

Religious freedom crisis escalates Turkish Supreme Court criminalizes “ecumenical”

The Supreme Court of Turkey issued an ominous decision June 26 that reaffirmed state-sponsored religious persecution and further threatened to permanently exile the Ecumenical Patriarchate from its birthplace.

The case involved a Turkish Orthodox priest of Bulgarian origin who charged that the Holy Synod infringed freedom of religion by removing him from his office for what it called “unfitting and inadequate behavior.” The court determined the charges against the Synod were unfounded, technically ruling in favor of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. But it used the opportunity to restate Turkish government policies oppressing the church’s ability to sustain itself, thus threatening that the church will literally die out in Turkey.

The decision read as follows: “As it can also be understood from the letter of Istanbul Governorate dated 6 December 1928 and numbered 1092, the persons who will participate and get elected in the religious and spiritual elections that will be held in the Patriarchate should be Turkish citizens and be employed in Turkey at the time of elections. This is a clear indication that the Patriarchate does not have the title “ecumenical.” It is unquestionable that the Patriarch and the employees of the Patriarchate are subject to the Turkish law as regards their activities and their titles; and that they will be subject to the Turkish penal codes where their actions constitute an offense under the framework of Turkish laws.” (An English translation of the entire decision can be found at www.archons.org)

The decision criminalizes the term “ecumenical,” confines the ministry of the Phanar to the local Greek Orthodox of Turkey, and requires both the Ecumenical Patriarch and those in the Synod who elect him to be Turkish citizens. With the few Orthodox left in Turkey numbering less than 3,000, most of them elderly, the government forbidding the country’s only Orthodox seminary to open, and laws restricting foreign clergy from working in the country, the court’s statements seem to aim for justification to permanently erase the Ecumenical Patriarchate from Turkish soil.

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew expressed his “profound sorrow” regarding the Supreme Court decision as it applies to the title “Ecumenical” and the issue of primacy, the Ecumenical Patriarch being the first among equals of patriarchs of all Orthodox churches. The church in Constantinople, the current Istanbul, was founded by the Apostle Andrew; the Ecumenical Patriarchate was established there in the fourth century A.D.

The court further justified the policies, claiming they date back to the origin of the Turkish state and have their root in the Treaty of Lausanne of the 1920s.

See related comments on pages 5 & 9

His All Holiness summoned to court to defend his title

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has been summoned to court to testify in relation to his use of the word “ecumenical” during a speech he gave in Constantinople, Greek newspapers reported on August 21. A Turkish citizen reportedly filed a complaint against the Ecumenical Patriarch, claiming that he violated a Turkish appeals court decision which bans him from using the title.

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D. Panagos Photo.

His All Holiness, BARTHOLOMEW,
Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarch



Presidential candidates, lawmakers support rights of Ecumenical Patriarchate

By Sophia S. Huling

The Ecumenical Patriarchate’s religious human rights took center stage in Washington during the 23rd Annual Cyprus, Hellenic and Orthodox Issues Conference, a meeting hosted by PSEKA (International Coordinating Committee — Justice for Cyprus), UHAC (United Hellenic American Congress) and CEH (Coordinated Effort of Hellenes) in Washington, D.C. May 16-17.

Archons attended the three-day event, which included meetings with Undersecretaries of State Nicholas Burns and Edward Derwinski, key members of Congress, and three of the leading presidential candidates, all of whom spoke of the threat to the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s survival as a result of Turkish governmental policies.

“Three of the leading presidential candidates came to speak to us and raised the issue of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which shows that they are making progress informing our government,” said Archon *Depoutatos* Andrew Manatos, who organized the event.

During the conference, U.S. Rep. Tom Lantos (D-California), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, issued a bold statement urging Turkey to ease its restrictions on the Ecumenical Patriarchate. He called on the government to recognize His All Holiness’ ecumenicity, withdraw its interference in his selection, and cease confiscating church lands. (See page 3 for the full statement).

“Those are the strongest words I’ve heard, other than from (Sen.) Joe Biden (D-Delaware),” Manatos said. “One brick at a time, we’re starting to build a base.”

Lantos’ statement supplemented a letter from the House Foreign Affairs Committee to Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, asking him to urge his government to respect the rights and religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The letter was signed by 42 of the committee’s 50 members and forwarded to President George W. Bush.

Manatos recommended the Order organize a letter-writing campaign to all 385 members of Congress who are not members of the Foreign Affairs Committee, to include a copy of the statement and a note explaining that it is in the U.S.’s best interests to ensure religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The head of the Congressional Turkish Caucus Robert Wexler sent a strongly-worded letter to President Bush calling his attention to the severe religious freedom restrictions on the church in Turkey and asking him to “explain why it is in the interest of Turkey to guarantee unequivocally religious freedom to the spiritual head of the second largest Christian Church in the world. Ensuring religious freedom is essential to Turkey’s accession to the European Union and to its growth as a democratic nation that fully respects human rights.”



Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-New York) addressed the conference.



Sen. and presidential candidate Barack Obama (D-Illinois) met Dr. Limberakis and Archon Constantine Caras, right.



Sen. Joe Biden (D-Delaware) greeted Dr. Anthony Limberakis.



Lantos supports Ecumenical Patriarchate



U.S. Rep. Tom Lantos (D-California) addressed the 23rd Annual Cyprus, Hellenic, and Orthodox Issues Conference, with conference organizer Andrew Manatos seated to his right.

U.S. Rep. Tom Lantos, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman, gave this address at the 23rd Cyprus, Hellenic & Orthodox Issues Conference:

Among the most gratifying developments of the post-Cold War world has been the rapprochement between Greece and Turkey. It was initiated in the late 1990s by the former Greek foreign minister George Papandreou and has evolved since then. Both sides have benefited enormously. The mutual rewards have extended to politics and economics – on both sides of the Aegean. Greece’s far-reaching vision in this matter earned the praise and admiration of the world.

Now it is time for Turkey to take the next major step forward in relations between Greeks and Turks. Ankara needs to show a new resolve and a renewed energy in addressing some of the longstanding, difficult problems between the two sides. What is needed now is willpower and goodwill.

As many of you already know, I have just written a letter to Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan urging that he take a number of steps to liberalize Turkey’s policies toward the Ecumenical Patriarchate once and for all.

First, and most important, Turkey must recognize that the Patriarchate is indeed ecumenical. Its ecumenical nature exists in the hearts of Orthodox believers everywhere, and it is absurd for Turkey to try to deny it.

Second, Turkey must cease all interference in the process of selecting the Ecumenical Patriarch, particularly its maddening insistence that the Patriarch be a Turkish citizen. It is simply beyond the bounds of religious freedom for a state to impose such requirements. If Turkey persists in these policies, the Ecumenical Patriarchate will cease to exist: sadly, there are now less than 2,500 Orthodox citizens left in Turkey. The demise of this solemn spiritual institution – with a tradition spanning two millennia – is intolerable to Orthodox worshippers, to the world at large, and to me personally. All Orthodox, regardless

of citizenship, should be eligible to become the Ecumenical Patriarch. It is the Church, not the Turkish state, that should determine who becomes Ecumenical Patriarch.

Third, Turkey must cease expropriating land that belongs to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This unethical and illegal policy deprives the Ecumenical Patriarchate of both badly needed funds and cultural patrimony. This land was handed down through generations and generations.

I am far from alone in these views in the U.S. Congress. A remarkable 84 percent of the members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, which I chair, agreed to sign my letter urging the Turkish government to stop bullying the Ecumenical Patriarchate nearly into extinction. That’s a bipartisan coalition of 42 out of the Committee’s 50 members. I’m very proud of that, particularly in this era when it is difficult to get a bipartisan consensus on much of anything in the United States Congress.

Turkey’s policies regarding the Ecumenical Patriarchate are anachronistic and inappropriate, and I will underscore that point in all my future meetings with Turkish leaders – until Turkey changes these policies. Turkey should recognize the Ecumenical Patriarchate for what it is – a spiritual beacon to 250 million Orthodox believers around the globe, millions of whom live right here in the United States.

Turkey wants to be a fully modern European state, and I believe it will be. It has already made some strides in that direction. But Turkey can only mature fully if it implements modern values. And that starts with real religious freedom. There is no better way for Turkey to begin this process than by taking the long overdue and morally imperative step of recognizing the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate is one of the world’s oldest and greatest treasures. I look forward to working with you to save it and to ensure that it thrives, throughout this century and well beyond, in a manner commensurate with its spiritual stature.



Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns spoke to the assembly at the 23rd Annual Cyprus, Hellenic and Orthodox Issues Conference in Washington, D.C.



Religious freedom resolutions passed in 8 states

Georgeson appointed Resolutions Initiative Coordinator

By Sophia S. Huling

Legislative bodies in eight states so far have adopted resolutions urging Turkey to respect the Ecumenical Patriarchate's religious human rights, and a ninth state's governor has issued an executive proclamation to that effect.

New Jersey's legislature was the first state to pass such a resolution in May 2006, followed by Pennsylvania in October. More states followed this year, with Rhode Island in March, Georgia, South Carolina, and Alabama in May, and Tennessee and Louisiana in June. And in April, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich signed an executive proclamation calling on the Turkish government to eliminate all forms of religious discrimination and to respect the property rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The Order's Religious Freedom Initiative is a campaign to ensure that each state legislature in the nation adopt a resolution supporting religious human rights in Turkey. These resolutions will be sent to the President and to the Turkish prime minister. The Order is also designating a religious freedom chairman in each state that has not yet adopted a resolution; at press time, chairmen had been named in 24 states and the District of Columbia.

