



DESMOS
INTERNATIONAL LINK
OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN SCOUTS
LE LIEN INTERNATIONAL
DES SCOUTS ORTHODOXES

4th DESMOS CONFERENCE Yasmine Hammamet, Tunisia 4 September 2005

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

According to the Statutes (Articles III, IV, V) of the DESMOS Constitution, the 4th DESMOS Conference was held on 4 September 2005 at the Medina Conference Center, in Yasmine Hammamet, Tunisia. The Conference was attended by 26 participants from 9 countries as well as by observers from the European Scout Committee, the World Scout Committee, the World Scout Bureau including the Secretary General Dr. Eduardo Missoni and members of National Scout Organisations – members of WOSM. The Conference was attended by His Eminence Alexios, Metropolitan of Carthage, on behalf of His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope & Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa. The Conference was also attended by the Consul General of the Hellenic Republic in Tunisia Mr. Antonios Papadopoulos, on behalf of H.E. the Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic in Tunisia. Members of the Hellenic Community of Tunis also attended the Conference.



1. DESMOS President, Yiannis Tzen, who was unable to come to Tunisia due to unforeseen professional engagements, sent the cordial message to the Conference participants and expressed his sincere wishes for a fruitful Conference. On behalf of DESMOS President, DESMOS Vice-President, Mr. Marko Petrovic, opened the Conference and asked His Eminence to lead meditation. Following meditation a minute of silence was observed.

2. DESMOS Vice-President, Mr. Marko Petrovic, expressed his thanks to all participants present, including DESMOS Committee Members and NSO representatives. He then called for the election of the Conference Chairman and Tellers.

3. Mr. Costas Tsolakidis (Greece), was elected Chairman and Messrs George Bahow (Israel) and Ivan Gribachev (Bulgaria) were the elected tellers. The elected Chairman proposed Mr. Theodors Zarkas (Cyprus), Mr. Marko Petrovic (Serbia-Montenegro) and himself to form the Resolutions Committee. The Chairman's proposal was then accepted by the Conference.

4. The elected Chairman expressed his thanks to the conference participants for his appointment as Chairman also expressed his appreciation to Metropolitan of Carthage, **Mgr Alexios** and the Consul of Hellenic Republic in Tunisia, **Mr. Antonios Papadopoulos** for their presence. He also welcomed the Vice-Chairman of the European Scout Region **Mr. Marios Christou** and expressed his thanks for the support of the European Scout Region to DESMOS. He then asked for the support of participants towards a productive conference. Mr. Tsolakidis ended his address with reading the Message of His All Holiness the Patriarch of Constantinople and New Rome and

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos the 1st on the occasion of the 4th DESMOS Conference (see Appendix 3). He then called the Consul General of the Hellenic Republic in Tunisia Mr. Antonios Papadopoulos to address the Conference, on behalf of the H.E. the Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic in Tunisia.

The need to revise the Conference Agenda, in order to adapt it to the time constraints placed by the 37th WSC Organisers was recognised by the Chairman, who then asked participants to approve a revised proposal. Participants then approved the Revised Agenda.



5. The Chairman then asked His Eminence the Metropolitan of Carthage Mgr Alexios to make His Keynote Presentation (see Appendix 4). After the conclusion of the Keynote Presentation, the Chairman expressed to His Eminence, on behalf of all present, the sincere thanks of the Conference for the insightful and motivating words of wisdom expressed.

6. The Chairman then called Mr. Marko Petrovic, DESMOS Vice-President, to address the Conference.

Marko in his address expressed his thanks to all present Committee Members and representatives of DESMOS for their work rendered to the causes of DESMOS, and his thanks to the European Scout Region for all the support and the Scouts of Greece for their assistance in preparing this conference. Marko pointed out difficult circumstances Desmos was facing in previous period, especially lack of financial means, indicating that significant results have nevertheless been achieved thanks to the personal efforts and enthusiasm of individuals committed to the idea of Desmos and thanks to the support of very few NSOs like the Scouts of Greece that recognized the importance of the Link helping its development in different ways.



An overview of the work and activities of DESMOS were then presented through a visual PowerPoint presentation. Marko stated that DESMOS despite many difficulties, is still here and 'alive'. DESMOS must move forward and must have planning of more activities for our Scouts and not only Committee meetings. We all have to make efforts in order to develop an action plan and promote DESMOS in our counties and in other countries in which there are Orthodox Scouts.

