be overcome in the spirit of the Gospel. That is the reason why we want to work untiringly for peace and unity, in accordance with the wish expressed publicly by the heads of the Orthodox churches in Constantinople on 15 March 1992 and by the special Synod of the Catholic Bishops of Europe on 14 December 1991. We desire to encourage the pursuit of these ecumenical and irenic efforts.

Proposals for Reconciliation

In order to pursue our efforts in the spirit of Christ's commandment concerning the unity of His Church (John 17:21), and in constant obedience to the divine will, we make the following proposals:

- 1 Alongside the desired official dialogue between the two churches, we suggest the exchange of personal visits and the maintaining of contact by letter at the episcopal and parochial levels.
- 2 Concerning the fate of ecclesiastical buildings, it is desirable to consider the pastoral aspect. This should lead to a common concern for Catholics and Orthodox:

to place, in all the important cities, at least one building at the disposal of each parish for divine worship, and that without prejudice to the necessary juridical decisions.

- 3 [...] Reciprocal complaints, recriminations and accusations levelled from time to time should not be made public immediately, but should be communicated to the homologues of the other church, in order to solve them peacefully.
- 4 [...] If a problem found at the local or eparchial level is not resolved, an ecclesiastical arbitration commission with equal representation of both sides should be appointed at the provincial or national level in order to find a solution to the problem. The initiative for the creation of these commissions should be taken by the concerned hierarchs of both churches, in agreement with the other party.
- 5 [...] At all levels within each church persons should be appointed to be in charge of the theological dialogue and commissions should be created for ecumenical affairs. Their task would be to assimilate the results of the ecumenical dialogue at the international and regional levels and to apply them in the Romanian context.
- 6 [...] Renouncing all proselytism, the churches could work together on common plans for reevangelisation. Common reevangelisation activities seem important at parish, eparchy, regional and national levels. Because all Christians have the same mission, the aim of evangelisation cannot be conversion to another confession; instead it must be to render visible the common Christian testimony in a particular country. This is all the more important because of the challenges of indifference and atheism and the unacceptable activities of some new sects. The success of this evangelisation will be possible only if Christians continue to move forward on the way towards unity in a spirit of unlimited patience and love.
- 7 [...] A way towards future ecclesiastical unity could be a common action in favour of justice, peace and the safeguarding of creation. In this way, and through common works of charity, the world could receive a credible testimony of Christian solidarity.
- 8 [...] In order to render visible the unity that already exists, even if incomplete, between the sister churches, we suggest common prayers and ecumenical services, particularly during the world Week for Christian Unity or during Pentecost. Moreover, on particular occasions involving mixed families, such as weddings or funerals, ecumenical celebrations could be considered.
- 9 [...] We recommend the resumption and pursuit of bilateral ecumenical dialogue between the churches of friendly nations, as, for example, that between Romania and Austria, in order to take advantage of the greater freedom which now marks relations between states and nations. On this subject, the will of the Greek-Catholic Church to participate fully in ecumenical dialogue should be recognised with gratitude.
- 10 [...] We want to encourage the continuation of the work of the common joint Commission. On this subject, we think it is preferable at first not to study the problems which divide and which bear the weight of the past, but rather to examine those questions on which conciliation is possible and which aim towards the future. The positive results of the commission for dialogue should be made public in order to familiarise Christian people with the aims of ecumenism.
- 11 [...] Concerning the education of theologians and priests, we recommend that there be exchanges between the Orthodox and Catholic educational institutions in order to offer them the possibility of doing complementary studies on a regular basis in the institutions of the other confession. We also recommend that advan-

tage be taken of possibilities for professorial exchanges.

- 12 [...] In Austria, the awarding of scholarships to Romanian Orthodox and Greek-Catholic students, with the consent of the Ordinary, should be promoted to a greater extent.
- 13 [...] It is necessary to show understanding and charity with regard to the difficulties of the Greek-Catholic Church, considering that after 40 years of forced illegality this church has not yet been able to proceed to the full recovery of its dismantled structure.
- 14 [...] In order to promote brotherly dialogue, we ask the faithful of the different ethnic groups not to give themselves over to emotional reactions and nationalist litigation.

Hans Hermann Cardinal Groer
President of the Curatorium of *Pro Oriente*

Metropolitan Nicolae Corneanu of Banat,
Archbishop of Timișoara and Caransebeș

Franz Cardinal König
Protector of *Pro Oriente*

His Excellency Vasile Hossu
Greek-Catholic Bishop of Oradea Mare

Dr Rudolf Kirschläger
President of *Pro Oriente*

Alfred Stirnemann
Secretary General of *Pro Oriente*

Notes and References

- ¹ Some Arab Christian groups have a similar practice: they print service-books and prayers of particular importance in vernacular Arabic but with Old Syriac orthography, and term the combination *karshuni*.
- ² Unlike Roman Catholic priests, who must be celibate, Greek-Catholic priests may be married provided that they marry before ordination to the diaconate. In Eastern Europe a priestly tradition often arises in certain families.
- ³ Pius X, *Christifideles Graeci ritus*.
- ⁴ For the story of this controversial organising of a Hungarian Greek-Catholic diocese, see Cyrille Korolevskij, *Liturgie en langue vivante* (Paris, 1955), pp. 42–71.
- ⁵ I apologise for this cumbersome term. Ukrainians and Rusyns are the same people; ‘Rusyn’ is an older expression which some groups in Transcarpathia continue to use exclusively.
- ⁶ There are very few Eastern Orthodox in Hungary; the Moscow Patriarchate attempted to create a Hungarian Orthodox Church, but it has few members. The Hungarian Greek-Catholic diocese in Hungary has about 500,000 parishioners and is very active.
- ⁷ Soviet Ukraine restored legal rights to the Greek-Catholic Church on 1 December 1989. Ukraine became independent two years later.
- ⁸ As noted above, about half the Romanian Orthodox in Transylvania did not accept the union

and did not become Greek-Catholics, which indicates that there was at least some freedom of choice in the matter.

- ⁹ A recent report indicates that local officials are engaging Orthodox catechists to teach religion to the children of Greek-Catholic families.
- ¹⁰ The text of this *Balamand Statement* appears in *Eastern Churches Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1, winter 1993/4, pp. 17–25.
- ¹¹ See Cardinal Lubachivsky's letter to Cardinal Cassidy, *Eastern Churches Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1, winter 1993/4, pp. 29–35; and his letter 'On Christian Unity', *Eastern Churches Journal*, vol. 1, no. 2, summer 1994, pp. 7–47.
- ¹² 'Romanian Greek-Catholic Bishops on Balamand', *Eastern Churches Journal*, vol. 1, no. 2, summer 1994, pp. 49–52.
- ¹³ Intellectuals of different religious beliefs are increasingly coming to the conviction that the return of King Michael is an urgent necessity to enable Romanian society to come to terms with the recent past and rebuild the country.
- ¹⁴ Originally published in French in *La Documentation Catholique*, 18 October 1992, no. 2058, pp. 909–11.
- ¹⁵ This is in fact an assessment which is more optimistic than the evidence would seem to justify.