To concentrate the effort, National Commander Dr. Anthony Limberakis in June appointed Archon *Ekdikos* Stephen Georgeson to the newly formed position of Coordinator of the Archon State Resolutions Initiative.

The Turkish government's religious human rights abuses include arbitrary confiscation of thousands of private properties, refusing to recognize the Ecumenical Patriarchate as a legal entity, prohibiting the re-opening of Halki Theological School which the government closed in 1971, thus preventing the education of local clergy, and still demanding that the Ecumenical Patriarch be a Turkish citizen while stringently restricting foreign clergy from working in the country.

Archon *Aktouarios* Dr. Nicholas Loutsion communicates the Religious Freedom Initiative's work to Archon regional commanders around the country. He likened the Ecumenical Patriarchate's struggle against government oppression to the American founding fathers' stand on religious freedom, which anchored the country's formation in 1776.

"The theme of the American colonists' fight for independence was religious freedom, the freedom to practice one's faith without fear of government oppression or reprisals. We are fighting a similar battle for the religious freedom of our Mother Church in Constantinople. In order to win this struggle, we need to enlist as many soldiers as we possibly can," said Dr. Loutsion. "Through our solicitation of these resolutions, we will succeed in educating America as to who we Orthodox are, as well as what our religious freedom concerns are."

Georgeson, an attorney, has practiced as a state legislative and government relations lobbyist for more than 25 years, appealing to legislators in 20 states on behalf of his clients. Until his recent

appointment, he was serving as the state resolutions initiative chairman for the Metropolis of Atlanta. He and his committee were instrumental in securing the resolutions that have been passed so far in the southern states.

Georgeson has volunteered his time to help secure the resolutions in all 50 States. He will assist the state chairmen in identifying legislative sponsors in their respective Senate and House chambers and in overseeing the passage of these resolutions through the legislative process. He will function as an advisor and proactive facilitator on the state level.

"I am both honored and humbled by my appointment to this position," said Georgeson. "While we are all aware of the immense challenge involved in securing the successful passage of these resolutions, our goal is to introduce a Religious Freedom Resolution in every state legislature during the 2008 sessions."

Rogue military group plots to assassinate His All Holiness *Five suspects arrested*

Turkish police uncovered a plot to assassinate His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on a computer in Istanbul, Greek and Turkish newspapers reported July 25.

Evidence of the scheme was discovered during the previous week in the course of an ongoing investigation into an organization of retired military officials who allegedly possess an arsenal of grenades, bombs, and other weapons taken from army sources.

The computer belonged to Bekir Ozturk, president of the National Forces Association, an ultra-nationalist organization in Turkey. After police found 27 hand grenades and other explosives in an Istanbul house, they went on to raid National Forces offices in Ankara, Konya, Bursa, and Balikesir. Ozturk was arrested along with four other suspects.

According to the report, the assassination plot also targeted Armenian Patriarch Mesrob Mutafyan and Turkish Jewish businessman Isaac Alaton. The public prosecutor's office demanded an increase in security measures to protect the three men, noted the report.

Violent groups have targeted His All Holiness before, with hostile demonstrations and hand grenades launched at the Ecumenical Patriarchate. According to the Athens News Agency, grenades and explosives used in those attacks came from Turkish military warehouses, and in some cases their serial numbers were linked to NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

The report appeared in the newspapers *Aksam* and in *Today's Zaman*, an English-language daily, as well as on the Internet news portal Gazeteport.



New U.S. Consul to Istanbul meets with Archons

Just days before she headed to Turkey to begin her new assignment as U.S. Consul General to Istanbul, Sharon Anderholm Wiener prepared for her post by meeting with Archon National Commander Dr. Anthony Limberakis and Washington, D.C. Regional Commander Andrew Manatos on August 8 in the nation’s capital.

Wiener asked to meet with the Archons, the first time in history that a U.S. Consul to Istanbul has requested such a meeting, so as to be brought up to date on the plight of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Accompanying her was Paul Malik, the senior desk officer for Turkish Affairs at the State Department.

Dr. Limberakis detailed the struggles of the Ecumenical Patriarchate under the Turkish government, including the government’s interference in the Ecumenical Patriarch’s selection, its refusal to recognize his ecumenicity, (including the recent Supreme Court proclamation — see page 1), the confiscation of properties, the closing of Halki Theological School, and the threat to His All Holiness’ personal security. These actions threaten the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s very survival.