Marko pointed out that we also have to keep in mind the 2007 Centenary of Scouting is approaching and that Desmos must be present and visible at the biggest scout event since the founding of the Movement. This should be one of the issues the newly elected Committee should focus and work on in the forthcoming period. In addition, earlier in the same year we have to take part at the European Scout Conference that will be held in Slovenia.

Marko said that we are facing important events and activities without having resolved certain essential issues like, for instance, the Desmos Headquarters Office and Desmos web site and called for additional efforts in order to create better conditions for work of our Link.

7. The Chairman then called Mr. Christos Marneros, to report to the Conference in his capacity as Treasurer. Mr. Marneros said that he had no financial report to make to the Conference, considering the fact that DESMOS does not possess any financial assets and all activities undertaken so far are the result of support by the host organizations. He then urged DESMOS conference participants to commit to the financial strengthening of DESMOS.



8. The Chairman then called Mr. Christos Papageorgiou, DESMOS Secretary General, to address the Conference.

The Secretary General focused his address on the following topics:

PUBLICATIONS OF DESMOS

- DESMOS must have more publications regarding the cause of DESMOS.
- A Book for the scout leader is 'under contraction' and will be ready in 2006.
- A web page (www) must be published as soon as possible (was decided in Sofia); Romania and Serbia - Montenegro and Palestine are working for this and will be ready by the end of this year.



COUNTRY CONTACT PERSON

We need a person (representative) from each country member as a contact person on which DESMOS can inform every NSO.

PARTICIPATION OF DESMOS IN INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

- 1st Inter-religious Scout Symposium, Valencia, Spain, 2003
- 1st seminar on the Spiritual Dimension of Scouting, Cyprus 2003
- DESMOS workshop in EuroJam, UK 2005
- DESMOS conference, Tunis 2005
- Annual DESMOS Executive Committee meetings

9. DESMOS FUTURE EVENTS. After discussion, the participants agreed that DESMOS must participate at the following future events:

- 2nd Inter-religious Scout Symposium April – May 2006
- Celebration of the 'Thinking Day' along the borders between all country-members of DESMOS
- Rover Way 2006 presence
- 2007 World Scout Jamboree presence
- Symposium – Seminar in Serbia
- International Camp for Orthodox scouts (possibly in Ohrid)

Report of the Secretary General on Desmos participation at EuroJam

Dear friends,

I would like hereby to inform you on DESMOS' presence at the 'EUROJAM', which was held in Essex, UK in last August.

In collaboration with Eurojam's organizing committee, representatives of various religions and dogmas set up work-shops in the zone of "Faith and Belief" in an attempt to emphasize the spiritual dimension of scouting in a peaceful, tolerant and open-minded manner. The representatives of all religions and dogmas worked together in a perfect way and, overall, the impact of the workshops was considerably positive.

The title of Desmos' workshop was "Art and Orthodoxy". The conception was based in our conviction that Orthodox Art (Painting and Architecture) could be a suitable way to welcome as well as inform children on the particularities of Orthodox faith.

To be precise, we had prepared the following two alternative activities for the children-visitors of our workshop:

- 1) Eurojam officials kindly provided us with 700 plates of wood (13 x 16 cm) on which children would outline, draw and finally color an Orthodox icon (either Virgin Mary, or St George, or a Holy Cross).
- 2) Having printed in an A4 size the picture of Holy Mary, St George, the temple of Holy Wisdom and the interior of the Holy Grave, we invited children to add to the drawings any colors they pleased.

Many children visited our workshop. We can safely estimate that they were several hundreds for both the 700 plates of wood as well as the 250 printed drawings run out. Children took with them whatever they had painted or drew as a souvenir.

We should here note that we owe much to the organizing committee -and especially to Jonathan How- for the wonderful infrastructure, which was more than vital for the success of all the workshops. Jonathan How restlessly, vividly and with an inspiring vision helped us to fulfill our aim in providing the conditions for the children to appreciate and internalize the spiritual dimension of Scouting.

Suggestions on how to improve the quality of the Jamboree workshops will be gladly provided if asked.

I would finally like to state that since that was the first time DESMOS took up such an activity, I am more than confident that with the knowledge gained we will be even more prepared and effective for a similar activity in the future.

