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This newspaper welcomes
responsible and informed articles
expressing divergent viewpoints

RESOLUTION

The ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN LAITY, a seven-year old lay reform movement of Orthodox Christians in the United States, assembled at its quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors in St. Petersburg, Florida, January 27-29, 1995, unanimously adopted the following RESOLUTION concerning the ancient and venerable GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM.

WHEREAS, The Orthodox Christian Laity (OCL), in its recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land to venerate and worship at the Holy Shrines in October, 1994, witnessed first-hand the deplorable state of affairs concerning the physical conditions of these Orthodox Holy Places due to the lack of basic upkeep and proper maintenance; and

WHEREAS, OCL has learned that this state of affairs has been generated, in part, by the absence of effective managerial and fiscal policies on the part of the See of Jerusalem which has resulted in serious concerns being raised by the native Orthodox Faithful in the Holy Land as well as among members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre - official Greek Orthodox custodians of the Holy Places, who fear that their Orthodox patrimony is being eroded; and

WHEREAS, the indigenous Arab Orthodox Christians, an important component of the Faithful of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, have become alienated over the alleged discrimination concerning equity and governance; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Nikiphoros, a former member of the Holy Synod and articulate spokesman, has objected to this state of affairs and has attempted through persuasion and exhortation to convince the Holy Synod to bring about fiscal and managerial reform for the restoration and preservation of the Holy Shrines and a more prudent operation of the Patriarchate, resulting in his excommunication by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem on October 31, 1994;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. OCL decries the deplorable conditions in which the Holy Shrines are in and recommends that the Patriarchate of Jerusalem take all necessary and appropriate steps possible for the restoration and maintenance of the Holy Places so that they may be preserved for posterity, a task, which the Patriarchate, up until the recent present, has performed well through the centuries in spite of enormous obstacles and difficulties; and

2. OCL regrets the reputedly lack of fiscal and managerial responsibility that appears to prevail at the Patriarchate and urges that appropriate and forthright steps be taken to provide for fiscal accountability and professional management, including the publication of an annual budget and audit; and

3. OCL laments the alienation that appears to exist among the native Orthodox Faithful over the issues that concern them including the sale and long-term lease of patriarchal property and the questions of equity and governance and urges the Patriarchal See to take the necessary action to allay the fears of the Orthodox pleroma in the Holy Land; and

4. OCL beseeches His Beatitude, Patriarch Diodoros, to reconsider the excommunication of Bishop Nikiphoros and extend clemency for his reinstatement in the Holy Brotherhood in the spirit of Orthodox tradition and forgiveness.