“She plans to deal with the issue of the Ecumenical Patriar-

chate as one of her priorities,” Manatos said. “She said that after all, her purpose in Turkey is to uphold the values and principles for which the United States stands, paramount among which is religious freedom.”

Dr. Limberakis explained the Order’s efforts to support the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s religious human rights. The Order has obtained the signatures of 75 U.S. senators on a letter to President George W. Bush explaining the religious freedom crisis, secured the signatures of 42 members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on a letter to Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, and given testimony before the Helsinki Commission detailing the climate of religious oppression in Turkey.

Dr. Limberakis emphasized the importance of the religious freedom crisis in Turkey when he told Wiener that the Order has met in recent months with Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns, as well as with presidential candidates Rudolph Giuliani, John McCain, Hillary Clinton, and Barack Obama.

“I was most encouraged when Dr. Wiener stated that she plans to promote our Western values of religious freedom and human rights when she takes her post in Istanbul,” said Dr. Limberakis.

Greek Foreign Affairs Minister Dora Bakoyannis released the following statement regarding the June 26 Turkish high court’s decision at a July 23 joint press conference with European People’s Party President Wilfried Martens:

A few days ago we received with regret the information on the recent decision by the Turkish Court of Cassation which passed a ruling, *inter alia*, on the Ecumenical role of the Orthodox Patriarchate, its legal personality and its internal election process.

This is a deplorable decision as it intervenes in issues of purely religious nature. In an attempt to minimize the religious role of the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate, the court — for the first time since 1923— rules on the ecclesiastical title of the Ecumenical Patriarch, who has been the head of the Orthodox Church worldwide since the 6th century A.D.

The Ecumenical Patriarch is the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide. He must be let free to exercise his religious duties and accomplish his mission, in line with the letter and spirit of Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the case law of the European Court of the Human Rights.

Once again, we urge Turkey to accept the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s international recognition and ecclesiastic succession by recognizing the legal status of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as well as the right to train clergy of all nationalities.

The property rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate should be reaffirmed and the reopening of the Halki Seminary addressed.

Under such grave circumstances and facing such significant obstacles there is a clear and present danger that the Patriarchate may not be able to sustain itself beyond the current generation. Turkey must honor its commitments towards the EU on an issue of great importance directly connected with the Copenhagen criteria and explicitly included in the Negotiating Framework.

We must act. We must act before it is too late.



Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis

ARCHON ARCHIVES



Archons Lead Greek Independence

Parade dedicated to Religious Freedom



His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios led the Greek Independence Day Parade along Fifth Avenue in New York City April 22, flanked by Grand Marshals Dr. Anthony Limberakis and Nicholas Davatzes, and Parade Chairman John Catsimatidis, far left.



Members of the Order enjoyed the sunshine and the camaraderie during the march.

By Sophia S. Huling

Dozens of Archons marched proudly along Fifth Avenue during the April 22 Greek Independence Day parade in New York City, in particular because this year's parade was dedicated to religious freedom.

The Order of St. Andrew was named Grand Marshal along with Nick Davatzes, CEO Emeritus of A&E Television Networks. Alongside His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Archon National Commander Dr. Anthony Limberakis and Davatzes marched at the parade's helm.

"It is a great honor for us to be chosen to lead this year's Greek Independence Day parade, whose theme echoes the core of our mission," said Dr. Limberakis. "The Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate hold the highest honor and responsibility to defend and promote the

Greek Orthodox faith and tradition. Religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate is our blessed goal."

Event Chairman and Archon John Catsimatidis said the parade, which for the first time in its 76-year history was broadcast live on the local Fox television station, achieved the second largest viewing audience according to early Nielsen ratings. Ernie Anastos, Rosanna Scotto and Nick Gregory anchored the special broadcast. Also featured at the event were Greece's Presidential Guard of *Evzones*, soldiers in historical attire, Greek and U.S. government officials, and celebrities.

"The Archons led the parade, and Anthony Limberakis appeared on television, explaining the plight of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to millions of people," said Catsimatidis assistant Matt Wanning.

The evening before the parade, the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York, the 200-member non-profit organization which hosts the event, held its Greek Independence Liberty Award Gala at the Hilton Hotel, where Dr. Limberakis accepted the Federation's Liberty Award.

Dr. Limberakis gave a short presentation detailing the plight of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Turkey. The Turkish government's religious human rights abuses include arbitrary confiscation of thousands of private properties, refusing to recognize the Patriarchate as a legal entity, prohibiting the re-opening of Halki Theological School which the government closed in 1971, thus preventing the education of local clergy, and still demanding that the Ecumenical Patriarch be a Turkish citizen while stringently restricting the comings and goings of foreign clergy from the country.