The second large-scale activity that we assumed was the organization of the Orthodox Mass for those present in the Eurojam. We had contacted in advance the Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, Gregory. The Archbishop heartily and generously accepted our invitation of him leading the Mass himself. He came to Hyland Park escorted by an Archimandrite and two deacons.

The Mass was immensely successful. It was held in the Cinema, with almost 400 scouts from all over Europe (both orthodox and not orthodox) being present. It was performed in 5 languages (English, Greek, Serb, Russian and Romanian). After the end of the Mass, the Archbishop and his escorts visited DESMOS' workshop.

I would like to end my briefing stressing how thankful we are to the Leaders of the Missions of Greece, Cyprus, Serbia and Montenegro, Romania and Moldova for having helped us in the Organization of the Mass, to the Eurojam's organizing committee for not only having substantially helped us in the setting up of the workshop but also for having considerably honoured the Archbishop during his entire stay in the field of the Eurojam.

Dear friends, I believe that with this briefing, along with the attached pictures and some selected reports of the participants you can get a clear picture of DESMOS' presence in the Eurojam. I will gladly be of service in case more information or clarifications are needed.

You will also soon receive the Report of DESMOS' 4th World Conference.

Secretary General's Notice concerning the THINKING DAY

Dear Friends in Scouting,

I communicate with you joining the common will to carry out the ideal of universal brotherhood and the breaking up of the dividing lines that overshadow humanity today.

Scouting, the biggest youth movement in the world, will shortly celebrate its 100th anniversary; that is to say 100 years of offering towards children and the society. World scouting had been shaped from the beginning as a well-defined way of life, based on liberty, justice and self-realization. These ideals have guided its steps throughout this period and today's scouting has already proved to be much more than a reminder of a rich yet obsolete past. The stance of the world scouting movement today is immensely promising. Scouting is deservedly among the leading social forces that maintain the aim of unconditional global peace vivid today and prepare a better future to come.

In an attempt to overthrow the religious points of cultural conflict that do so much to disturb the road towards peace, we suggest that all state-members of Desmos (and not only those of DESMOS) *celebrate the Day of Thinking in as many border points as possible together with their neighbors*. On the 22nd of February, work hard to build, even momentarily, world peace, with love springing from the sincerest core of your Orthodox Christian Faith. Work together to fulfill that day the Law and Promise which all of us undertook once.

You could organize common cultural, religious and artistic activities with your neighbors and make sure that during the entire day you actively engage in a spirit of solidarity and understanding. In collaboration with your neighbor states, carefully prepare that day so that youths significantly remember it as a day of Peace and Understanding. Thus we would do much to strengthen our steps towards a world of tolerance.

A special badge will be designed for the occasion, which all participants can proudly attach to their uniforms. The publicity given in this activity will add much to the warm reception of the scouting organizations from local societies.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ROLE OF THE FAITH ORGANISATIONS AND GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THE WORLD INTER-RELIGIOUS FORUM

The various faith links are working with the approval of the World Scout Bureau. They are autonomous bodies and they are acting as one more tool for the Scout Leader to do a better program on his Scout troop on the subject of the spiritual dimension in Scouting and make practice the principle of the Scout Law 'duty to God'.

All the religious bodies have to be very careful always in one main and very important issue. World scouting is working on the basis of freedom and democracy. The world youth has nothing to do with proselytism and fanaticism. World harmony through youth is our main interest. The diversity of religious beliefs has nothing to do with the essence of scouting itself.

Religious bodies can never replace the national organizations, nor are they ever involved in the internal affairs and in administration issues. They can propose activities in line of course with the Scout program and spirit, but it is only up to the national scout organizations to accept them and make them part of their activities.

Desmos has always strongly believed in freedom and democracy, which is coming from our deep knowledge of the Orthodox Christian faith and we try all these years to provide the dialogue between the members of the World Inter-religious Forum which is working during the last years, under the protection of the World Scout Bureau.

For the moment, we do not have the capacity to finance youth and common activities between Desmos' country members. This is our aim and vision for the near future.

