

I am writing in regards to the article titled "Interview with Bishop Nikiphoros of Constantine" by Frank Schaeffer in the Volume 4, 1994 edition of your magazine. In general, the article was very good. However, the reputations of both the Bishop and your magazine were severely tarnished by the discussion about the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Diodoros. The discussion in your magazine reminded me more of an article to be found in the *National Enquirer* than what should be found in a Christian magazine. The opinions expressed by the Bishop were never substantiated, but yet they were printed by your magazine anyway. Have you not heard of the Ninth Commandment, or has your heart become more journalist than Christian? In the explanation to the Ninth Commandment by Metropolitan Philaret in the "Catechism of the Orthodox Church," it states:

What is forbidden by the ninth commandment?... False witness out of court, when men slander anyone behind his back, or blame him to his face unjustly... But is it allowable to censure others when they are to blame? No: the Gospel does not allow us to judge even of the real vices or faults of our neighbors, unless we are called by any special office to do so, for their punishment or amendment.

So, in your magazine, you allow a Bishop to bring charges against a Patriarch that have not been substantiated by any investigation or synodical council. You then repeat this slander and distribute it to various churches in this country. While the Bishop may have a call, Patriarchs are to be judged by their synods, not by disgruntled individuals. You, as journalists, have no call by God to spread gossip and rumor. I would suggest that if you wish for your publication to continue to be blessed by God, that you stick to publishing only the truth, and even then only with the spirit of love and not rumormonging.

It is not my intent to judge you, but only to bring to your attention an apparent transgression of Christian love toward one another, and respect shown to their leaders. If I am wrong, forgive me. If you have wronged the Patriarch, I am sure that he would forgive you, and I know that Christ will.

In His service,
Kenneth S. Dowdy
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