Catsimatidis said Grand Marshals are those in the community who have shown leadership as well as role-model qualities.

"Religious freedom, the theme of this year's parade, reflects also on democracy, which both Greece and the United States were founded on," he said.



Independence Day Parade as Grand Marshals



Archon Spiritual Adviser Rev. Alexander Karloutsos, with Nicholas Tsoucalas, left, and Stephen Cherpelis bearing flags, led more than 50 Archons on the parade march.

Federation President Nick Diamantidis expressed his respect for the Archons.

“The Order of St. Andrew exemplifies religious freedom in the purest form,” Diamantidis said. “This year’s theme of religious freedom is a constant reminder of the Archons’ mission and their valiant efforts to promote and safeguard the Holy Patriarchate in Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey).”

The route ran from 60th to 79th Streets along Fifth Avenue, which was lined with thousands of delighted flag-waving spectators celebrating the 186th anniversary of Greek independence from Ottoman Turkish rule. The parade is traditionally held on the Sunday closest to March 25 (excluding Lent), the day on which Greek independence from the Ottoman Turks was declared.

Religious freedom: a basic human right

Archons called upon to defend the Ecumenical Patriarchate

The following address was delivered by Archon National Commander Dr. Anthony Limberakis at the Greek Independence Liberty Award Gala April 21, upon his receiving the Liberty Award from the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York on behalf of the Order of St. Andrew:

Christos Anesti! (Christ is Risen!)

Your Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America and Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Archon Religious Freedom Chairman John Catsimatidis, our dear friends of the Federation of Hellenic Societies of Greater New York, Archon Tasso Manassis, Archon Phil Christopher, Dino Rallis and President Nick Diamantidis, allow me to remind everyone here this evening that it was on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter, on April 22, 1821 less than a month after the start of the Greek Revolution that Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V was hanged while still in his holy vestments at the gate at the Phanar and later thrown into the Bosphorus. Eternal be his memory.

Independence, liberty and religious freedom are basic human rights that we as Greeks and as Americans take for granted. They are inalienable rights that are integral to the human dignity of mankind. On the feast day of St. Andrew last November 30, many of us in this room witnessed His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI declare in his homily in the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George in Constantinople that religious freedom is a basic human right.



Dr. Limberakis accepted the Federation of Hellenic Society's Liberty Award from Tasos Manassis on behalf of the Order. Behind him stood Secretary John Halecky, far left, and Treasurer James Fountas.

Tonight we rejoice in the independence and liberty of Greece from the yoke of Ottoman oppression. But let us not ever forget that Turkish subjugation continues at the Phanar, where the Patriarch of our *Genos* (People) resides in a hostile environment, where religious freedom and human rights are words without meaning and substance. As Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Defenders of the Faith, we call on all men and women of good will to join in our struggle for religious freedom and human rights on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate so that one day, not only we will celebrate Greek Independence on March 25, and America’s Independence on the Fourth of July, but the independence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate from the Turkish yoke of religious repression.



Archons Honor Metropolitan Meliton at Carlyle Dinner

New York, May 30

The Order of St. Andrew hosted a dinner at The Carlyle in honor of His Eminence Metropolitan Meliton of Philadelphia, who visited from Istanbul to meet with Archons to discuss the religious freedom difficulties confronting the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The Metropolitan, who in his position as Coordinator of all the Secretariates of the Ecumenical Patriarchate represents it in ecclesiastical affairs relating to the Orthodox churches and missions abroad, is an essential figure in the struggle for religious freedom in Turkey. He is a graduate of the *Megali tou Genous Scholi* (Great School of the Nation), the Theological School of Halki (forcibly closed by the Turkish government since 1971), and the Theological School of Thessaloniki, and received post-graduate education in France and England. He has served at the Ecumenical Patriarchate and on the Holy and Sacred Synod since his ordination in 1974.

“Next to the Patriarch, he’s the person with the deepest understanding of the history and the reality of the Patriarchate,” said His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios.

The Metropolitan addressed the Archons in English, praising their work in defense of the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s human rights against intense persecution by the Turkish government which threatens its very survival. He gave heartfelt thanks for the Archons’ *martyria* (witness) to His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in the United States.

“Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Light, the Life, and the Truth,” the Metropolitan said. “Our ancestors tried to give this Light, the Life and this Truth to the believers. Our Patriarch and all the deacons, the priests, and the bishops who work with him try to do their work. But without the Orthodox believers in the United States, Your Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, and the Archons, it is impossible to solve these problems. Our hope as the Patriarchate and as believers in Constantinople is in you, Your Eminence and you Orthodox believers in the United States.”