Another work that the religious bodies are obliged to do is to co-ordinate the World activities concerning the spiritual dimension, as well as faith activities in World-Events. Thus, through the Inter-religious Forum, to which we are members, having consultative status with WOSM, we have organized 1) a workshop in the EuroJam for Art and Orthodoxy, 2) we are members of the

organizing committee for the 2nd inter-religious symposium in Taiwan, and 3) we have started the preparations for having a workshop in the Centenary Jamboree of 2007.

Desmos is now passing slowly to the next generation, with young people and fresh ideas. The generation that founded Desmos in the beginning of 1997, is now giving way to a new committee. We thank all the past members of the committees for the perfect work they have done during these years, that has granted Desmos a worldwide recognized status.

Our vision and aim for the future through the spiritual dimension is a developing, open and respectful spirituality. It is one of the fundamental principles of the Scout movement that spirituality and faith beliefs should bring people together in fellowship, instead of separating them and bring them into conflict. Since modern societies are those which drive on communication and exchange and comprise a multiplicity of cultures and faiths, it is essential to prepare young people for this challenging diversity.

The World Scout Bureau is going to prepare a new publication for the spiritual dimension. They are going to send us the draft at the beginning of 2006. They are waiting for our comments and we hope to have it by the end of 2006. For this purpose all the members of Desmos and the participants of this conference will receive this draft. We are waiting for your proposals. We will attempt to synthesize all of your ideas and then send them to the WOSM.

Thank you for your attention.

10. DESMOS COMMITTEE ELECTIONS. The Chairman announced that there is a need to elect four new members to the DESMOS Executive Committee, as four existing members have reached the end of their three-year term. The proposals nomination for new candidatures duly sent by Member NSOs by the deadline of August 15 were the following:

- Mr. Abboud George, Orthodox Scouts Association of Lebanon,
- Golubovits Tanja, Scouts Association of Republica Srpska,
- Parageorgiou Christos, Scouts of Greece, and
- Petrovits Zoran, Scouts Association of Serbia and Montenegro.

The Chairman then read the list of countries with power to vote:

1. Lebanon
2. Serbia – Montenegro
3. Bulgaria
4. Poland
5. FYROM
6. Israel
7. Cyprus
8. Greece
9. Palestine (by proxy)
10. Romania (by proxy)
11. Republic Srpska (by proxy)

The Chairman then called the election process open and the member countries voted. After proper counting of the votes, the four people that were elected to serve on a three-year term the DESMOS Committee are:

- **Mr. Abboud George**, Orthodox Scouts Association of Lebanon,
- **Ms. Golubovic Tanja**, Scout Association of Republic Srpska,
- **Mr. Parageorgiou Christos**, Scouts of Greece, and
- **Mr. Petrovic Zoran**, Scout Association of Serbia and Montenegro.

The Chairman and the Conference congratulated the new members and wished them all success in their work. He also expressed on behalf of the Conference their sincere thanks to the outgoing members for their work that has brought DESMOS to its present standing.

11. NEW MEMBER NSO to DESMOS. After the election, Mr. Sampo Lappalainen, International Commissioner of the Scouts & Guides of Finland, on behalf of his NSO announced their intent to become members of DESMOS.

Participants unanimously accepted the Scouts & Guides of Finland as official members of DESMOS.



12. RESOLUTIONS OF COURTESY.

The Chairman then read the following resolutions of courtesy for approval.

“The participants of the 4th Conference of DESMOS:

1. Express their deep gratitude to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos for his spiritual leadership manifested in various occasions since the inauguration of the Link, for his Blessings and his continual support to the cause of DESMOS.
2. Express their gratitude to his Beatitude the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa Theodoros II for his Blessings and wishes for the success of the conference, for his active interest on the progress of DESMOS, manifested with the presence and blessings of his Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Carthage.
3. Express their thanks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its active interest and presence at the conference through the Embassy of the Hellenic Republic in Tunisia, and especially to its Consul, Mr. Antonios Papadopulos for his presence.
4. Express their thanks to the World Scouts Committee for the guidance and support.
5. Express their gratitude to the host Committee of the 37th World Scouts Conference for the untiring support for the success of this conference.
6. Express their sincere thanks to Soma Hellinon Proskopon (Scouts of Greece) for its material and overall support and all other National Scouts Organizations for their fine interest and support for the progress of DESMOS.”

The Conference unanimously approved the aforementioned resolutions.

