

Sunday, March 6, 2016

Discussion on Unifying The Dates of the Feasts (1)



I met with a friend after a long absence and he asked me:

- What happened to the issue of unifying the dates of the Christmas celebration between the Catholic church and the Orthodox Church?

(I replied with a sad smile):

+ There has not been a change; some are celebrating according to ancient calendars and others are celebrating according to the modern calendar.

(He raised his eyebrows and said):

- I don't understand.

(I replied quietly):

+ The current situation is that each church is committed to their own calendar, and thus they celebrate Christmas at different times. There are some Eastern Churches such as the Syriacs, the Armenians and the Greek Orthodox who decided to follow the Western calendar so they celebrate Christmas on December 25th. Some of the other Eastern Churches such as the Coptic, the Russian and the Serbian churches adhere to their own calendar and so they celebrate on January 7th.

My friend looked at me and said:

- I've read your research that you wrote a few months ago on how to set up the Coptic Calendar, and from what I understood there is a chance to set the old Coptic Calendar to become compatible with the modern Gregorian calendar, and therefore we unify the dates of the Christmas celebration. What progress happened in this period?

I answered:

+ In fact, there are three types of reactions regarding the proposal I made to adjust the Coptic calendar: The first group is strongly resistant to the idea as they associate the calendar with faith and the ancient Coptic heritage. They do not want to accept that there is any arithmetic error in Coptic calendar, and consider that the change will weaken the position of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

- Why do they think so? It is well known that the issue with the calendar does not have anything to do with the Orthodox faith!

+ Yes, but you might know that some of the fans of the heritage can sometimes become prisoners of it. They are not open minded to other circles of knowledge and they are very sensitive to any changes. Therefore they refuse to even put the matter up for discussion. This group are few in number, but they often are verbally aggressive and accusatory, and their willingness to understand is very weak.

- Are you afraid of this group?

+ Of course not! I wouldn't have written or published anything if I was, but I also kept the peace of Church in mind when I consider the time required to make any change.

- What about the second group?

+ The second group is enthusiastic about the idea and are more in number than the first group. Most of them live outside of Egypt, and suffer with their children and grandchildren because of the different dates of the feasts. They seriously feel a generation gap growing and are open to any solution to unify the dates of holidays, provided that it is celebrated on the same day inside and outside Egypt.

- Who is the third group?

+ The third group include those who are not objecting to unifying the date of the however, at the same time, they are not enthusiastic about it. This group makes up the majority of the church members. The important thing to realize is that this group doesn't have a clear understanding of the scientific knowledge behind this issue.

- What do you mean by the scientific proof? Do you think that all people should understand the science of astronomy?!

(To be continued)

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