



ORDER of
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The

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
and UKRAINE AUTOCEPHALY

Historical, Canonical, and Pastoral Perspectives



**The Ecumenical Patriarchate
and Ukraine Autocephaly:**
Historical, Canonical, and Pastoral Perspectives

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Editor

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ARCHONS OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE**



The pious Ukrainian people have awaited this blessed day for seven entire centuries. And, behold, the fullness of time has come for them, too, just as so many Orthodox peoples beforehand, to enjoy the sacred gift of emancipation, independence and self-governance, becoming free from every external reliance and intervention, which have not always been nurturing and respectful of their own identity.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kyiv and all Ukraine (January 5, 2019)



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Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos for the Bestowal of the
Ecclesiastical Status of Autocephaly to the Orthodox
Church in Ukraine

Contributors



Foreword

DR. ANTHONY J. LIMBERAKIS

I write this Foreword to *The Ecumenical Patriarchate and Ukraine Autocephaly: Historical, Canonical, and Pastoral Perspectives* to illustrate and underscore why this collection of writings is so important.

It is tempting to want to respond to the vitriol that has been generated by some against His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Ecumenical Patriarchate with words of like kind; but we must not succumb to that temptation.

Instead we must respond to hateful rhetoric with love and reason – and that is exactly what this collection of writings is – a work of love and reason.

I am very proud of the authors of these texts. These articles have been written to inform all people of goodwill and are based on facts and logic. They are not designed to inflame passions, but to educate the clergy and the laity alike. They cover a range of perspectives and are written from various points of view. You will read about the pastoral considerations as well as the canonical considerations behind the issuance of the Tomos of autocephaly by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. You will read about the critically important perspectives of the Ukrainians who have struggled for decades – or better said centuries – to obtain autocephaly.

Read these articles and discuss them at your parishes and at your dinner tables. Above all, pray to the Lord for the unity of His Church.

In writing this Foreword, I am mindful of the classic conundrum of the parish priest preaching to the choir about the importance of church attendance. I am, in a fashion, “preaching” to the readers of these articles about the importance of being informed. But, of course, since you are reading this Foreword you already know of the importance of being informed. So, with the goal of making sure these materials reach the broadest possible audience, I have one request of you. Please share these materials with others. Indeed, I would like to ask each of you to email this collection to five other people and ask them to share this collection with five more.

On behalf of the Order of St. Andrew I want to thank the authors of these articles for helping all of us become better informed about this critical topic to our Holy Orthodox Church.



Introduction: The Ecumenical Patriarchate and Ukraine Autocephaly

EVAGELOS SOTIROPOULOS

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29).

Ukraine Autocephaly has caused significant controversy. High emotions and long term vested interests have resulted in inflamed and often un-Christian rhetoric among commentators.

This, in turn, has caused significant misinformation and often completely fake news to the detriment of the Orthodox Church.

The goal of this eBook is to present information regarding the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Ukraine Autocephaly that *edifies* and *imparts grace* to its readers. Importantly, the contributors to the eBook are diverse – men and women, clergy and lay people, belonging to different jurisdictions from around the world but connected by and through Christ.

Organized alphabetically, the words of Abbess Theoxeni of Chrysopigi begin the volume and especially epitomize the above reference to Ephesians. Her text exudes edification and grace; it offers the reader a distinct approach and analysis on the “Ukrainian Question,” paying special attention to one word – and

action – that is sorely lacking in the debate of Ukraine Autocephaly: *silence*. Readers will be well served by reading, and contemplating, on the words and theme of this article.

Fr. John Chryssavgis continues with an elegant and insightful article that peels away the political veneer of this issue to uncover the deep – and often painful – pastoral concerns and experiences that motivated the Phanar to take a decisive, and historic, step with regards to Orthodoxy in Ukraine.

The next article is authored by Fr. Nicholas Denysenko, who does a masterful job showing the historical use of “canonical sanctions” by the Moscow Patriarchate to suffocate any effort to achieve an independent church in Ukraine. Readers will do well to read Fr. Nicholas’ words – and supporting case studies – with care.

The issue of Ukraine Autocephaly should not be examined in isolation; after all, the Orthodox Church is the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, with hundreds of millions of faithful around the world. The entry by Fr. Perry Hamalis offers an excellent comparison, highlighting common themes in the process, as it relates to the “assault” on Church unity waged by the Moscow Patriarchate – not only in Ukraine, but in Korea as well.

“Reflections from the Diaspora” by Fr. Bohdan Hladio puts a personal spin on the issue of Ukraine Autocephaly, not only from a member of the Ukrainian Diaspora (in Canada), but by a Reverend Father who has lived experience with the pain and often destruction that the schism in Ukraine brought to the faithful there, and to their family and friends in foreign countries.

Similarly, Fr. Cyril Hovorun also offers a perspective from the Diaspora, this time from the United States. His personal experience as a once high-ranking official in the Moscow Patriarchate’s Church in Ukraine provides a unique historical perspective, shedding light on Moscow’s lack of desire to reach a unifying solution for the Orthodox faithful in Ukraine.

Archbishop Job of Telmessos registers the longest article of the eBook. Its detailed history and timeline, however, are certainly worth the extra words. With specific information and exact dates, the Archbishop details not only the history that led to the Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, but also features the canonical prerogatives – with specific examples – of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople that reinforces the validity of the actions taken by the Phanar.

Dr. Daniela Kalkandjieva, who is a noted and accomplished Orthodox scholar in Bulgaria, provides a unique and exceptional comparison between the process of Autocephaly for the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the one for the newly-established Orthodox Church in Ukraine. Moreover, she highlights the similar role played by the First Throne of Orthodoxy, Constantinople, not only for Bulgaria and Ukraine, but historically in the Church as well.

Dr. Lewis J. Patsavos is a distinguished Church canonist and, similarly to Archbishop Job, offers readers a methodical review of the “Principles of Ecclesiastical Organization” that underpin the necessary leadership role granted to the Ecumenical Patriarchate by the Church through the Ecumenical Councils for the unity and proper administrative functioning of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

Last, although certainly not least, is a personal reflection from Dr. Gayle E. Woloschak, an active and well-known member of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA. In fact, Dr. Woloschak traveled to Constantinople and was present in the Patriarchal Church of St. George the Great Martyr during the Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord when His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew bestowed the Tomos of Autocephaly to Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kyiv and all Ukraine.

Finally, the complete and official “Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos for the Bestowal of the Ecclesiastical Status of Autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine” is included for the convenience – and reference – of the reader.

The articles in this essay will hopefully add a measured quantity of love and hope – and fact – on the issue of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Ukraine Autocephaly; ultimately, however, it will be readers of goodwill who will judge whether the words in this eBook live up to the standard set by Saint Paul.



The Voice of Silence: A Monastic Voice on the Ukrainian Question

MOTHER ABBESS THEOXENI

"Evil is erroneous judgement concerning the conceptual images of things." – Saint Maximus the Confessor (*Chapters on Love*, 2.17)

The decades-long schism in Ukrainian church life has created polarization not only between ecclesiastical jurisdictions, but also in the hearts of the people.

Saint Maximus described *erroneous judgement concerning the conceptual images of things* as evil. Similarly, a mistaken assessment of the complicated situation that has prevailed for many years in Ukraine has led to an accumulation of many evils, producing deep social division and a rift in the ecclesiastical body with countless tragic consequences.

In the Orthodox Church we pray "*for the welfare of the holy churches of God and the union of all [people]*" and we invoke *the unity of faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit*. This means that the Holy Spirit is to be found in unity and that the gifts of the Holy Spirit activate unity. How indeed can there be unity when we do not live in accordance with those gifts which Saint Paul names as "*love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*" (*Galatians 5.22*)?

The Gospel and the Church Fathers teach that a Christian loves and prays for all people, and much more so for brothers and sisters in faith who are distanced on account of *erroneous judgement concerning the conceptual image of things* and other passions of egotism and vanity born of ethnic tribalism together with a desire to further political interests under the pretext of a strict interpretation of ecclesiastical canons.

Porphyrios of Kavsoakalyvia, the well-known saint of our own times, identified unity with reconciliation, with a deep understanding for our brother or sister, with sensitivity to our language, a refusal to make any accusation or slander, and above all with a desire to walk together in the Church – in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church: "*When we set ourselves apart from others, we are not Christians. We are true Christians when we have a profound sense that we are members of the mystical body of Christ, of the Church, in an unbroken relationship of love – when we live united in Christ, that is, when we experience unity in His Church with a sense of oneness.*" (*Wounded by Love: The Life and Wisdom of Saint Porphyrios*, p. 89).

It is not fortuitous that Saint Gregory Palamas, when he was a captive at the Ottoman court in Bursa, engaged with Ishmael – the grandson of the Emir – in a dialogue on matters of faith with the utmost sobriety and composure and without the slightest trace of fanaticism or animosity.

At the present time we are experiencing on a global scale an ever-intensifying upsurge in mindless fundamentalism: attacks on Christian churches and Muslim mosques which turn the most sacred hours of worship into tragedy. Fanatical and callous individuals wish, in the name of "God," to impose their views and ideas with hatred, destruction and death. At such a critical time in the world, it defies reason to break off ecclesiastical communion without seeking a mode of spiritual reconciliation. Who can offer

an explanation of this to the young people who come to our monasteries in search of God with their existential anxieties and questions?

In recent times many voices have been heard about the matter of the Autocephaly of the Church of Ukraine: articles, pronouncements, interpretations, interviews and programs on radio and television. Some of these have a sound foundation in history and canon law, while others have been attempts to disorient public opinion.

There is, however, also the voice, or rather the urgent cry, of silence. Insistent, devout silence. Prayer in silence, which accomplishes the miracle of unity in the Church. This voice of silence, which is prayer, pain, and weeping at the lack of love, at the *erroneous judgement of the conceptual images* of the matter, is expressed in a reticence about speaking. We have sensed this quietness in the words of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew, which have not been disrespectful or scathing about anyone, but rather have been words of encouragement for everyone and a call for unity, mutual forgiveness and reconciliation.

This voice is also heard in the silence of the monastics who have not spoken, who have not written and who have not judged, but who rather have prayed "*for the welfare of the holy churches of God and the union of all*", the unity of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

This intervention on their part is at once of no consequence and of every consequence. It is of every consequence because Christ looks down upon the secret voice and silent pain of those who have left everything and followed Him on the path which is a "profession of the Cross and death" (*Service of the Great Schema*).

At the same time, however, it is of no consequence, because the silence of prayer is not publicized and does not have followers and likes on social media postings. This thing of no consequence,

however, has the power to overcome worldly turmoils and ambitions. It has the power to bring peace and unity to the Church, because it is founded on all-night vigil and selfless intercession, which performs its work with asceticism, prostrations and God-pleasing tears before the icons.

In the ever-remembered homelands of Asia Minor, the Orthodox *Romioi*, the faithful Greek flock of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, when they gave alms would make no distinction between Greeks and Turks. They would offer help indiscriminately. This is the spirit of *Romiosyni*, a spirit of selfless generosity, embodied in the stance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and of its venerable Primate: it is a disposition that seeks to bestow gifts of loving kindness on all, and to care for every soul that finds itself, for reasons for which it bears no responsibility, outside the bounds of the canonical Church, just as it happened with our brothers and sisters in Christ of Ukraine.