13. The Chairman then gave the floor to Mr. Christos Papageorgiou, outgoing DESMOS Secretary General, and Mr. Marko Petrovic, outgoing DESMOS Vice-President, to express their appreciation to all DESMOS NSOs and Conference Participants for their support and work, and presented each participant by a commemorative gift.

14. The Chairman, **Costas Tsolakidis**, then adjourned the Conference, after expressing his thanks to all Participants for their active participation.



09:00 - 09:30 REGISTRATION

09:30 - 10:00 PREPARATORY SESSION

- Meditation, Minute of Silence
- Announcements
- Appointment of Tellers
- Election of Conference Chairman, Vice Chairman, Tellers, Resolution Committee
- Approval of Revised Agenda

10:00 - 10:30 PLENARY SESSION

“Breaking Down Barriers” Keynote Presentation by H.E. Metropolitan Alexios of Carthage

10:30 - 11:00

- Address by DESMOS Vice-President Mr. Marko Petrovic
- Report of the Treasurer
- Report of the Secretary General

11:00 – 11:30 COFFEE BREAK

11:30 – 12:00 PLENARY SESSION
“DESMOS Future Events”

12:00 – 13:00 DESMOS COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

13:00 Welcoming of New Members

13:15 CLOSING

Marko Petrovic , DESMOS Vice-President (ztpbginv@eunet.yu)	Serbia-Montenegro
Christos Papageorgiou , DESMOS Secretary General (cp_desmos@yahoo.com)	Greece
Maher Sahlieh , DESMOS Treasurer (maher@pal-arc.org)	Palestine
George Bahow , DESMOS Committee member (george_bahow@yahoo.com)	Israel
Christos Marneros , DESMOS Committee member (Fax: +357 24621661, cyprus.scouts@cytanet.com.cy)	Cyprus
Ivan Gribachev , DESMOS member country representative (ivangribachev@yahoo.com)	Bulgaria
Naaman Shahada , DESMOS member country representative (naaman46@netvision.net.il)	Israel
Marios Christou , European Scout Region Vice-president (mchristou@avacom.net)	ESR
George Tsikkos , (cyprus.scouts@cytanet.com.cy)	Cyprus
Theodoros Zarkas , (zarkas@spidernet.com.cy)	Cyprus
Nicoletta Kethreotou , (nickythii@yahoo.co.uk)	Cyprus
Elena El Haper , (elenascouts@yahoo.com)	Cyprus
Nikola Zdraveski , (nikola@scout.org.mk)	FYROM
Panagiotis Katrougalos , (pkatrougalos@yahoo.com)	Greece
Christos Lygeros , (chlygeros@aipha.gr)	Greece
Constantinos Sakalaktioglou , (ksakalaktioglou@yahoo.com)	Greece
Constantinos Tsolakidis , (tsolakidis@hotmail.com)	Greece
Dimitrios Chitzios , (chitzios@yahoo.com)	Greece
Avgi Martin , (agnimartin@hotmail.com)	Greece
Rania Ramatu Qussasi ,	Greece
Maciej Suska , (czarna13@alte.pl)	Poland
Aida Bahaw ,	Israel
Zipora Iskandar ,	Israel
Sampo Lappalainen , (sampo.lappalainen@sp.partio.fi)	Finland
Jaakko Weuro , (weuro@iki.fi)	Finland
Georges Abboud , (abboudgeorges11@hotmail.com)	Lebanon



The participants of the 4th DESMOS Conference also had the pleasure to welcome WOSM Secretary General, Dr Eduardo Missoni, as well as candidates for the World Scout Committee: Thérèse Bermingham (later on elected WSC Vice-president), Gualtiero Zanolini (later on elected WSC member), Georges El Ghorayeb (later on elected WSC member), and Alexandros Modiano.

Appendix 3: **Message of His All Holiness the Patriarch of Constantinople and New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos the 1st on the occasion of the 4th DESMOS Conference (English translation)**



“ To all those who participate at the Tunisia World Conference of Orthodox Scouts Children of God praying for grace blessing and mercy by our God.

