



Interview in the Georgian Church Newspaper *Lomisi*

Tbilisi, Georgia

August 15, 2014 (Old Style), Dormition of the Theotokos

† Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle

1) Question: First of all, we express our best wishes to you on your elevation to the position of Metropolitan.

Answer: Thank you for your kind wishes for my new ecclesiastical ministry as Metropolitan, which was assigned to me by our Holy Synod, of the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece, under His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos.

More specifically, following the Union of Old Calendarist Orthodox in Resistance with the Church of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece, under Archbishop Kallinikos, which came to fruition on the basis of a Common Ecclesiological Statement, I have been entrusted with the pastoral supervision of the Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle, near Athens, Greece.

This ministry is very onerous, since the Metropolis needs to be organized at all levels, with a focus on our parishes and monasteries.

At the same time, our Holy Synod has appointed me *Locum Tenens* of two new dioceses: (a) Stockholm, Sweden and (b) Gldani, Tbilisi, Georgia.

2) Question: What do you think is in store for Georgia?

Answer: We Greeks, who are of the same Faith, regarded the blessed land of Georgia (Iberia) as the paragon of an Orthodox country, in which

the people's way of life was steeped in ecclesiastical piety, as this has been lived and handed down by the multitude of Georgian Saints.

Our visit this year, in August of 2014, was a source of distress to us, because we found that the Western way of life is constantly gaining ground and debasing Church and social life.

If this phenomenon continues, then Georgia will gradually lose its ecclesiastical, spiritual, and cultural identity, something which we, moreover, are experiencing also in our homeland of Greece, as indeed are other Orthodox countries.

The gratifying and hopeful thing is that in Georgia this loss is occurring at a slower rate, while at the same time there exist “pockets of resistance,” which need to be vigilant in maintaining an Orthodox Georgian witness: a witness of Truth, Life, and Hope.

3) Question: What impression remains with you from your visit?

Answer: Our impressions, completely off the cuff, are that Georgia, although it possesses an inestimable wealth of spiritual and cultural tradition, is not responding to the challenges of history to the extent that it should.

The people of Georgia, an ancient country that is at the same time both poor and wealthy, convey the feeling that they do not understand their responsibility in the face of contemporary developments, that they are looking more towards the West as a pattern for their way of life.

We do not detect a harmonious blend of past and present, as this is expressed by means of architecture, styles of clothing, advertisements, rôle models, and concern for the environment, and in general there is a sense that the future will be detached from its roots.

To be sure, we have an abiding hope that Orthodox Georgian civilization will be embodied in “islets” of Orthodox Christians who uphold an authentic Orthodox ethos and remain steadfast in the Tradition of the Fathers.

4) Question: Do you have any other thoughts?

Answer: Our thoughts dwell on the expectation that Georgia will have the capacity to rally its forces and resist Westernization.

It grieves us to see in blessed Georgia a decline of what has always amazed and inspired us: • Orthodoxy and *Orthopraxis*, as these emanate from our Holy Tradition; warm interpersonal relations on the basis of Evangelical Tradition; the avoidance of religiosity and ritualism and the cultivation of a life of spiritual renewal in accordance with the Gospel, through the Holy Mysteries, and centered on deifying compassion; a freely chosen ascetical ethos and poverty in Christ, always with the prospect of an “exodus” from ourselves and from self-love, with a view to “encountering” God through our brothers and sisters.