There are some unapproachable horizons which are touched by prayer, by the tears and sorrows of the humble, of those who feel pain for the Church, for the people of God, who reach out to children and young people and know their anxieties and questions. These humble and nameless monks and nuns raise up their hands to God every day and night in prayer for the unity of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, resting on the sure foundations of the Orthodox faith and on the axiom that truth sets free, whereas extremism and separation isolate and distance people from salvation, since they cut them off from the Church.

The unity of the Church is a path of communion with God, true life, union with the saints, and a path to eternal blessedness. A monastic community can move from this life to eternity if it acquires full identification with the consciousness of the Church and senses and experiences the fact that in the Church we are all one, as Saint Porphyrios used to say. In this way the sanctification of the monastic community can contribute to the common transfiguring path in Christ of the entire body of the Church.



Pastoral Perspectives of the Ukrainian Autocephaly: A Personal Face to a Political Issue

FR. JOHN CHRYSAVGIS

In October 2018, the Ecumenical Patriarchate finally accepted the appeal by Ukrainian hierarchs for their restoration to canonical status and for the readmission of their faithful to full communion after a period of some two decades, during which time they were excluded from communion with the rest of the Orthodox world.

While much noise is made about these decisions being revolutionary or radical, it is important to remember that they did not appear suddenly or unexpectedly. Among other considerations—including canonical and jurisdictional reasons, which are often emphasized—there are specific historical relationships and special pastoral perspectives that led to the recent decision on the part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to grant autocephaly officially to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine January 5, 2019.

Briefly, the official historical relationships include five centuries of intimate and immediate relations between Ukraine and its Mother Church of Constantinople from 988 to 1458 when the Russian Orthodox Church, which included the Ukraine, declared itself autocephalous. There then followed a lengthy, often tumultuous association and alliance with the Ukrainian Orthodox

and the Church of Moscow, especially in the twentieth-century when the state of Soviet Ukraine was part of the atheist Soviet Union. Regrettably, throughout the latter period and to this day, Ukraine became a battleground of Russian authoritarianism and territorialism. Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union and establishment of Ukrainian state independence in 1991 (coincidentally also the year of the enthronement of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew), Orthodox Christians in Ukraine once again pursued an independent church and an immediate relationship with the Phanar. The Patriarchate of Moscow, however, consistently denied their request, which resulted in breakaway churches and faithful out of communion for an entire generation.

Thereafter, for the ensuing period of almost three decades, the Ecumenical Patriarchate—and particularly Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew—encouraged and even entreated Moscow to heal the divisions in Ukraine. For years, the Ecumenical Patriarchate mediated conversations through a special consultation including Russian and Ukrainian hierarchs. Sadly, albeit not surprisingly, the Patriarchate of Moscow withdrew from those negotiations. The Phanar clearly and publicly outlined to Moscow that it could not ignore the appeal or abandon millions of Orthodox faithful. The issue of autocephaly might have been discussed in a conciliar manner at the Holy and Great Council convened in Crete by the Ecumenical Patriarch in 2016; however, the churches – at Moscow’s insistence – agreed to withdraw the issue from the agenda.

The Wounded People of God

The tumult of these historical relationships led to the pastoral perspectives instrumental in the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s

decision to grant autocephaly and what needed to be considered for healing to begin in Ukraine. In a hierarchal, patriarchal, and institutional church such as ours, it is easy to forget the fundamental principle and essential objective of the church as the healing presence and transforming grace of God in the world. So often, we are overwhelmed by the external politics or internal conflicts that influence and impact believers, who comprise the soul and support of the Orthodox Church throughout the world. Whether we refer to this as the personal or pastoral dimension of church life, it is frequently overlooked in the heat of dissension and the challenge of division.

In my mind, then, the question of autocephaly in Ukraine transcends the exercise of right or the exhibition of might. It is ultimately about the priority of the people of God as the Body of Christ and the pastoral care essential to heal the brokenness and pain of: 1) being out of communion or in schism; 2) being marginalized from governing decisions and administrative policies; 3) being isolated from one's Orthodox brothers and sisters because of nationalism or an imbalanced relationship between church and state; and, 4) experiencing disappointment and disillusionment when lay believers witness clergy not resolving matters in a spirit of humility and forgiveness.

First, one must recognize with compassion the pain of separation and ostracization in Ukraine of—not just an individual bishop or isolated clergymen, and even a specific synod or particular bishops, but—an entire population of many millions whose sacramental life had been labeled invalid. No one has the right to assign an entire generation of parishes and faithful to hell by branding them as schismatics. Thus, the restoration of sanctioned communion by the Ecumenical Patriarch to Orthodox Christians in Ukraine was pastorally vital. Unfortunately, after the recognition of autocephaly, the Russian Orthodox Church

responded by breaking communion with all the churches under the Ecumenical Patriarchate, thereby further inflicting unnecessary pain on more people around the world who had communed and worshipped with each other for many years. A genuine pastoral perspective requires recognition of the pain that excommunication inflicts and prayer for its healing.

Secondly, one cannot ignore the sense of marginalization that many people feel in matters of governance in the church. Of course, the Orthodox Church can hardly pretend to function democratically, even at its most conciliar expression. Instead, at least at its best, it resembles a synodal dialogue among brother bishops and a mutual interdependence between hierarchy and laity. Still, the power to discern authority and authenticity in the church—what the Orthodox Liturgy calls “rightly dividing the word of truth”—is granted not so much to a hierarchal synod in isolation, still less to any hierarch individually, but to the entire people of God: “It seemed good to the apostles and elders with all the Church” (Acts 15:28). This was the mindset of the Holy and Great Council of 2016 at which four autocephalous churches tragically refused at the very last minute to attend. Healing requires pastoral recognition of the importance of inclusion (of both clergy and laity) and eventually the convening of a council to deal not only with matters of governance but to reflect on the church’s role and responsibility in a modern, pluralistic society.

Third, I would submit that, while issues of autocephaly and authority over geographical regions and jurisdictional territories, as well as the attending questions about canonical validity of orders and the punitive consequences of schisms, are doubtless vital to the unity and maturity of the Orthodox Church, most people—including many Orthodox themselves, along with certain bishops involved in the current crisis—are actually unaware that the importance of these issues actually pales in comparison to the

plight of isolationism and nationalism that have plagued Orthodoxy in recent centuries. These problems of isolationism and nationalism are what also define the context of the situation in Ukraine.

What became amply apparent at the Holy and Great Council of 2016 under monumental and appalling pressure—was that the Orthodox Church would neither readily nor voluntarily enter the twenty-first century without stubborn resistance, even fierce resentment. For me, the Church of Russia missed a vital opportunity to demonstrate true leadership at the Council, especially after it had already obstinately skewed its agenda and documents.

The Great Council may have been, but was not primarily about unity. Orthodox Christians may congratulate themselves about the oneness of the Church in doctrine and sacrament, which has long provided a lucrative selling point to outsiders, while hauntingly persisting as an elusive romantic notion for insiders. If unity and canonicity are anything but legalistic or pharisaic, then Orthodox Christians must surely admit their failure and hypocrisy on this level. So it is futile and fruitless to wave unity as a banner of protest or defense whenever internal problems arise. Regrettably, it is more convenient for Orthodox to dispute territorial boundaries than discuss contemporary issues. There is a greater security in priding ourselves on our liturgy and spirituality than collaborating to transcend parochialism and prejudice.

Fourth, from the people's perspective—the one of laity and even many clergy watching from the sidelines—the inability of bishops to transcend their fixation on power and money, or jurisdictional and territorial control, results in profound disappointment and disillusionment. They see bishops serving in long liturgies, asking each other for forgiveness, and in the same day hypocritically engaging in struggles for power and revenge.

Such clergy fall exceedingly short of being Christ-like models, who resolve matters in humility and forgiveness. Unfortunately, many believers pull away from the church when they witness such behavior. To restore the people's trust and the clergy's integrity, the pastoral ministry in the Body of Christ urgently needs to assume priority.

The Guiding Grace of God

My humble experience in the church is reassuring; the recognition that the grace of God guides the church and never abandons the church remains comforting. It is the hope and prayer of many millions that church leaders in both Russia and Ukraine will embrace the present moment as an opportunity of growth, enrichment, and solidarity for all of God's people in a region that has endured far too much suffering and among nations that have far more to gain from complementarity than conflict, both national and ecclesiastical.

The pastoral perspective is crucial in the current situation of Ukraine. For his part, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew felt responsible for restoring millions of Orthodox to communion. The church should always seek to embrace the spiritual interests of its faithful. The church should never serve as a vehicle to promote its own ambitious interests; and it should definitely not pursue or protect the interests of a state.



Penalty or Abuse of Power? Canonical Sanctions and Ukrainian Autocephaly

FR. NICHOLAS DENYSENKO

On October 11, 2018, the Ecumenical Patriarchate issued a statement concerning the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. The Patriarchate renewed its commitment to granting autocephaly to the Church in Ukraine, and heard the appeals of Filaret (Denysenko) and Makariy (Maletych). These two bishops had been deposed by the Moscow Patriarchate and had appealed the judgments rendered against them to the Constantinopolitan throne. Constantinople heard their appeals and annulled the sanctions imposed against both bishops by the Moscow Patriarchate, restoring them and their faithful to communion with the rest of the Orthodox Church. The official position of the Moscow Patriarchate is that the sanctions imposed were justified on the basis of the canonical violations committed by the clergy. For their part, the accused and convicted clergy claimed that politics motivated their removals from holy orders, and are therefore unjust.

Throughout the process of the implementation of Ukrainian autocephaly, one of the primary points of dispute among Orthodox theologians and Church leaders was the canonical justification for the annulment of the depositions of the two bishops. Recently, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has responded to the question

on this matter posed by Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, with reference to canons 9 and 17 of the Council of Chalcedon (451), which grant the patriarch of Constantinople the privilege to hear and adjudicate disputes between bishops.¹ While the Moscow Patriarchate has presented its dissenting opinion on the canonical basis for annulling canonical sanctions, the story of how these sanctions were imposed in the first place has been buried underneath the controversy surrounding the history of Filaret in particular.

The following section explores Moscow's imposition of canonical sanctions on clergy who led the movement for autocephaly in Ukraine in three historical periods. This review demonstrates that the canons became instruments of power to remove dissenting voices on autocephaly from the Church in Ukraine and provide a decisive advantage for those favoring the status quo of Ukrainian subordination to the Moscow Patriarchate.

Case Study 1: Canonical Depositions in 1920-21

The canonical deposition of priests in the eparchy of Kyiv in 1920-21 is the first example of the conflict between Ukrainian supporters of autocephaly and the bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate.² Originally, the primary objective of the autocephalists was the introduction of Ukrainian-language in church services such as the Divine Liturgy. The pre-conciliar

¹ See Patriarch Bartholomew's letter dated February 20, 2019, here: <https://www.patriarchate.org/-/letter-to-archbishop-of-albania-2019-01-14>. For the early history of the application of canons 9 and 17 from the council of Chalcedon, see Brian Daley, SJ, "The Meaning and Exercise of 'Primacies of Honor' in the Early Church," in *Primacy in the Church*, vol. 1: *The Office of Primate and the Authority of Councils*, ed. John Chryssavgis (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 2016), 46-7.