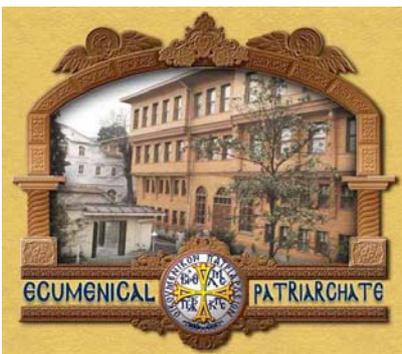
Already conferring in Tunis, close to the ancient and infamous city of Carthage may you be inspired by the heritage of the brave martyrs and the personalities of our churches in north Africa when the lands of paradise were enriched.

Our orthodox faith as you know is not application of typical and strict regulation, but in the country of apocalypse of the supralogical love, of self-love of our lord Jesus Christ, who being God, became human in order to cultivate humans approach God , as Athanasios the great wrote.



Our Lord has revealed to us the fullness of the tripartite God, which stands in eternal conference in love for humans catering to the creation. Likewise you all present in conference are imitating the fullness of eternal conference in order to exchange experiences and views and reunite though the bond of the holy spirits enriching the scouting dimension.

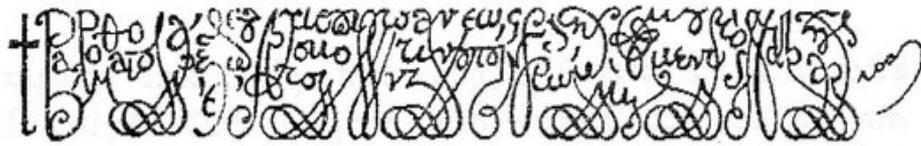
Through the Orthodox Humanism of Mother Church, the Church that has been revealed by the self-crucifixion of our incarnate Lord



From the Seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, we give you warmest Patriarchal Blessing, wishing full success to your work and progress in God in aspects of your work, inspired by the spirit of the Holy Church of Christ.

My beloved Children in God, may the grace of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you.”

*Bartholomeos the 1st
Patriarch of Constantinople and new Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarch*



Τοῖς μετέχουσι τοῦ ἐν Τύνιδι Παγκοσμίου Συνεδρίου τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Προσκόπων, τέκνοις ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀγαπητοῖς τῆς ἡμῶν Μετριότητος, χάριν, εὐλογίαν καί ἔλεος παρά τοῦ ἐν Τριάδι Θεοῦ ἡμῶν.

Λαβόντες ὡς κλῆρον πατρικόν τήν ἐν Χριστῷ θείαν καί σωτηριώδη Ἀποκάλυψιν, τέκνα ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀγαπητά, συνήθως δέν ἐκτιμῶμεν τόν θησαυρόν τοῦτον τῆς Πίστewς, τόν ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν ἐμπιστευθέντα ἡμῖν καί διά τῶν ποταμῶν τῶν μαρτυρικῶν αἱμάτων θεμελιωθέντα.

Ἦδη ὑμεῖς συνεδριάζοντες ἐν Τύνιδι, πλησίον τῆς ἀρχαίας πόλεως καί περιφήμου Καρθαγένης, δέον ὅπως, πρός ταῖς ἄλλαις σπουδαίαις εἰσηγήσεσιν, ἀναθεωρήσητε καί τήν ἐκβασιν τῆς ἀναστροφῆς τῶν ἐκεῖσε γενναιοψύχων Μαρτύρων καί τῶν ἄλλων μορφῶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, διά τῶν ὁποίων ἡγιάσθη ὁ τόπος ἐκεῖνος τῆς Βορείου Ἀφρικῆς καί ἐπλουτίσθησαν τά δώματα τοῦ Παραδείσου διά πλήθους σεσωσμένων ἀδελφῶν μας.

Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος ἡμῶν Πίστις, ὡς γνωρίζετε, δέν εἶναι ἐφαρμογή τυπικῶν καί σκληρῶν διατάξεων, ἀλλά ἀποκάλυψις τῆς κενωτικῆς καί ὑπερλόγου ἀγάπης τῆς Αὐτοαγάπης, τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ Ὅποιος "Θεός ὢν ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο, ἵνα τόν ἄνθρωπον Θεόν ἀπεργάσῃται", κατά τόν Μέγαν Ἀθανάσιον.