He continued by relaying the blessings of His All Holiness and expressing deep gratitude to the church in America for its continuous support.

National Commander Dr. Anthony Limberakis, Archbishop Demetrios, and Archon officers presented the Metropolitan with an engraved glass plaque as a memento of the event. “Through the hands of the Exarch, we present this to a faithful son of the Mother Church,” said Dr. Limberakis.

The Archbishop spoke of the Order’s mission to support and defend the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s religious human rights. “We are very blessed by God in having this great mission. We are in a condition of vigilance, of guarding day and night,” he said.



His Eminence Metropolitan Meliton addresses the gathering at the dinner in his honor. From left are Nick Bouras, Mrs. Mary Jaharis, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Michael Jaharis, and Dr. Anthony Limberakis.



Metropolitan Meliton accepts an honorary plaque from Archbishop Demetrios and Dr. Limberakis on behalf of the Archons.



Archon Andrew Comodromos greets Metropolitan Meliton.

Archons Sponsor Meeting of Orthodoxy & Judaism

Macris represents Order

Archons made possible a meeting between representatives of Judaism and Orthodox Christianity recently, when the Order of St. Andrew donated \$40,000 toward sponsoring the Ecumenical Patriarchate's sixth academic meeting between the two religions, held at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem March 14-15.

Archon *Hieromnimon* Spiro Macris, D.D.S., represented the Order at the meeting, held every two years, whose title this year was "Religious Liberty and the Relationship between Freedom and Religion."

"This was a discussion of how faith can continue to exist and survive in this time of secularism and, in particular, extremism of both the secular and the religious types," said Macris.

His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, Archon spiritual adviser Fr. Alexander Karloutsos, and ecclesiastical scholars from the United States and Europe appeared under the helm of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The meeting drew representatives from the Patriarchates of Jerusalem, Moscow, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Georgia, as well as from the churches of Cyprus, Poland, Albania, the Czech lands and Slovakia. Greek government officials presented messages, and the secretary of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with Jews also attended. About 15 to 20 rabbis from the Israel and the United States rounded out the assembly. The meeting was co-sponsored by the Sapir Center for Jewish Education and Culture, a seminar center in Israel providing programs on Jewish heritage in many languages.

Chief Rabbi David Rosen, president of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, co-chaired the meeting with Metropolitan Emmanuel. Each session topic was addressed by a presentation from the Orthodox and the Jewish point of view.

The meeting's 40 delegates affirmed the following principles:

- The principle of religious freedom is a fundamental right that flows from our mutual biblical affirmation that all human beings are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Freedom is a divine gift and religious value and as such must be respected and protected.
- Because freedom enables us to choose between good and evil,



Spiro Macris Photo.

Fr. Alex Karloutsos, center, is pictured with the co-chairmen of the conference, His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, head of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Office of Interreligious & Intercultural Affairs, and Chief Rabbi David Rosen, President of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations.

the gift of freedom requires the exercise of responsibility. The manner in which we express our responsibility profoundly affects human dignity and wider contexts in which the person lives: family, community, nation and humanity. We are, therefore, endowed with an ethical responsibility to pursue righteousness, and to confront evil wherever we find it. Personal freedom, morality and responsibility are all interconnected.

- Freedom of religion, freedom of conscience for all individuals and freedom to exercise one's worship and practices at the national, regional and international levels must be guaranteed. Otherwise, societies fail to respect the inviolable rights of persons of diverse religions as well as of those of no religion at all.
- Religious communities are entitled to defend their own authentic religious identities against attempts to undermine them.
- The pre-eminent value of the human person obliges us to respect all forms of religious and secular expression, as long as they do not infringe upon or threaten the security and religious freedom of individuals, communities and societies. Conversely, where militant secularism and religious extremism pose such a threat, they must be repudiated and combated.

Take heart – despite court ruling

By John Catsimatidis, Archon *Notarios*,
Archon Religious Freedom Chairman

The following appeared in the July 29 edition of the Hellenic Times.

I know many in the Greek American community have been further saddened by rulings recently, wherein a Turkish court decreed, "The Patriarch is not the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians, yet leads only the dwindling enclave of Christians in Turkey."

As the wise Apostle once said, "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's. Render unto God that which is God's." Likewise the Turkish courts should leave matters of spirituality to a higher court. A much higher court.

Turkish courts are hardly beacons of justice on temporal matters such as human rights or religious freedom. A court

ruling in Turkey or any other country for that matter, on any element of any religion's spirituality or leadership only highlights that country's medieval court system. Just another reason Turkey is not ready to join the European Union.

So I am saying: take heart, Orthodox Christians of the world, even though the Turkish courts may appropriate Church property, and though the Turkish government may close our schools, hospitals and orphanages.