² Examples taken from Nicholas Denysenko, *The Orthodox Church in Ukraine: A Century of Separation* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2018).

liturgical commission preparing for the Moscow Council of 1917-18 prepared proposals for the translation of liturgical texts into Russian and Ukrainian. Ukrainian Orthodox had anticipated approval of the use of the vernacular, and were heartbroken when the Moscow Council did not approve these translations. The defeat of the proposal at the all-Ukrainian Council of 1918 stung even more, as reception of Ukrainian as a legitimate liturgical language was widely expected. The 1918 council permitted Ukrainian only for the reading of the Gospel on Pascha.³

The leaders of the Ukrainian autocephaly movement did not accept the dismissal of Ukrainian without a struggle. From the second half of the nineteenth century until the revolution, the Tsarist regime had intensified its efforts to promote Russian language throughout the empire, and had placed tight restrictions on Ukrainian-language publications. On the one hand, encouraging Russian language was part of a larger attempt to educate all the peoples of the empire; discouraging Ukrainian was aimed towards eradicating potential revolutionary threats to the imperial state. In this sense, these efforts cannot be reduced to Russian colonization of Ukraine. On the other hand, Ukrainian intellectuals received the ecclesial decisions of 1917-18 as the latest of a series of efforts to minimize the Ukrainian people by dismissing the legitimacy of their language. The pioneers of the autocephaly movement viewed the fall of the tsar as an opportunity to promote the Ukrainian language and restore the traditions of the Kyivan Metropolia before it came under Moscow's jurisdiction in 1686. Only canonical autocephaly would create the conditions necessary for such a restoration, but a number of supporters of autocephaly were unilaterally removed from the all-

³ This prohibition was eased during a meeting of the patriarchal synod in Ukraine in 1921 – they decided to allow a Ukrainian Gospel after the Slavonic one, along with a homily and Ukrainian pronunciation of Slavonic for all liturgical services.

Ukrainian council to facilitate the bishops' implementation of their agenda.

For pro-autocephaly Ukrainians, this series of events confirmed their lack of trust in Moscow to honor the rules of conventional proceedings. The Ukrainians therefore turned from convention to subversion in their tactics, negotiating with the Soviet authorities independently of the bishops of the patriarchal exarchate in Ukraine to obtain use of parish communities for Ukrainian-language liturgies, a path that resulted in the official registration of Ukrainian parishes. After tolerating this for a short while, the Russian bishops in Ukraine responded forcefully, by suspending and deposing Ukrainian clergy who presided at such services without explicit episcopal blessings from the ranks of holy orders in 1920-21.

The bishops made these decisions from the canonical power they had over the lower clergy, and the result was twofold. First, these canonical depositions essentially excised Ukrainians from the Church who threatened the internal unity of the Moscow Patriarchate. Second, their removal from the ranks of the clergy delegitimized them – any and all activities involving suspended or deposed Ukrainian clergy from this point forward be illegitimate by definition, evidenced by a letter from the synod of patriarchal bishops in Ukraine addressing all Orthodox faithful and reminding them that “those who are deposed from orders and priests who are suspended from liturgical service are not permitted to perform any church services or sacraments, and that celebrating them does not yield any gracious power.”⁴

It is at this early point in the modern history of the Ukrainian Church that canonicity became a crucial feature of ecclesial identity. The question of who is and who is not canonical shapes the entire movement for Ukrainian autocephaly. The effect

⁴ Cited in Denysenko, 31.

of the decisions of the Moscow Patriarchate revealed the power dynamics at play in the struggle between the Ukrainian clergy and the patriarchal bishops in Ukraine: by deposing all of the clergy who participated in Ukrainian-language services, the Moscow Patriarchate essentially eliminated pro-Ukrainian, pro-autocephaly members of the clergy who could otherwise wield influence in restoring momentum for obtaining canonical autocephaly for the Ukrainian Church.

Case Study 2: Deposition of Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) Bishops in 1942

The next two case studies essentially follow this pattern of imposing canonical sanctions to eliminate opposition from within the Church. Our second example occurred during World War II, when Ukraine was under German occupation. Nazi cruelty was no less severe than the Soviet version, but it was different, and the Germans allowed the Ukrainians to resume Orthodox Church life.

The opportunity to begin reconstruction of the Orthodox Church throughout Ukraine began in 1941. The problem was one of jurisdiction, because the occupied portions of Ukraine included those that had belonged to Poland. The Orthodox Church of Poland received autocephaly in 1924, and it had a significant Ukrainian population. The leaders of the Ukrainian Church disagreed on the proper canonical decisions to observe for restoring Church life. One cohort of bishops adopted autonomy under the Moscow Patriarchate as the most recent authoritative canonical status from the Moscow and Kyiv councils of 1918. Another cohort of bishops honored the tomos of autocephaly given to Poland as authoritative – this tomos declared the 1686 transfer of Kyiv to Moscow as uncanonical. Metropolitan Dionisii of Warsaw approved the establishment of an autocephalous Church in

Ukraine on the basis of the tomos given to Poland. He appointed Metropolitan Policarp (Sikorski) to act as the senior bishop of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, and Policarp began organizing Church life, which included the use of Ukrainian for the liturgy.

The conflict between the two cohorts of bishops – autonomous and autocephalous – intensified, and eventually resulted in a response from Moscow. A series of events during the war complicated matters. First, the clergy of the 1921 UAOC who remained in Ukraine sought entry into the 1942 UAOC. As a canonical Church, the 1942 UAOC decided to receive these clergy as they were (в суцтoму сaні, in their “true orders”), consistent with their ordinations from the 1921 church despite its canonical deficiencies.⁵ The 1942 UAOC composed a rite of return of priests from a different ordination as a method of receiving the 1921 clergy without re-ordaining them. The rite consists of prayers of absolution followed by the laying-on-of-hands and a prayer.

The autonomous bishops rejected the canonicity of this rite and referred to this decision as a heretical act. The autonomists called for the canonical deposition of all clergy who joined the UAOC, concelebrated with it, and commemorated its bishops. The UAOC responded angrily, pointing out that the autonomists were the only Orthodox to describe the 1921 UAOC as heretical, and that the execution of many of their clergy resulted in the bloodshed of martyrs “that consecrated their order(s).” On March 28, 1942, the synod of the Moscow Patriarchate deposed Metropolitan Policarp and all of the UAOC bishops on March 28, 1942, for “leading the Church into schism.” Metropolitan Sergei accused Policarp of creating an alliance with the fascists and betraying the interests of the people. The justification for the decision of the Moscow Patriarchate was that Ukraine remained their canonical territory,

⁵ For a complete account, see *ibid.*, 79-83.

even though the bishops of the UAOC traced their apostolic succession to the Church in Poland, not the Moscow Patriarchate.

This event demonstrates another instance in the pattern originating in 1920. By canonically deposing the bishops of the UAOC in Ukraine, the Moscow Patriarchate again attempted to remove pro-autocephaly clergy from the Church. This particular action was accompanied by sharp political overtones, as Metropolitan Sergei's polemical assault accused the autocephalist bishops of collaborating with the fascists and Nazis, adding another layer to an allegedly illegitimate identity.

Case Study 3: Deposition and Anathematization of Metropolitan Filaret (1992, 1997)

Our third and final case study is the one receiving all of the media attention, the deposition (1992) and anathematization (1997) of Filaret.⁶ When the Soviet government permitted the legal registration of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) in 1989, and the UAOC elevated its status to a patriarchate in 1990, the resurgence of the autocephalous movement in Ukraine unleashed a barrage of exchanges of blows between autocephalists and the Moscow Patriarchate that followed the pattern established in 1921, only with more intensity.

After the Moscow Patriarchate's attempt to elevate the stature of its Church in Ukraine by changing its canonical status from exarchate to "broad autonomy," Metropolitan Filaret (patriarchal exarch to Ukraine) likely realized that the autocephalists were impervious to the usual strategy of polemical dismissal as "uncanonical." He galvanized his own episcopate – some say with the cruel force of a dictator – to appeal to Moscow for autocephaly, twice – in November of 1991 and April of 1992.

⁶ For a complete account, see *ibid.*, 170-81.

Moscow responded by accusing Filaret of leading the Church into schism and attempted to force him to retire. When Filaret refused after initially agreeing, his own bishops abandoned him by gathering in Kharkiv in May 1992 to elect a new primate. Moscow effectively excised Filaret from the Church by not only deposing him, but adopting the most brutal nuclear option of anathematization in 1997.

The context surrounding the events of 1991-92 provide clarity on the situation unfolding in the Ukrainian Church. Filaret secured the signatures of all the bishops of the Church in Ukraine that formally appealed for autocephaly from Moscow. There is certainly evidence suggesting that Filaret used coercive tactics to secure signatures of reluctant bishops, such as reassigning bishops to undesirable eparchies as punishment for dissidence.⁷ Nevertheless, only three bishops ultimately withdrew their support for autocephaly in April of 1992, despite Filaret's own abuse of canonical power in transferring bishops who refused to support his position.

The news of Moscow's deposition of Filaret was dominated in the media by a series of accusations that he had violated his monastic vows by having a common-law wife and children. It was convenient that Moscow publicized Filaret's violation of his monastic vows only when his struggle with the patriarchal synod in Moscow came to a head in April of 1992. He was charged with leading the Church into schism, and publicly depicted as a corrupt despot. In previous cases, Moscow accused the Ukrainians fighting for autocephaly of Nazism and nationalistic tendencies. In Filaret's case, the news of his personal transgressions added weight to Moscow's campaign against him. To this day, Filaret vehemently denies the charges against him. In 1992, then, Moscow perpetuated their pattern of simply removing the most formidable supporter of

⁷ Ibid., 173.

Ukrainian autocephaly through the imposition of canonical sanctions. Currently, the Moscow Patriarchate continues to use the threat of canonical interdict in the present situation. When two metropolitans of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) participated in the unification council on December 15, 2018, the Moscow Patriarchate immediately suspended them, even though Patriarch Bartholomew had received both bishops under his omophorion on the previous day. Moscow imposed the same bans on clergy who left the UOC-MP for the Orthodox Church in Ukraine (OCU) after the unification council.⁸

Conclusions

Were the canonical depositions from holy orders imposed by Moscow on three generations of pro-autocephaly Ukrainian clergy justified canonically, or abuses of power? In these cases, both the judges and the suspects argue that their actions were justified. The primary problem revealed by this pattern is the collision between power and impartiality. The bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate had the power to impose sanctions, and in each stage of Ukrainian autocephaly, they exercised that power to simply remove the ordained leaders of the pro-autocephaly cohort in an attempt to dissolve the movement. The accused and convicted members of the clergy claimed that political conditions made an impartial hearing of their appeals impossible.

When the accused and convicted claim that they cannot receive an impartial hearing from the Church that imposed the sanctions, the only solution is to invite a third party to adjudicate

⁸ In one case, a bishop suspended the priest and declared that the bread and cup offered at the Divine Liturgy would not become the Lord's body and blood if the priest presided at Liturgy in spite of the suspension.

the appeal. The history of the Ukrainian autocephalous movement is one of dozens of painful and polemical conflicts with the Moscow Patriarchate. In this environment, it would be unlikely for Moscow to consider a Ukrainian appeal impartially.

Filaret and Makariy appealed to the Ecumenical Patriarchate as the first among the Orthodox Churches, knowing that the canons of the council of Chalcedon granted Constantinople the authority to adjudicate appeals. Dissenters might claim that Constantinople is misinterpreting these canons and that the ecumenical patriarch is not an impartial mediator, but to date, no one has identified an alternative mechanism for a third party appeals process grounded in the canonical tradition of the Church so that power is not abused by imposing canonical sanctions to silence dissident voices in the Church.