Οὗτος μᾶς ἀπεκάλυψε τήν πληρότητα τῆς Τριαδικῆς Θεότητος, ἣτις εὐρίσκεται εἰς αἰώνιον συνεδρίαν πλησμονῆς ἀγάπης καί φιλανθρώπως προνοεῖ ὑπέρ τῆς Δημιουργίας. Ὅθεν, καί ὑμεῖς πάντες πανταχόθεν συνελθόντες ἐν Τύνιδι, ὡς μέλη τοῦ "ΔΕΣΜΟΥ" τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Προσκόπων, παριστάνετε ἐν σμικρογραφίᾳ τήν Ἀγιοτριαδικήν συνεδρίαν, διό καί ἐν πνεύματι φιλαδέλφου ἀγάπης εἶναι

εὐκαιρία νά ανταλλάξῃτε ἐμπειρίας καί γνώμας καί νά συνδεθῆτε ἔτι πλέον διά δεσμῶν τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος, ἀρδεύοντες τόν προσκοπικόν θεσμόν διά τοῦ Ὁρθοδόξου ἀνθρωπισμοῦ τῆς Μητρὸς Ἐκκλησίας, τοῦ ἄκρως φανερωθέντος διά τῆς αὐτοθυσίας τοῦ Ἐσταυρωμένου καί Ἀναστάντος Κυρίου.

Ἐκ τῆς ἑδρας τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου καταστέφομεν πάντας διά τῶν ἐνθέρμων Πατριαρχικῶν εὐλογιῶν, εὐχόμενοι πλουσιόκαρπον ἀμητόν τῶν ἐργασιῶν ὑμῶν καί ἐν Θεῷ πρόοδον ἐν πάσαις τῶν ἐκφάνσεσι τοῦ βίου, κατὰ τό πνεῦμα τῆς Ἁγίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ Μεγάλῃς Ἐκκλησίας.

Ἡ δέ Χάρις τοῦ Πατρὸς καί τοῦ Υἱοῦ καί τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος εἴη μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν, τέκνα ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀγαπητά καί περιπόθητα.

Ἐκ τῆς ἑδρας
τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ
Πατριαρχείου

β' Αὐγούστου 1917
Διάκου αἰφ' Θεὸν εὐχόμενος



Breaking down barriers...

Dear fellow guests at this gathering,

Before I begin to share my thoughts with you, who have received me here with such love, on the topic that forms the subject of this conference, it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the beautiful, or as its people say in their tongue, the green and beloved land of Unisia. This is the seat of the historic and long-established Holy Metropolis of Carthage of Northern Africa, which also has spiritual jurisdiction over the Orthodox faithful of Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania.

All of the countries in N. Africa are almost entirely Muslim. This means that the Missionary Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa here does not participate in Missionary work, i.e. preaching and Evangelism. It continues, however, with its mission, which is to have a continuing presence among the Greek and Slavic-speaking diaspora who are its flock, and to help preserve our traditions and monuments here.

It brings me great pleasure that you, young people with wide open horizons and ideals, at such a difficult period, are attempting to create a common identity, to share the same thoughts, to find common goals and establish areas of contact. As Christian pathfinders, you are constantly taking wonderful, bold unique steps. And, as I shall attempt to show you, you also have a uniquely inspirational incentive: Christ.

You have elected to hold your conference in a beautiful and peaceful Arab land, where co-existence and mutual respect among the different religious communities are taken for granted. If only other communities could all follow the example of Tunisia.

Dear fellow guests,

As I tried to find the right approach to my subject, I found myself constantly coming back to the same point.

And so I began to build up a plan in my mind about how I would not make a religious speech as the local spiritual father-bishop of the Orthodox Community. I would instead make a speech, which would be like a drop of dew for your souls, one which would inspire you to think and offer your thoughts strength.

I looked around me, right and left, in front and behind, up to the heavens and down again. And what did I see? That I find myself and offer my services within a genuinely spiritual place, a place which brings down barriers and overcomes obstacles, uniting all men without discrimination. It is a spiritual lighthouse, named Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa. It is the Church, which makes the vision of Asceticism of love into a reality.

Now of course, you may well say to me that that is, after all, the task of the Church generally, wherever it may stand. Of course it is. But here we have certain particular characteristics, which give the Patriarchate its special mature. Its multitude of colours and languages. Here in the African continent, the vision of the sanctity of Man becomes real, a little darker or black and with a wealth of African languages and dialects.