And yes, the Turkish government refuses to hear the constant pleas for religious tolerance and freedom.

But take heart, because no court in Turkey, no court on earth will ever possess authority to define such matters of Christian Orthodoxy.



Bouras Receives Humanitarian Award



Archon *Depoutatos* Nicholas Bouras, center, with *Hellenic Times* publisher John Catsimatidis, left, and Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund President Nick Katsoris.

Archon, philanthropist, and business leader Nicholas J. Bouras received the Hellenic Times Scholarship Fund's Humanitarian Award at the New York Marriott Marquis May 19, as part of a star-studded gala at which 35 scholarships totaling \$100,000 were awarded to students from across the United States.

The fund's president and founder Nick Katsoris said the decision to award Bouras was made by the scholarship's board.

"Each year we award Humanitarian awards to members of the Greek community that prove that hard work and dedication lead to achievement, thereby setting a perfect example for our scholarship recipients to emulate," Katsoris said. "It gives the students someone to look up to."

Singer/actor ("The Bold and the Beautiful") and American Idol finalist Constantine Maroulis was also honored. Grammy-nominated singer Taylor Dayne ("Tell it to my heart," "Love will lead you back") and Greek singing star Thanos Petrelis gave performances. Scholarships presenters included CBS News anchor Alexis Christoforou, Fox-5 Meteorologist Nick Gregory, and Judge Nicholas Tsoucalas.

This year marked the sixteenth anniversary of the awards gala, which to date has granted 550 scholarships. The weekly newspaper *Hellenic Times* is published by Archon *Notarios* and Red Apple Group President John Catsimatidis.

from page 1

His All Holiness Pursued

Istanbul prosecutor calls Ecumenical Patriarch to justify use of term "ecumenical"

A prosecutor in Istanbul has called Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to testify as to why he used a phrase referring to the "ecumenical nature of the Patriarchate" during a conference for Orthodox youth held in the city in July. The incident was reported by the Greek newspaper *Kathimerini* on August 22.

This is the second time in the last month that the prosecutor's office has made such a request. After the first inquiry, the Ecumenical Patriarchate's legal team pointed out that the term "ecumenical" had been in use since the 6th century. The Ecumenical Patriarchate expected the matter to be resolved and was surprised by the new request.

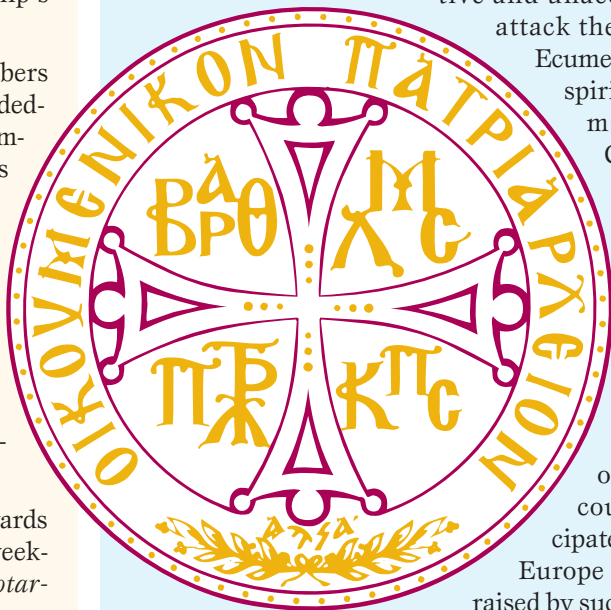
Archon National Commander Dr. Anthony Limberakis decried the Turkish government's persecution of His All Holiness and the church, and called for urgent legal action by the Order of St. Andrew.

"This activity makes all the more urgent the need to seek legal redress of these matters, both within Turkey and in the European Court of Human Rights," said Dr. Limberakis. "We will fight to defend religious freedom, a basic human right to which all people throughout the world are entitled and which is being denied to the Ecumenical Patriarchate."

Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis said the decision was "provocative" and "totally unacceptable," and referred to Turkey's ongoing negotiations to join the European Union.

"If some in Turkey believe that they can, with such provocative and unacceptable actions,

attack the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch, the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians throughout the world, let it be abundantly clear that they do so in vain," said Bakoyannis. "They do so in vain and they open their country to international criticism, a country which anticipates a course toward Europe without obstacles raised by such actions."





Pittsburgh Archons introduce Zikos Memorial Lecture

More than 300 people from the Metropolis of Pittsburgh celebrated the life and legacy of a dedicated Archon last spring, with the inauguration of the Peter J. Zikos Memorial Lecture.



Peter Zikos, far right, and his wife, Dorothy, seated on his right, attended the 2006 Clergy-Laity Congress in Nashville, Tenn. with others from the Metropolis of Pittsburgh, including Dr. Nicholas Loutsion, second from left.