What has Korea to do with Ukraine? Russia's Tragic Assault on Korean Unity

FR. PERRY HAMALIS

Readers may legitimately wonder, why is “Korea” the focus of an essay in a volume examining issues related to Orthodoxy in Ukraine? What might the status of the Orthodox Church in Korea reveal about the relationship between the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Moscow Patriarchate, and the granting of autocephaly to the Church in Ukraine? In short, *what has Korea to do with Ukraine?* An analysis of recent events within the Church in Korea offers an unexpected but clear picture of two sharply different theological visions, one manifested by the ethos and actions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the other manifested by the ethos and actions of the Patriarchate of Moscow. These two contrasting visions confront each other not only on the Korean peninsula today, as has been described incisively in the August 2017 and April 2019 interviews given by His Eminence Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea, but across East Asia, the diaspora, and the Church worldwide.

We can begin with an undeniable and tragic fact: *The exemplary and exceptional unity of Eastern Orthodox Christians in the Republic of Korea is in the process of being destroyed today by the recent actions of the Moscow Patriarchate.* To grasp the seriousness and diabolical nature of the current situation, one can examine the

three main components of the above-stated claim: (1) the “exemplary” unity of the Church in Korea, (2) the “exceptional” character of Orthodox unity in Korea, and (3) the Moscow Patriarchate as the source of the division threatening Korean Orthodox unity.

The Exemplary and Exceptional Unity...

First, the unity of Orthodox Christians in Korea has been *exemplary* because, for decades, it has instantiated the principle of “one city, one bishop, one Church.” This ecclesiological principle has grounded Orthodoxy since the early Church, and it is fully congruent with an exact interpretation of Orthodox canon law. Specifically, “One city, one bishop, one Church” expresses the fundamental claim and ancient practice of the Orthodox Church that *the jurisdictional boundaries of autocephalous churches and of bishops within those churches are based on geography, and nothing more than geography*. Stated differently, all Orthodox Christians in one geographical region should be under the spiritual care of one presiding hierarch. Eastern Orthodox Christians in Korea have lived this reality, this true unity. Not only are all *Korean* natives who became Orthodox under the *omophorion* (the spiritual care and ecclesiastical jurisdiction) of the Metropolitan of Korea of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, *all Eastern Orthodox Christians living in Korea*—regardless of their ethnic background or country of birth—have lived in unity under one bishop. Thus, in Korea there has been no “jurisdictional overlap.” Instead, there has been a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual *united* Orthodox Church, comprised of many parishes across the Korean peninsula, and led and cared for by a single local hierarch.

Most significantly, this was not a unity in name only; nor was it a unity that annihilated cultural diversity. Remarkably, the

Orthodox faithful of Korea have been living as *one spiritual family* comprised of over 5,000 native Koreans, expatriates, and visitors from a wide range of countries including Russia, Ukraine, and other former Soviet states, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, and the U.S., many of whom emigrated to Korea in the 1990s after the collapse of communism in Russia and eastern Europe. For decades, the ethnically diverse faithful have understood themselves as being one ecclesiastic body. At the St. Nicholas Cathedral in Seoul, for example, Orthodox faithful of all cultural backgrounds share a common “*agape meal*” every Sunday and feast day after the Divine Liturgy; their children are all friends and attend catechism and summer camp together; and, most importantly, all of the sacraments they celebrate commemorate the one local bishop, who himself commemorates the Ecumenical Patriarch. At the same time, the distinct pastoral needs and cultural backgrounds of the multi-ethnic faithful have been respected and honored. The local language, Korean, is the dominant language of worship at all parishes; however, liturgies and other holy services in Slavonic are prayed every Sunday and on major feast days at additional parishes and chapels. In addition, the pastoral needs of non-Korean natives are met by clergy who speak Russian, Ukrainian, English, and Greek, and who all commemorate the same local bishop. Twice a year in Seoul, the Metropolis of Korea even hosts an “International Festival” where the food, music, and dance of the faithful’s native lands are celebrated and showcased for the local community. Non-Orthodox who attend the festivals are struck by “borderless” unity of Orthodox Christians, despite the political tensions between their native countries. The structure and spirit of the Church in Korea, therefore, embody and bear witness to the ecclesiological and canonical *ideal* of Orthodoxy, a communion that respects otherness.

The Exemplary and *Exceptional* Unity...

Second, the exemplary unity of Orthodox Christians in Korea is *exceptional* because it is one of very few places in the diaspora¹ where one witnesses strict congruence with the Church's canonical order. The fact that congruence to Orthodoxy's ecclesiology has become a "rare exception" in the diaspora is a scandal of appalling proportions—a betrayal of the gospel and hypocrisy beyond description. The words of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, written in 1964 about the canonical problem of the diaspora, still resonate with convicting force today:

"[F]or the first time in history division belongs to the very structure of the Church, for the first time *canonicity* seems strangely disconnected from its fundamental "content" and purpose—to assure, express, defend and fulfill the Church as Divinely given *Unity*, for the first time, in other terms, one seems to find normal a multiplicity of "jurisdictions." Truly we must wake up and be horrified by this situation. We must find in ourselves the courage to face it and to re-think it in the light of the genuine Orthodox doctrine and tradition, no matter what it will cost to our petty human likes and dislikes. ..."*For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*" (1 Peter 4:17)"²

¹ The term "diaspora" in this context refers to the geographical regions around the globe that fall outside the borders of all autocephalous Orthodox Churches. Traditionally, Canon 28 of the Council of Chalcedon has been interpreted to mean that the entire diaspora falls within the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, until such time as the Ecumenical Patriarchate creates from them new autocephalous Churches. In this respect, "the Church of Constantinople continually decreases and decreases" in its jurisdictional scope, as has been stated by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in a recent interview. See: <https://www.ecupatria.org/2019/03/22/interview-of-ecumenical-patriarch-bartholomew-by-z-rakocevic-for-the-serbian-newspaper-politika/>.

² Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, "Problems of Orthodoxy in America: The Canonical Problem," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 8 no. 2 (1964), 64.

Across North and South America, across Western Europe, across Australia, and across South-East Asia one looks for the Orthodox Church and one finds a divided witness, a multiplicity of jurisdictions in the same geographical region. However, *this has not been the case in Korea*. Korea has been a sign of hope, a rare glimpse into Orthodoxy's potential for witness and evangelism when we are united as one local family under one local bishop, honoring diverse cultural heritage but prioritizing our unity in Christ (cf. Gal. 3:28). The Eastern Orthodox of Korea have heeded the prophetic words of Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) of Essex:

"I do not know a Greek Christ, a Russian Christ, an English Christ, an Arab Christ...Christ, for me, is everything, the supra-cosmic Being. ...When we limit the person of Christ, when we bring Him down to the level of nationalities, we immediately lose everything and fall into darkness. Then the way is open for hatred between nations, for hostility between social groups."³

Despite living in the perpetual shadow of political division, the Orthodox faithful of Korea have lived in exemplary and exceptional unity in Christ...*until now*.

In the process of being destroyed by the recent actions of the Patriarchate of Moscow

This God-pleasing unity was assaulted by the Russian Orthodox Church when, on December 28, 2018 and at subsequent meetings on February 27, 2019 and April 4, 2019, the Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate established a new Metropolis of Singapore and South-East Asia, including within it a new Diocese

³ Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov), *Words of Life* (Essex: Stavropegic Monastery of St. John the Baptist, 1998), 20-21.

of Korea. Metropolitan Sergiy (Chashin) was named as the Moscow Patriarchate's new Metropolitan of Singapore and South-East Asia and Archbishop Theophan (Kim) was named as the presiding hierarch of the Diocese of Korea. In recent decades—well before both Moscow's boycott of the Holy and Great Council of Crete (2016) and the Ecumenical Patriarchate's recent granting of Autocephaly to the Church in Ukraine—there have been many threats and provocations by the Moscow Patriarchate toward the thriving Orthodox community of Korea. However, nothing as callous or as contrary to the ethos of Orthodoxy as this recent development.

The Moscow Patriarchate's appointment of a new Metropolitan and Exarch of Singapore and, under him, an Archbishop of Korea within the exact geographical jurisdiction of the existing Metropolis of Singapore and South Asia (Ecumenical Patriarchate) and the Metropolis of Korea (Ecumenical Patriarchate) are a direct violation of the canonical order of the Orthodox Church, and of the Decision of both the 4th Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference (**Chambésy, June 6-13, 2009**), which was signed by the representatives of all autocephalous Eastern Orthodox Churches (including Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk)⁴ and the Statement of the Council of Crete on "The Orthodox Diaspora," signed by the 10 participating Autocephalous Churches. It is a violation of the canonical order of the Orthodox Church because it transgresses the "one city, one bishop, one Church" or "territoriality" principle of Orthodox ecclesiology. And it is a violation of the Decision of the 4th Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference and the statement of the Holy and Great Council of Crete on "The Orthodox Diaspora" because it

⁴ See the full Pre-Conciliar document on "The Orthodox Diaspora" and list of signatories at: <https://www.holycouncil.org/-/preconciliar-diaspora>

transgresses the agreed upon statement (#7): *“The Orthodox Churches are bound to avoid actions that could hinder the above process for a canonical resolution of the issue of the Diaspora, such as the conferment of hierarchal titles that already exist.”*⁵

The timing of these acts by the Moscow Patriarchate is undeniably connected with the Unification Council held in Ukraine (December 15, 2018) and the subsequent granting of the *“Tomos of Autocephaly”* to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine on January 5, 2019. However, it also seems undeniable that the developments in Ukraine provided a pretext for the Moscow Patriarchate to engage in unrestricted expansionist practices across the diaspora that have been planned for many years. This motivation could not be more clearly seen than in the words spoken by Metropolitan Hilarion immediately following the Moscow Patriarchate’s December 28th Synod meeting: *“We now have some 1,000 parishes in the diaspora and several dioceses, and, of course, we have not agreed, and especially in this situation [of Ukraine] we cannot agree that Constantinople has an exclusive right to ministry to the diaspora.”* He then continued, claiming that the Moscow Patriarchate, *“will now act as if they [Constantinople] do not exist at all because our purpose is missionary, our task is to educate, we are creating these [new ecclesiastical] structures for ministerial care [of] our flock, there can be no such deterring factors here.”*⁶

The events and words noted above express but a small fraction of the actions that have grown out of the Moscow Patriarchate, especially in recent decades. They embody a mindset that has no defense from an Orthodox canonical, ecclesiological, and ethical perspective. Taking just one example, in the above quote, Metropolitan Hilarion claims that the Moscow Patriarchate

⁵ <https://www.holycouncil.org/-/diaspora>

⁶ Quote is taken from the Interfax article dated 29 December 2018: <http://www.interfax-religion.com/print.php?act=news&id=14831>.

is creating new dioceses in South-East Asia “for ministerial care of our flock.” But what flock of the Moscow Patriarchate exists in the Republic of Korea—to whom will you minister? *There is only one flock there*—an exemplary and exceptional spiritual family united across all ethnic, racial, gender, linguistic, or class distinctions—and *it already has a shepherd*: Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea.

Instead of supporting the local faithful, the Moscow Patriarchate is dividing them. Instead of uniting them in Christ the Moscow Patriarchate is separating them again as ethnicities. Instead of offering to collaborate in evangelizing the non-Christians of Korea, the Moscow Patriarchate is proselytizing, stealing sheep *from the existing Orthodox Church itself*.

This is truly a horrifying scene, a tragedy and setback for Orthodox witness beyond words. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann—a true Orthodox from Russia—understood what is at stake. Archimandrite Sophrony—a true Orthodox from Russia—understood what is at stake. But have today’s Orthodox leaders in Moscow understood what is at stake? Not simply “jurisdictional territory” in Korea, in Ukraine, or in any other part of the diaspora, but the very ecclesiology, ethos and canonical structures that support Orthodoxy.