Breaking down barriers means:

1. That I have a powerful, unique model which leads me to pursue this course in life
2. That I understand well what I have within my mind and my heart, i.e. that I am sure that I believe and know well what it is I believe.
3. There is no room for doubts. I will come across doubts within myself, but I shall overcome them, and I shall build up my defences, defences which are protection for life.
4. Finally, I shall move ahead and carry out in practice everything I believe in. my beliefs about life will become my way of life, and my whole being will be infused with the ecumenical spirit, the spirit of unity, concord and love.

And this is how we break down barriers, how we reach our target.

Let us look one by one at each of the steps that lead us to the peak of Christian unity of Earth, building within ourselves a precise and invaluable vision of Ecumenicalism as one of the teachings of the Lord, as an idea which gives succour to and nourishes the consciences of the spiritually well members of His Church.

- **IN CHRIST I HAVE A POWERFUL, UNIQUE MODEL**

I am a person, but so is Christ. Thus I understand that I must look for a personal meeting, person to another. With Jesus Christ. I develop within myself a type of personal relationship with the historically strong personality that is our Lord. I come to understand that within this personal relationship I acquire knowledge about God.

- **I AM CERTAIN THAT I TRULY BELIEVE AND KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IT IS I BELIEVE**

As someone on an ongoing quest, I fulfil my knowledge of God and know well by experience our dogmas, principles and traditions. That allows a true picture of God to build itself up in my mind, one that is known as far as His actions are concerned, but unknown as far as His essence is concerned. Thus, understanding well what it is I believe, I can also be certain that I do believe. And vice-versa. I am certain that I believe because I understand well what my faith is.

- **I COME TO AND OVERCOME THE STAGES OF DOUBT AND DEFEND MYSELF NOBLY IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD MY FAITH.**

As I have embedded firmly within me the principles of the teachings of Jesus Christ and I have satisfied the real prerequisites for a personal encounter with Him, I defend myself with patience, tolerance and love in the face of anyone who attacks my faith. I maintain my faith intact and solid.

Wasn't it Peter (one of the most important personalities in the establishment of the Church) who also experienced denial (during the incident when thrice he denied knowledge of his teacher "before the cock crows") and disbelief during the incident when the Lord walked on the water but he himself sank the moment he doubted the power of faith while later the storm abated by the Grace of God and His Blessing?

- **AND WHERE DOES ALL THIS GET ME? IT BRINGS ME TO LOVE IN PRACTICAL AND ASCETIC TERMS**

I fill my heart and the hearts of others with unadulterated love. The old Missionary, Gabriella, said, "It does not matter where you are going, or how you are going there. What matters is how much and what love you give, without distinction, to all around you. Only that shows true love..."

When breaking down barriers and obstacles I pay no attention to skin colour or race, nor to language or any other characteristic. I notice only the human soul, pain, poverty, addiction and sin; all of these summon me to offer help, shelter, to forgive, to soothe, to teach, to console and to embrace.

That is what you too are trying to do. It is what both I and everyone else is trying to do.

Realise it. Feel the ecstasy and remain indifferent to what the world thinks.

Chastely and truly we seek and find the Lord, even as others mock us. We simply need to avoid becoming trapped in the ruinous illusion that we are complete and self-sufficient.

Brothers, (I have been opening up my soul and mind to you; that is why I call you my brothers), with just a few thoughts I have tried to show you how I, personally, break down the barriers in the depths of my conscience and overcome obstacles in the name of the ecumenical idea of worldwide love, peace and solidarity. And that is why I want to end my worthless talk with its inconsequential and minimal content with a small dialogue which I once had with a friend.

Friend: How are you, how are you doing?

Metropolitan: Sin. And I am trying to help others, so that perhaps God might take pity on me.

Friend: You, in the Church. You have that opportunity. So many of our Christian brothers are suffering. Institutions, the poor....

Metropolitan: Yes, but I am in a land with a different religion. In my flock I do not have many who belong to the same denomination as I do or share the same religion...

Friend: All the better. Take peace in that and relax. You don't have any responsibilities.

Metropolitan:.....

I looked and fell silent.

The very next day I felt as if I had solved the issue of the dialogue, because I began the procedure of distributing thirty tonnes of medical supplies to Muslim earthquake victims in Algeria.

Thank you. May God bless you all.

YOUTH AT THE 4TH DESMOS CONFERENCE