Zikos, an insurance company owner who passed away suddenly last November at age 75, had served the Metropolis of Pittsburgh for more than 40 years in various capacities, including Archon Regional Commander. He sat on the Diocese/Metropolis of Pittsburgh Council for 38 years, the last 20 as treasurer. He was a member of the parish council of Pittsburgh's St. Nicholas Cathedral for 12 years, two as president, and helped found the Pittsburgh area's summer camp program. He served on the Board of Trustees of St. Photios Shrine, the National Council of GOYA (Greek Orthodox Youth Association), and Leadership 100.

"He will always be remembered by his gentle manner and sincere generosity by all who knew him, and what better way to honor this beloved community leader than through this memorial lecture," said Archon National Council Member Nicholas Loutsion, who co-chaired the lecture with Pittsburgh Metropolis Greek Education Coordinator Maria Stamoolis.

Quoted in the *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*, Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh described Zikos as "a man of great faith," one "will truly be missed."

Besides co-sponsoring the lecture, the local Archons underwrote the expenses of the lecture in Zikos' memory. "No Archon refused when asked to donate because it was in Peter's memory," said Loutsion.

The inaugural lecture, held at St Nicholas Cathedral on March 18, focused on the events of September 6 - 7, 1955 in Istanbul, Turkey. The night of violent atrocities against the Orthodox community in the city destroyed thousands of Greek homes, businesses, religious institutions, schools, and cemeteries within hours. Scholar and historian Dr. Speros Vryonis, Jr., author of "The Mechanism of Catastrophe: The Turkish Pogrom of



The flyer used to advertise the Peter Zikos Memorial Lecture.

September 6-7, 1955," spoke of the incident's long term effects on the Ecumenical Patriarchate, its churches, and the Orthodox community. His book was used by the U.N. Commission of Human Rights to label the event a genocide.

Flyers placed on five local university campuses drew many students, including several Turks who reportedly told Vryonis they thought that his lecture was presented in a very honest and unbiased way.

"Just as the Jewish community remembers its "Kristallnacht / Night of Broken Glass," delivered to them by the Nazis of Hitler's Germany in November 9 - 10, 1938, we also must remember those days when the Kemalists Turks committed similar if not worse atrocities to the Greek Orthodox community of Istanbul," Loutsion said.

IN MEMORIAM

OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS GO TO THE FAMILY & FRIENDS OF OUR BELOVED MEMBERS.

Constantine Lapaseotes

Deputatos

March 26, 2007 - Bridgeport, Conn.

Stephen Pendas

Megas Notarios

April 16, 2007 - Garden City, NY

Theodore Kotsovolos

Notarios

June 18, 2007 - Granada Hills, Calif.

George N. Kontos

Deputatos

June 24, 2007 - Warren, Ohio

Thomas D. Demery

Deputatos

August 8, 2007 - Franklin, Mich.

MAY THEIR MEMORY BE ETERNAL



A view of Agia Sofia (above) in Istanbul, the 1,500-year-old cathedral and symbol of Orthodoxy built by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. The minarets were added by the Ottoman Turks after their conquest of Constantinople, converting the church into a mosque. When the Ottoman Empire dissolved into the modern Turkish state after World War I, secular authorities turned it into a museum, as it now remains.



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the apostle
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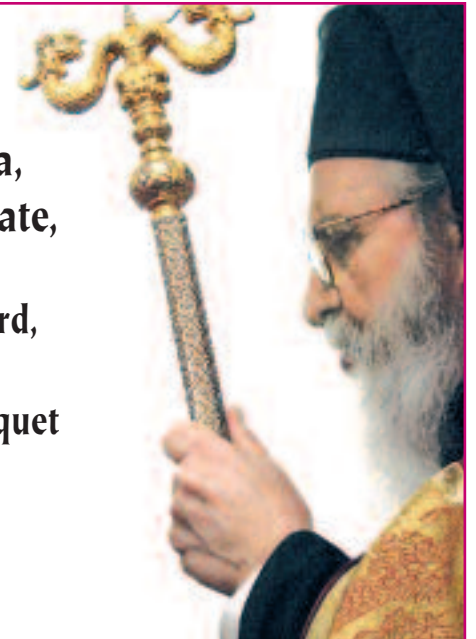
Hieromnimon • Sergeant-at-Arms

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2007 ATHENAGORAS HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

His Eminence
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Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,
will receive the
2007 Athenagoras Human Rights Award,
to be presented
at the Order of St. Andrew's Grand Banquet
at the New York Hilton
October 27, 2007
Save the Date!



Sophia S. Huling
EDITOR

Abel Montoya
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

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