Will God be merciful? *“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”* (1 Peter 4:17)



Ukrainian Autocephaly: Reflections from the Diaspora

FR. BOHDAN HLADIO

In April 2018, the Ecumenical Patriarchate began the process which culminated in the Orthodox Church in Ukraine (OCU) receiving a tomos of autocephaly in January of this year. The reaction of Orthodox Ukrainians in the diaspora to this event can be summed up in two words: someone cares!

For centuries Ukraine was a stateless nation, its people living on the territories of the Russian or Austro-Hungarian empires, Polish commonwealth, or the Kingdom of Romania. Though Ukraine achieved “Republic” status within the Soviet Union, it was in fact still treated as a colonial territory by the political leaders in Moscow. Both Russian imperial as well as Soviet historiography regarded Ukraine, its people, its language and its culture as part of a “great Russian” nation, with no real identity of its own.

Though Kyivan Rus’ was Christianized by the Church of Constantinople in the 10th century, due to Mongol and Tatar incursions, as well as the political ascendancy of Muscovy in the 14th and 15th, centuries the centre of Church and political life moved north to Muscovy, though Kyiv remained a Metropolitan see under Constantinople. The decision by the Ecumenical

Patriarchate of Constantinople to transfer responsibility for consecrating the Metropolitan of Kyiv to the Church of Moscow in 1686, though made for practical reasons, became a great source of vexation and resentment for Orthodox Ukrainians.

Over the centuries the hopes of Ukrainians to regain both political as well as ecclesiastical independence intensified. Though the attempts by the Moscow Patriarchate, beginning in 1917, to suppress Ukrainian aspirations for its own autocephalous Orthodox Church were unsuccessful, the Churches which did exist, both in Ukraine as well as in the diaspora, bore for decades the cross of isolation. Following the reception of the Ukrainian Orthodox Churches of Canada and the United States into the bosom of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (in 1990 and 1995, respectively), a normal and healthy interaction between these churches and world Orthodoxy began.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Churches which arose in Ukraine during the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in 1989 and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyivan Patriarchate in 1992) were not seeking isolation, but rather recognition, from world Orthodoxy, specifically from the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

As a Ukrainian Orthodox priest of the Ecumenical Patriarchate I felt the discomfort of the schism more than most. Visiting Ukraine was very challenging. No matter which Church I visited, it could be (and often was) perceived as an act of politics rather than piety. The Moscow Patriarchate Churches in Ukraine serve (with rare exceptions) in Church Slavonic with the Russian (rather than Ukrainian) pronunciation. Unless a person has studied this language, it is relatively unintelligible to Ukrainian or Russian speakers, similar to the intelligibility of biblical or liturgical Greek for most speakers of modern Greek. While visiting Ukraine in 2006, I attended a Divine Liturgy at the Kyiv Caves monastery served in

Slavonic; that same evening I went to St. Michael's Cathedral (then of the Kyivan Patriarchate, currently the Metropolitan Cathedral of the OCU) where the Akathist was served in Ukrainian. The contrast was stark: at the Monastery of the Caves I felt as if I was in Russia (even the signage was in Russian), whereas at St. Michael's Cathedral I felt at home in Ukraine.

For Ukrainian Orthodox Christians in the diaspora the bestowal of autocephaly means three things: *acknowledgment, justice, and respect.*

It acknowledges that Ukraine exists, as a state with a particular culture, language, tradition, history, and Church.

It is an act of justice, the correction of an historical and ecclesiastical anomaly. Why should Ukraine, with its more-than-millennial history as an Orthodox nation, not have an autocephalous Orthodox Church as other traditionally Orthodox countries, nations and lands do? The repeal of the 1686 agreement between Constantinople and Moscow by the Ecumenical Patriarchate was regarded by Ukrainians as an especially meaningful act of redress.

Finally, respect: Orthodox Ukrainians, notwithstanding their deep piety, millennial history, and martyric sacrifices, have generally felt denigrated. The unfortunate result of the irregular consecrations of the Kyiv Autocephalous Sobor of October 1921 was a legacy of suspicion towards the Ukrainian Church which has persisted to this day. We can now, with gratitude to God, take our place as brothers and sisters in Christ with all the Orthodox peoples of the world.

When visiting Ukraine during Soviet times, one thing people always said was, "We don't want luxuries, we don't want people to give us anything, we just want to be able to work and have a normal life." This attitude is, I think, exactly the way

members of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine see life after the tomos.

While Ukrainian autocephaly has brought joy to many, three troubling realities need to be acknowledged.

First, we must note the failure, to date, of other local churches to recognize Ukrainian autocephaly. Though hopefully a temporary phenomenon, it hinders the growth and development of the OCU when such help and direction could do the greatest amount of good. The early years of life are always the most formative. (What has been especially vexing for Ukrainians is the fact that certain hierarchs of the Church of Poland have been very critical of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's actions in Ukraine, yet the Church in Poland received autocephaly in 1924 from the Ecumenical Patriarchate based on the fact that part of the territory of the Polish state had been within the borders of the Kyivan Metropolia.)

Second, the polemical stance taken by certain local churches, hierarchs, clergy, and individuals towards the OCU cannot bear good fruit. Ukrainians have had considerable practice in developing a "fortress" mentality. When the general attitude is "everyone is against us" it is much more difficult to cultivate constructive, healthy relationships with "strangers" (*ξένοι, чужі*). As has been noted, isolation has been a bane for Ukrainian Orthodox Churches both in the homeland as well as in the diaspora for decades.

The third and final point, and perhaps the most problematical one, is the failure of the Moscow Patriarchate Church in Ukraine to accept the autocephaly of the OCU. On the one hand, it is not surprising, as over 300 years of colonial domination by the Russian and Soviet Empires cannot help but have left their mark, both politically and ecclesiastically. On the other hand, however, it is a tragedy that all the time, energy, and

resources which will continue to be invested in polemical agitation against the OCU, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew will not be used for Orthodox evangelization, Christian education, or charitable endeavors.

The position of the Moscow Patriarchate regarding the tomos is understandable. Of course, the Russian Federation does not want to lose its influence in Ukraine; and, following the Russian invasion of the Donbas and its annexation of Crimea, the only instrument of influence left there is the Moscow Patriarchate Church.

Nevertheless, two things should be remembered.

First, there is a war ongoing, which is tragic. The leadership of an ostensibly Orthodox nation has been waging a war against a neighboring Orthodox nation for almost five years. While in Ukraine, I met people who have lost family members due to this egregious breach of international law, and soldiers who have been permanently maimed defending their country. The question therefore arises: why would reasonable Ukrainians wish to belong to a Church closely allied to the government of a country killing its citizens?

Second, as emphasized by His All-Holiness, Bartholomew, the Moscow Patriarchate Church in Ukraine has not had any success whatsoever in healing a schism that lasted for almost 30 years. At some point, when tens of millions of people are in schism for decades for non-dogmatic reasons, someone needs to do something. I am confident that I can speak for the tens of millions of Ukrainians, both in Ukraine as well as in the diaspora, when I say: "Thank God Patriarch Bartholomew took this bold and courageous step! Thank God the Ecumenical Patriarchate cares!"

What does autocephaly mean for Ukrainians? Dignity. Justice. Equality. Respect. The spurious and unchristian attacks against "schismatics" (which are, in fact, an attack against the grace

and authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate) and the withholding of recognition of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine by other local Churches are an affront – sometimes a very hypocritical and disingenuous affront – to the Orthodox people of Ukraine.

Such a state of affairs cannot help but reflect poorly upon those who disagree with the Ecumenical Patriarchate's decision, and upon the Orthodox Church as a whole.



Pastoral Care for the Ukrainian Orthodox

FR. CYRIL HOVORUN

Ukrainian people are among the most religious in Europe. According to the study “Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe” conducted in 2017 by the Pew Research Center,¹ 78% of the entire Ukrainian population identify as Orthodox. Twelve per cent attend church weekly, which is twice as many as in Russia, by comparison. Religious affiliations and practices are not spread evenly in Ukraine, however. Those people who live in the western regions of the country go to the church more frequently than those who live in the east.

Unfortunately, the most religious regions of Ukraine’s west, such as Volhynia, were affected most severely by the ecclesiastical schism that happened soon after Ukraine regained its independence in 1991. Millions of devoted Orthodox Christians, who regularly attend church and participate in the sacraments, found themselves cut off from the communion with global Orthodoxy. Social sciences can measure religiosity quantitatively, but not qualitatively. When it comes to the *quality* of religious life, one can be only subjective.

¹ <https://www.pewforum.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2017/05/CEUP-FULL-REPORT.pdf>

From my many meetings and conversations with the lay faithful from the Patriarchate of Kyiv and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, I came to the conclusion that their religious life is intensive and yet healthy. It does not feature any significant fanatical or fundamentalist approach. Most “non-canonical” Orthodox that I met were open-minded, appreciating others, and loving Christ.

At the same time, they had to face relentless accusations of being “schismatics” and deprived of any saving grace. They were declared non-church. Even their baptism was questioned by their “canonical” Orthodox brothers and sisters. Some cases of how the “non-canonical” Orthodox Christians were treated are outrageous, as evidenced by the following example.² On December 31, 2017, in the city of Zaporizhia, a 39-year old man committed suicide by jumping from the 8th floor of a building. He fell on a 2-year old boy who was walking nearby with his father. Both the man and the boy died immediately. Stricken by unbearable grief, the parents of the boy came to a church of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine to arrange a burial service. When they mentioned to the priest that the boy had been baptized in the Kyiv Patriarchate, the priest categorically refused to offer the boy commemoration service. They went to another church, also of the Moscow Patriarchate. There, the priests also asked them to leave the church without offering any pastoral assistance. The priests of the Moscow Patriarchate, who demonstrated such an attitude to the grief-stricken parents, were completely supported by their bishop, Metropolitan Luka Kovalenko, and later on by the synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. The synod at its session on March 14, 2018, approved the decisions made by the priests in

² <https://www.christiantimes.com/article/moscow-led-church-in-ukraine-refuses-to-bury-boy-because-he-was-christened-in-a-rival-denomination/73505.htm>

Zaporizhia and stated that the church services can be offered only to the baptized members of the church.³ The “schismatics” for the synod were not a church and not even baptized. Such an attitude was for decades a heavy burden on the consciousness of those faithful who belonged to the unrecognized Orthodox churches in Ukraine.

The hostile attitude towards the unrecognized churches from the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine increased under the leadership of Metropolitan Onufriy Berezovskiy, who in 2014 succeeded Metropolitan Volodymyr Sabodan (1935-2014). He has led his church to the self-imposed isolation from the Ukrainian society and other Ukrainian churches. During his tenure, attempts at developing relationships with other Christian groups became practically non-existent. In comparison, such attempts were repeatedly made under Metropolitan Volodymyr, although they were blocked, nevertheless, by Moscow, illustrated by the following example.

