

Listening Module
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Batal

**English Translation of the TV interview with Pope Shnuuda
from Syrian TV**

Interviewer: Another subject is the Arab expatriates, Muslims and Christians, in every corner of the world. What does his holiness the Pope say to them, and what does he expect from them?

Pope: Do you mean expatriates, or migrants? There is a difference. There are, for example, some Arabs who work in other countries and then return. Those are the expatriates.

I: Those who reside there.

P: There are some who are there for study and will return. The immigrants.

I: Yes

P: Migration has increased in the second half of the twentieth century, and now some things are complicated. The same countries that welcome immigration are no longer absorbing the same numbers (of migrants) as they were before. As for these immigrants, we perhaps do not fear too much for the first generation, who emigrated at an older age, and who preserve their principles and traditions. They can live their lives correctly. But what is really concerning is the new generation that is born in the western countries, or that leaves the eastern countries at an early age.

I: What do you say from them and what do you expect from them?

B: The issue is not merely what we say to them, but what we do for them. For we should help them preserve their interest in their countries of origin and their home nation. And this issue needs a great number of things, because these are growing up in nations that believe in freedom, even if in many situations, this freedom is unlimited. We do not believe in absolute freedom, but rather in disciplined freedom. For example, a person may not break traffic laws and say, "I am free. I'll go as I please." He can't do that. A person can't break the law and say, "I am free to obey it or not obey it." A person cannot do harm to another, or violate the freedom or rights of another in the name of his personal freedom. Thus, discipline freedom must be limited by the rights and freedoms of others, the general system, the laws of the state, and also the commandments of God.

But there, in the western countries, freedom can sometimes transform into lack of restraint. For example, willing to be very strict in observing traffic laws, while being completely lax about morals, for example. So there are problems, and we must protect our children from problems of thought, on the one hand, and on the other hand from moral problems, even from religious deviations. And all of that is possible in western countries.

And as for us, when we established many churches in the western countries, one of our goals was to protect our children from the foreign atmosphere in which they live that might influence their principles. And also, I personally appointed a bishop for youth, in order to take an interest in youth in Egypt and the western countries, who has no duties other than the youth. Also, we encourage migrants to come to their countries of origin, and we encourage maintaining the connection between us and them, meaning establishing groups in the west, and our goal is to serve *them*. We also serve our countries, and we serve the future of these groups in the future. What will they become? How easy it is for a person to travel from any of the eastern countries [to the west], and after a while you come and ask him, and his first upbringing doesn't come to mind. Haven't many Americans, for example, who say that they are of Spanish, Portuguese, Belgian, or English descent, completely forgotten this, only looking to their current nationality?

Naturally, we want to preserve these generations, so that they are not lost in the future. We must strive for that. And perhaps this is the reason that has made me travel a lot, to preserve our children in the western countries, their connection with their country, their connection with their church, and for the preservation of their traditions and principles.