From 2007 to 2009, I was the chairman of the Department for external church relations of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the Moscow Patriarchate. In my position, I tried to establish a dialogue with the uncanonical groups in Ukraine, primarily the Patriarchate of Kyiv. In my attempts, I was completely supported by Metropolitan Volodymyr, who also wanted a genuine dialogue and rapprochement with other Christians in Ukraine. On September 9, 2009, the synod of the church under the leadership of Metropolitan Volodymyr adopted a decision to renew a commission for the dialogue with the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and to establish a commission to discuss a

³ Minutes #1: <http://sinod.church.ua/2018/04/26/zhurnali-zasidannya-svyashhennogo-sinodu-ukrajinskoji-pravoslavnoji-cerkvi-vid-14-bereznnya-2018-roku/>

possibility of dialogue with the Patriarchate of Kyiv.⁴ The initiative to set up both dialogues was mine, and it was supported by both Metropolitan Volodymyr and the synod of the church. This initiative, however, was not accepted by Moscow, which took drastic steps to prevent it. At the following session of its synod on October 10, 2009, the Russian Orthodox Church removed me from the jurisdiction of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and placed me in Moscow.⁵ I did not give my consent for this decision and actually learned about it from the Internet. Following this synodal decision, there were no more genuine attempts for dialogue with the unrecognized churches in Ukraine.

Nevertheless, from the side of the unrecognized churches, particularly the Patriarchate of Kyiv, attempts to contact Moscow in order to find a solution to the Ukrainian schism continued. Thus, the primate of this church (Filaret) approached the Russian Orthodox Church with a request to lift the anathemas, which had been imposed on him in 1997. On November 16, 2017, he sent a letter to Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and the council of bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church (held from November 29 to December 2, 2017). In this letter, he asked for “forgiveness for everything that I have sinned by word, by deed, and by all my feelings. I also forgive everyone from the bottom of my heart.” Filaret asked the Russian church to “take proper decisions to put the end to the existent antagonism. Namely, to consider void all the decisions that impede the above-mentioned [reconciliation], including the ones about suspension and anathemas.” It is also noteworthy that Filaret signed his petition not as a patriarch or even a bishop, but as “co-brother.”⁶

⁴ Minutes #45: <http://sinod.church.ua/2014/01/15/zasidannya-9-veresnya-2009-roku/#more-1180>

⁵ Minutes #97: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/810642.html>

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/yevstr/posts/1478723815509231>

Filaret effectively humiliated himself and implied that he is neither a recognized patriarch nor even a bishop. He made this step towards reconciliation despite the criticism this provoked in Ukrainian society. He was accused of “betraying the Ukrainian standpoint” in the conflict with Russia. He nevertheless did what no one expected him to do—make the first step towards the Russian church and asking it to give some solution to his personal issue of anathema and to the issue of the Ukrainian schism. The response of the Russian church, however, was cold and formal: the council of its bishops appointed a commission to consider the case,⁷ which was simply a way to say “no” to Filaret.

Filaret appealed to the council of the Russian bishops as an institution eligible to lift the anathema against him, because in 1997 a similar council had imposed anathema against him. That the council appointed a commission to study his case meant that the decision was postponed to at least the next council of bishops that would not be convened for several years. Filaret, who was then 88 years-old, could not wait and appealed to the Ecumenical Patriarchate as an institution, which could solve the problem that the Russian church refused to solve. This step, thus, was canonical and legitimate. Unlike the Russian church, which all of these years that the Ukrainian issue existed, only imitated giving solution to it, the Ecumenical Patriarchate offered an effective solution that put the end to the schism.

At its session on October 9-11, 2018, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate declared that the faithful of the non-canonical churches “have been restored to communion with the Church.”⁸ This was an important pastoral decision, which relieved millions of faithful Ukrainians from the consciousness of

⁷ Definition of the council of bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5074551.html>

⁸ Communique of the Ecumenical Patriarchate: <https://www.patriarchate.org/-/communiq-1>

being second-class Christians. It also made impossible manipulations with their canonical status, like the one in Zaporizhia, where a child was refused burial service on the pretext of being baptized in a non-canonical church. By the same synodal decision, the primates of the Kyiv Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, Filaret and Makariy, respectively, were restored to the ranks of bishops. Constantinople did this in the frame of its own historical and canonical right to receive and review appeals from other Orthodox jurisdictions and to better establish pastoral care for the Orthodox faithful in Ukraine.



The Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine and the Canonical Prerogatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

ARCHBISHOP JOB OF TELMESSOS

On October 11, 2018, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate discussed at length the ecclesiastical matter of Ukraine and decreed to grant autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine (OCU). It revoked the legal binding of the Synodal Letter of the year 1686, issued for the circumstances of that time. In accordance with the canonical prerogatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Holy Synod also accepted and reviewed the petitions of appeal of Philaret Denisenko, Makariy Maletych and their followers, who found themselves in schism not for dogmatic reasons. Thus, the above-mentioned hierarchy and its clergy have been canonically reinstated to their hierarchical or priestly rank, and with their faithful, have been restored to communion with the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

Following this decision, a unifying synod was convened by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Kyiv on December 15, 2018, to establish the new autocephalous Church of Ukraine and elect her primate. Metropolitan Epiphanius was elected Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine. On January 5, 2019, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew signed the tomos of

autocephaly, thereby officially granting autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine and on the next day concelebrated the Divine Liturgy together with His Beatitude Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kyiv and all Ukraine, as well as with Hierarchs of the Throne and of the OCU, for the Great Feast of Theophany (January 6) at the Patriarchal Church of Saint George at the Phanar.

In this article, I seek to both explore and explain the canonical prerogatives and responsibilities of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for granting autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate as the Mother Church of the Church of Ukraine

From a historical point of view, there is no doubt that the Church of Ukraine was under the Ecumenical Patriarchate since the Christianisation of Kyivan Rus' (988), until the end of the 17th century.

When Left-bank Ukraine joined the Moscow State in the middle of the 17th century, the Church of Kyiv was divided into parts between different rival countries (Russia, Poland and Turkey). Because of the ongoing war, it was impossible to proceed to the election of the Metropolitan of Kyiv for a long time. Gedeon Svyatopolk-Chetvertinsky, a Ruthenian prince, was elected and ordained Metropolitan of Kyiv by the Patriarch of Moscow in 1685 with the help of Hetman of the Zaporizhian Host Ivan Samoylovych. This election and ordination were anti-canonical, since the Metropolitans of Kyiv ought to be elected by the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Understanding the political circumstances and wishing not to leave the Church of Kyiv without a pastor, Ecumenical Patriarch Dionysios gave in 1686 the permission that, by *oikonomia*, the Metropolitan of Kyiv may be

ordained by the Patriarch of Moscow, although he ought to be elected by the Clergy-Laity Assembly of his eparchy and continue to commemorate the Ecumenical Patriarch as the first hierarch at every celebration in order to proclaim and affirm his canonical dependence to the Mother Church of Constantinople. Thus, there was by no means any transfer of the Metropolis of Kyiv to the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Moscow¹. The documents concerning what happened in 1686 speak only of a permission given to the patriarch of Moscow to ordain the metropolitan of Kyiv in the political context when Left-bank Ukraine had been united to the Moscow State and while wars were opposing different rival countries (Russia, Poland and Turkey). However, the condition was that the Metropolitans of Kyiv ought to continue to commemorate the name of the Ecumenical Patriarch and remain his Exarchs, thus enjoying ecclesiastical autonomy from Moscow.

It is also worth mentioning that the first Ukrainian Constitution of April 5, 1710, a peculiar constitutional pact between the newly elected Hetman Pylyp Orlik speaks of the necessity to restore the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate over the Metropolis of Kyiv and that the Metropolitans of Kyiv continue to be Exarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

One should remember, however, that the permission granted to Moscow in 1686 did not concern the other territories (Right-bank Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Crimea) which remained under the direct ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. These territories were annexed by Moscow only later, without any ecclesiastical act, due to the

¹ K. Vetochnikov, « La ‘concession’ de la métropole de Kyiv au patriarche de Moscou en 1686 : Analyse canonique », in B. Krsmanović & L. Milanović (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Belgrade, 22–27 August 2016 : Round Tables*, Belgrade, 2016, p. 780-784. ; V. Tchentsova, « Синодальное решение 1686 г. о Киевской митрополии », *Древняя Русь. Вопросы медиевистики* 2 [68] (2017), p. 89-11.

expansion of the Russian Empire and, ultimately, of the Soviet Union after the Second World War. Thus, even after 1686, most of the Ukrainian lands remained under the direct jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

After 1686, the diocese of Lviv remained in the canonical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and when the archbishop of Lviv entered into union with Rome after 1700, the Orthodox parishes and monasteries in Galicia were temporarily administered by the Bukovinian metropolitans, who were also part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In 1791, a local council of the Orthodox clergy and laity from Western Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and Poland held in Pinsk decided to restore their autonomy under the *omophorion* of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate had jurisdiction not only over Bukovina but also over the southern (the so-called “Khan”) part of Ukraine, which was officially then under the protectorate of the Crimean Khanate and the Ottoman Empire. After the violent liquidation of Zaporozhian Sich in 1775 by Catherine II, many Cossacks moved to the territories controlled by the Ottoman Empire, where a new Danubian Sich was founded on the banks of the Danube. It lasted until the middle of the 19th century and recognized only the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The diocese of Transcarpathia who was under the Ecumenical Patriarchate until 1946 was then annexed by force to the Moscow Patriarchate.

In Crimea, the ancient metropolises of Gothia and Kapha remained under the Ecumenical Patriarchate until the end of the 17th century. They were liquidated by the Russian government in 1788 after the annexation of the Crimean Khanate. However, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has never recognized the legality of their

subordination to the Russian Synod and the elimination of these historic Metropolises in Crimea².

The Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Granting of Autocephaly

Concerning the practice of granting autocephaly, it is important to recall that the Ancient Patriarchates (Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem) and the autocephalous Church of Cyprus were established by the Ecumenical Councils³.

The first “new” autocephaly was the one of the Church of Russia, but it happened in an unusual way. After the council of Florence (1439), the Moscovites rejected their Metropolitan, Isidore of Kyiv, who was one of the signatories of the union. After his expulsion, the see of Kyiv was vacant for many years. Finally, in 1448, Jonas was elected as Metropolitan by a synod in Moscow. *De facto*, the Church of Russia thus self-proclaimed its autocephaly, but this autocephaly was not recognized *de jure*. The election of Jonas by a synod in Moscow was anti-canonical, since according to the established practice, the Metropolitans of Kyiv ought to be elected in Constantinople. This anti-canonical situation was maintained until 1589 when the Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremiah II visited Moscow. He then regularized the situation by granting to the Metropolitan of Moscow the status of patriarch. It is interesting to underline that his patriarchal letter of May 1590 states that in

² K. Vetochnikov, « La suppression de la métropole de Caffa au 17^e siècle », *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 76 (2010), p. 433-457 ; Id., « Οι πατριαρχικές εξαρχίες και σταυροπήγια στην Κριμαία », *Κληρονομία* 34 (2002), p. 23-28 ; Id., « La politique religieuse des autorités génoises vis-à-vis de la métropole de Caffa (Crimée, 15^e siècle) », in M.-H. Blanchet et F. Gabriel (Ed.), *Réduire le schisme ? : ecclésiologies et politiques de l'Union entre Orient et Occident (XIII^e-XVII^e siècle)*, Paris, 2013, p. 261-276.

³ Cf. Fourth Ecumenical Council, canon 28; Quinisext Ecumenical Council, canon 36; and third Ecumenical Council, canon 8.

order to honor the ruler of Russia Theodore Ivanovich that the archbishop of Moscow Job was granted *to be called* patriarch and that he be considered as the fifth patriarch after the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Furthermore, the document underlines that thus, the patriarch of Moscow “*ought to have as his head and keep as his authority and to respect the apostolic see of Constantinople, as the other patriarchs do.*”⁴ Thus, for the first time after the epoch of the Ecumenical Councils, the see of Moscow was granted the status of patriarchate by the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The next autocephaly of the newest times to be granted by the Ecumenical Patriarchate was the Church of Greece. But once again, the history was not that easy. After the Greek War of Independence (1821-32), the provisional president of Greece Ioannis Kapodistrias (1776-1831) began, without any success, negotiations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the autocephaly of the Church of Greece. The final decision was made when Otto I (1815-1867), the new king of Greece, fearing that the Turkish government might still be able to influence the politics of Greece through the Ecumenical Patriarchate, self-proclaimed the autocephaly of the Church of Greece in 1833. Only two decades later, the Ecumenical Patriarchate finally issued a tomos of autocephaly in 1850 in order to restore the ecclesial communion with the Mother Church of Constantinople that had been broken. The head of the new autocephalous Church of Greece ought to commemorate the name of the Ecumenical Patriarch as well as the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, which were established by the Ecumenical Councils, but not the one of Moscow who had been suppressed by Peter the Great in 1721. The Church of Greece ought to receive the holy Myron from the Ecumenical Patriarchate and cooperate with regards pan-orthodox matters.

⁴ <http://doc.histrf.ru/10-16/gramota-ob-utverzhenii-moskovskogo-patriarkhata/>

The organization of the Orthodox Church worldwide has profoundly changed during the 20th century due to the restoration or the proclamation of several autocephalous local Churches. Indeed, some local Churches, that had in the past centuries an honorific patriarchal status because their country had historically been an independent kingdom from the Byzantine Empire, were restored as autocephalous and patriarchal Churches by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, but always in the limits of concrete state implying concrete geographical borders. This was the case of the Churches of Serbia (1920), Romania (1885 for the restoration of autocephaly, 1925 for the restoration of the patriarchate), Bulgaria (1953) and Georgia (1990). In each of these cases, the major reason for the restoration of their autocephaly and of their patriarchal status was the independence of their state either from the Ottoman empire (in the case of the first three) or from the Russian empire (for the Church of Georgia, in 1917).

Besides the restoration of these four patriarchal Churches, the Orthodox Church proclaimed autocephaly to three additional local Churches: the Church of Poland, the Church of Albania and the Church of Czechoslovakia. The reason for proclaiming the autocephaly of the Church of Poland was the request addressed to the Ecumenical Patriarchate by the Polish Republic between the proclamation of its independence in 1918 and 1923⁵. The Polish State, which recovered its eastern territories from the Russian Empire, was favorable to the existence on its territory of an Orthodox Church on the condition that she would not serve and not be controlled by the Russian Empire. For this reason, the Polish State addressed a request to the Ecumenical Patriarchate to grant

⁵ A. Mironowicz, “L’Église orthodoxe en Pologne au XX^e siècle”, C. Chaillot (Ed.), *L’Église orthodoxe en Europe orientale au XX^e siècle*, Paris : Cerf, 2009, p. 234 [in English : *The Orthodox Church in Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, Bern : Peter Lang, 2011, p. 247-267] ; V. Phidas, *Εκκλησιαστική Ιστορία*, III, Athens, 2014, p. 617.

autocephaly to the Orthodox Church of Poland. In response, the Ecumenical Patriarchate proclaimed autocephaly of the Church of Poland in 1924, taking as a basis that the Church of Poland consisted of eparchies which used to belong to the Metropolis of Kyiv and were in the past under the direct canonical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate until 1686.

The Church of Albania had been auto-declared by the independent Albanian State in 1922 by an ecclesiastical-national congress. The reason was a growing national consciousness, following the independence of their country, among the Orthodox Albanians, who were Albanian-speaking Greeks, which led them to search freedom from Greek influence and to use Albanian as their liturgical language. For obvious reasons, the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the beginning was reluctant to give them the status of autocephaly and accepted to grant a status of autonomy on specific conditions that were not accepted by the Albanians who, with the help of two Russian bishops from Yugoslavia, obtained the consecration of four bishops who formed their own Synod in 1929. The self-proclaimed autocephalous Church was then officially recognized by the Albanian State as one of its three national religious entities. Placed in front of this accomplished fact, the Ecumenical Patriarchate gave its benediction (εὐλογία) for the autocephaly of the Church of Albania a few years later, in 1937, but imposed its canonical conditions for that⁶.

After the formation of Czechoslovakia as an independent state, the Church of Czechoslovakia was proclaimed autonomous by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1923, but in parallel, some parishes depended from the Church of Serbia. One of the characteristics of the Orthodox churches in Czechoslovakia was the usage of the Czech vernacular language in worship. After the

⁶ A. Lotocki, *Autokefalia*, II, Warsaw, p. 502-503 ; V. Phidas, *Op. cit.*, p. 630-639.

Second World War, Czechoslovakia was liberated from the German occupation, and subsequently to the access of the communists to the government in 1946, came into close contacts with the USSR and found herself behind the Iron Curtain. The different existing Orthodox groups in Czechoslovakia, which had definitely a particular national flavor, asked at that time to be received into the jurisdiction of the Church of Russia. They finally were integrated into an autonomous exarchate of the Church of Russia in 1946. In 1948, the communist party took the power and the Church became then completely controlled in a very strict way by the communist regime. The Church of Russia decided at that time to proclaim the autocephaly of the Church of Czechoslovakia in 1951, a canonical act which was not recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and other local Churches. After the Prague Spring (1968) and the dissolution of the communist regime in 1989 which led to the establishment of two independent states (the Czech Republic and Slovakia), there was on the one hand a revival of uniatism, which had been suppressed during the communist regime, and on the other hand, links with Russia were not well perceived by the local population. This is the reason that brought the Church of Czechoslovakia to seek support from the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which about half of a century later, officially proclaimed autocephaly of the Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia in 1998⁷.

As one can see, the new autocephalies that were proclaimed from the 16th century onwards were all exclusively proclaimed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Each of these proclamations was linked to a political factor and autocephaly was proclaimed as a way of ensuring the unity of the Church, within the interior of each

⁷ C. Pulec and G. Stransky, “L’Église orthodoxe en République Tchèque et en Slovaquie au XX^e siècle”, C. Chaillot (Ed.), *Op. cit.*, p. 218-225 [in English : *Op.cit.*, p. 229-245] ; V. Phidas, *Op. cit.*, p. 648-655.

of these states, as well as the unity between the Local Churches. Throughout the history of the Orthodox Church, no other local church, except the Ecumenical Patriarchate, has proclaimed autocephaly because it is regarded as the exclusive privilege of the first see of Orthodoxy.

The Right of Appeal

Among its various prerogatives (*pronomia*) that it has received from the Ecumenical Councils, the Ecumenical Patriarchate enjoys the right to receive appeals not only from clergy and bishops of its own jurisdiction, but also from others ecclesiastical sees in order to re-examine them and to make the final judgement over these cases.

This right of final appeal takes its origin in the right of the see of Rome, as to the first see of the Pentarchy, to receive appeals from bishops from other provinces, as formulated by the Synod of Sardica (343) in its canons 3, 4 and 5. This ecclesiastical practice was fixed by the Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon, 451) in its canons 9 and 17. Canon 9 recalls the canonical principal that the one who ordain is the one empowered to judge. Therefore, a clergyman ought to be judged by his bishop, and a bishop ought to be judged by his synod. Provincial synods are also the place to receive the first appeal for a clergyman. Canon 9 mentions the “exarchs of the diocese” that were the predecessors of the patriarchs of the regional Churches. But canon 9 continues by adding that when a conflict arises between the metropolitan who chairs the provincial synod and a clergymen or bishop, the see of Constantinople has the right to receive the recourse and make the final judgement.

Commenting the previous canon 9, the Byzantine canonist Alexis Aristenos (12th c.) affirms that although each patriarch has the right to receive appeals from hierarchs within his own jurisdiction, the patriarch of Constantinople is the only one among the patriarchs to have the prerogative (*pronomion*) according to the canons and to the laws to receive appeals coming from hierarchs as well from other sees than his own jurisdiction⁸.

The canon 17 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council adds that the throne of Constantinople has the right to judge cases of whoever may have been wronged by his own metropolitan. The canon 28 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council also states that the see of Constantinople, as the capital and New Rome, has the equal dignities (τὰ ἴσα προσβεῖα) as the Ancient Rome⁹. The Quinisext Ecumenical Council (in Trullo, 692) confirmed this ancient usage by confirming the canons of the council of Sardica and of the Fourth Ecumenical Council in its second canon. Furthermore, it stated in its canon 36 that *“the see of Constantinople shall have equal privileges with the see of the ancient Rome, and shall be highly regarded in ecclesiastical matters as that is, and shall be second after it.”*¹⁰ Among these privileges is the right of appeal.

The major council held in Constantinople in Saint Sophia in the year 879 reaffirmed in its first canon that the see of Constantinople has the equal rights to the see of Rome to receive appeals. Therefore, those who were subjected to canonical sanctions by the bishop of Rome ought to be also regarded as sanctioned by the see of Constantinople, and vice versa.

⁸ Rhalle-Potle, vol. 2, Athens, 1852, p. 240.

⁹ Fourth Ecumenical Council, Canon 28. Cf. Rhalle-Potle, vol. 2, Athens, 1852, p. 281.

¹⁰ Quinisext Ecumenical Council (in Trullo), Canons 2 and 36. Cf. Rhalle-Potle, vol. 2, Athens, 1852, p. 308-310 and 387.

At the same epoch, the *Epanagoge* of Emperor Basil the Macedonian, a Byzantine law book promulgated in 886 and published as an introduction to the byzantine legislation, which later found its way in Slavonic translation into the Russian *Kormchaya Kniga*, reaffirmed this ecclesiastical practice formulated by the canons of the regional and ecumenical councils and reiterated clearly that the see of Constantinople has as its prerogative the right to receive appeals not only from clergy and bishops of its own ecclesiastical see, but from all ecclesiastical sees as well and to judge them in last recourse.¹¹

In the 14th century, the Byzantine canonist Matthew Blastares in his famous *Syntagma* reiterates that “*the primate of Constantinople ... possesses the right to observe the disagreements arising within the limits of others sees, to correct them and to pronounce the final judgment over them (πέρας ἐπιτιθέναι ταίς κρίσεσιν)*”.¹²

As one can see, there is a well-established canonical practice, confirmed by the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils and by the Byzantine canonists, that since its foundation, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, among its various privileges (*pronomia*) has the right of *ekkleton*, that is to receive, as a remedy of canon law, the appeals of clergy and bishops that have received a canonical punishment, either having been deposited, anathematized or excommunicated by their respective synod, to review these decisions and to pronounce a final judgement over them in last recourse. Thus, the canonical right of *ekkleton*, conferred to the see of Constantinople according to the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils and to the Byzantine ecclesiastical law, makes of the Ecumenical Patriarchate the supreme ecclesiastical

¹¹ *Epanagoge*, Title 3, About the patriarch, 9-10. *Collectio librorum juris Graeco-romani ineditorum* (Ed. Z. von Lingenthal), Lipzig, 1852, p. 68. Cf. A. Vasiliev, *Histoire de l'Empire byzantin*, vol. 1, Paris, 1932, p. 451.

¹² Matthew Blastares, *Syntagma* II, 8. Cf. Rhalle-Potle, vol. 6, Athens, 1859, p. 429.

court of all the local autocephalous Orthodox Churches. Therefore, until today, the Ecumenical Patriarchate enjoys the right of receiving appeals from bishops and clergy from all local autocephalous Orthodox Churches, who consider themselves having been wrongly condemned — deposed, anathematized or excommunicated — by their local synod.

Conclusion

The decision of the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to grant autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine on October 11, 2018, was based on fundamental facts. First, that the Ecumenical Patriarchate has been since the very beginning the Mother Church of the Church of Ukraine and that the Church of Ukraine has never been canonically transferred to the Church of Russia. Second, that the Ecumenical Patriarchate has been the only local Orthodox Church to proclaim autocephaly since the period of the Ecumenical Councils and regard it as its exclusive privilege being the first see of Orthodoxy. Third, that among its other privileges, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has the right to receive, as a remedy of canon law, the appeals of clergy and bishops that have received a canonical punishment, either having been deposed, anathematized or excommunicated by their respective synod, to review these decisions and to pronounce a final judgement over them in last recourse.



The Bulgarian Orthodox Church and Ukrainian Autocephaly

DR. DANIELA KALKANDJIEVA

The fall of the Ottoman and the Russian empires brought about not only the establishment of newly independent states but also the rise of new, or independent, Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe. Between 1850 and 2000, eight of these Churches gained autocephaly that enabled them to appoint their First Hierarchs (i.e., the local church primate) without seeking the approval of any external church authority. Although often compared with state sovereignty, this ecclesiastical status contains an essential distinguishing feature – the duty of autocephalous Churches to keep the unity of the Church of God as the Body of Christ. Therefore, when an autocephalous Church faces problems or challenges that exceed the limits of its jurisdiction, it refers to the most holy Apostolic Throne of Constantinople for authoritative opinions and assistance.

A reference to this custom can be found in the *tomoi* of autocephaly issued by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Between the mid-nineteenth and the mid-twentieth century, it granted this ecclesiastical status to six Orthodox Churches, namely to those in Greece (1850), Serbia (1879), Romania (1885), Poland (1924), Albania (1937), and Bulgaria

(1945). The fact that the Ecumenical Patriarchate was also their Mother Church guaranteed their smooth integration in the family of canonical autocephalous Orthodox churches. Quite different is the case of the Orthodox Churches in Georgia and in the former Czechoslovakia which were declared autocephalous by the Patriarchate of Moscow in 1943 and 1951, respectively. These acts, however, were not accomplished by their Mother Church but by the so-called “Kyriarchal Church,” i.e., the ecclesiastical body under which jurisdiction Orthodox communities in both countries were at that moment.¹ Besides, they were undertaken in pursuance of secular, and even (geo)political goals, rather than in tune with Orthodox tradition. Therefore, both autocephalies were acknowledged as canonical mostly by the Orthodox Churches in the Soviet zone of influence. In practice, they joined the family of canonical autocephalies upon their formal recognition by the Ecumenical Throne of Constantinople. This happened in 1990 for the Georgian autocephaly and in 1998 for that of the Orthodox Church of the Czech and Slovak Lands.

On January 5, 2019, the Ecumenical Patriarchate granted autocephaly to a new ecclesiastical body – the Orthodox Church in Ukraine (OCU). Following the previously established pattern, its smooth recognition by the other canonical autocephalous Orthodox Churches should not be a problem. This time, however, local Orthodox Churches to date have refused to formally acknowledge the OCU and some have accused the Ecumenical Patriarchate of encroaching on the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church. Other local Churches have abstained from expressing their position on Ukrainian autocephaly, one of which is the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

¹ See “Kiriarkhal’naya tserkov” [Kyriarchal church], in *Pravoslavnyaya entsiklopediya* [Orthodox encyclopedia], under the editorship of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/1840229.html>.

Until the end of 2018, the Bulgarian Holy Synod recognized the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate as the only canonical representative of Eastern Orthodoxy in Ukraine and treated as schismatic the two autocephalous churches established there after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This position is well documented in the letter sent by Patriarch Neophyte of Bulgaria to President Poroshenko on December 15, 2015. In this document, the Bulgarian Primate stressed the fraternal intercommunion of his Church with the autonomous branch of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine and expressed worries about the attempts made at taking away the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra and Holy Dormition Pochayiv Lavra from the canonical Church in favor of such a “totally unacknowledged by all local Orthodox churches” as the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate. In this regard, Patriarch Neophyte pointed out that such a development “might make it impossible for the Orthodox episcopate, clergy and faithful persons from foreign countries to visit” the aforesaid holy sites because the canonical Orthodox Churches do not maintain Eucharistic and prayerful communion with schismatics.²

The creation of a new Orthodox Church in Ukraine (December 15, 2018) and the tomos of its autocephaly signed by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (January 5, 2019), however, confronted the Bulgarian Holy Synod with a dilemma. Under these circumstances, it is expected to follow the custom and to enter into communion with the newly born autocephalous Orthodox Church in the same manner as the foreign Orthodox Churches did when the schism over the Bulgarian Exarchate had been abolished and granted autocephalous status. Still, if some doubts have appeared,

² “The Bulgarian Orthodox Church-Bulgarian Patriarchate intercedes with President Poroshenko in defense of the shrines of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church”, [website] *Bulgarian Orthodox Church – Bulgarian Patriarchate*, 15 December 2015, available in Bulgarian at: <http://bg-patriarshia.bg/news.php?id=191124>

the 1945 tomos of Bulgarian autocephaly explains how to proceed in such cases. According to it, when the Bulgarian Church faces problems that exceed its jurisdiction, its First Hierarchy should refer to the most holy Patriarchal and Ecumenical Throne of Constantinople and *through it* “to seek and accept its authoritative opinion and vision as well as that of the other Sister Churches.”³

After World War II, however, under the pressure of the communist regime established in Bulgaria, the local Orthodox Church often deviated from the rules set down and previously agreed upon in the tomos. In September 1948, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party decided to elevate the local Orthodox Church into a patriarchate.⁴ According to the atheist rulers, this ecclesiastical rank would assist the fight of the Orthodox Churches from the “camp of democracy” against Western Christianity. In parallel, the Bulgarian Holy Synod was forced to interrupt its relations with the Ecumenical Throne of Constantinople. In this regard, the head of the Bulgarian Directorate of Religious Affairs insisted that the ecumenical title of the Patriarch of Constantinople had lost its meaning and that this Primate was merely in charge of a regular local Orthodox Church.

The first step towards the distancing of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church from its Mother Church was made on April 6, 1950, on Holy Thursday, when the Bulgarian episcopate prepared Holy Myron for the needs of its Orthodox Church instead of asking

³ Tomos for the Abolishment of the Schism over the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and for the Bestowal of Its Ecclesiastical Status of Autocephaly, 22 February 1945.

⁴ This account of the Cold War history of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is based on Daniela Kalkandjieva’s monograph *Balgarskata tsarkva i darzhavata, 1944-1953* [The Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the State] (Sofia: Albatros, 1997). Some of the commented developments are also discussed in English in Kalkandjieva, “The Bulgarian Orthodox Church” in Lucean N. Leustean (ed.), *Eastern Christianity and the Cold War, 1945-91* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 76-95.

it from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This act violated the engagement undertaken by the Bulgarian Church before the Mother Church of Constantinople during the autocephaly negotiations in February 1945. At that time, the Ecumenical Patriarch agreed not to include a Holy Myron clause in the tomos of autocephaly after receiving the written promise of Bulgarian delegates that their Church will continue to receive Holy Myron from the Throne of Constantinople until its elevation into a patriarchal rank.

The next step was made on January 3, 1951, when the Holy Synod adopted a new Church Statute, defining the Bulgarian Orthodox Church as a patriarchate. Two years later, a local ecclesiastical council was convoked for the election of a Patriarch of Bulgaria, thus officially demonstrating the patriarchal dignity of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Instead of conferring with the Mother Church of Constantinople, this act was done in consultation with the Russian Orthodox Church and was correspondingly recognized by all Orthodox Churches in the Soviet sphere of influence.⁵

The spiritual leaders of Orthodox Churches outside the Iron Curtain, however, refused to accept this rank of the Bulgarian Church. Especially strong was the reaction of Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople who wrote:

“... it was not expected that the Orthodox Bulgarian Church, recently declared independent and autocephalous, introducing again in the Church innovation and deviating from the existing canonical and ecclesiastical order to arbitrary ascribe to itself patriarchal dignity and honor

⁵ A short account of the Cold War history of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is presented in Daniela Kalkandjieva, “The Bulgarian Orthodox Church” in Lucean N. Leustean (ed.), *Eastern Christianity and the Cold War, 1945-91* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 76-95.

while keeping in complete ignorance our Holy Ecumenical Throne and the other Holy Patriarchal Thrones and Autocephalous Churches, and contrary to the promises and assurances given by it to the blessing Mother Church through its delegates and during the settling of the abolishment of the schism [of 1872]. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church had, in accordance with the ecclesiastical order established in ancient times, to attest in advance its maturity in church life and ability by unswerving constancy and devotion to the canonical order, established for it and in general, as well as by presenting considerable flourishing in Christ and particular church activity *in normal conditions*, and only then to ask through us for its elevation to patriarchal dignity from the host of the honorable presiding hierarchs of the Holy Orthodox Churches".⁶

As a result, the relations of the Ecumenical Patriarchate with the Bulgarian Church were frozen. They were restored during Khrushchev's *détente*, which allowed Patriarch Alexii I of Moscow to negotiate the recognition of the patriarchal dignity of the Bulgarian Church by Patriarch Athenagoras in 1961. After the fall of communism, the Mother Church of Constantinople gave again a hand of help to its Bulgarian Daughter Church, this time to heal the schism of 1992 and to preserve its unity. From this perspective, the position which the present Bulgarian hierarchs will take on the autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine will demonstrate their freedom from the burden of communism and their ability to follow the Orthodox ecclesiastical tradition and canons as well as to keep the engagements taken with the tomos of its own autocephaly of 1945.

⁶ Cited in Kalkandjieva, *Balgarskata tsarkva i darzhavata*, pp. 329-330.



The Role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Granting
Autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine:
A Canonical Perspective*

DR. LEWIS J. PATSAVOS

It is said that privilege/prerogative brings with it responsibility and that the recipient thereof is doubly responsible to speak the truth in love. It is in this spirit, therefore, that the present response is given to the question regarding the granting of autocephaly (self-government) to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine (OCU) by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the person of the Ecumenical Patriarch. Much has been said and written about this granting of autocephaly from a political, theological, historical, and geopolitical dimension. What follows is the canonical perspective of this issue, which is also the origin and basis of the claim of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to intervene in instances such as this.

History affirms that the Ecumenical Patriarchate has a particular responsibility to strengthen the unity of the local Orthodox Churches and to coordinate their common witness. At the same time, it has a specific responsibility to care for the faithful in lands beyond the established borders of the other Autocephalous Churches. This is a ministry of service to the entire Church which the Ecumenical Patriarchate undertakes in accordance with the canons, often under difficult circumstances.

Regrettably, statements and claims related to the recent granting of autocephaly to the OCU, widely distributed, have been made which are contested. In fact, they misinterpret the canonical prerogatives and distort historical facts related to the distinctive ministry of the Ecumenical Throne. Worse still, they have done little to advance the cause of Orthodox unity and the witness of the Church today.

Principles of Ecclesiastical Organization

The Church, chiefly through the Ecumenical Councils, has established significant principles of ecclesiastical organization. These principles are expressed in the canons of Ecumenical and Local Councils and in subsequent historical practices, which have been sanctioned by the Church. These principles support the proclamation of the Gospel and strengthen the good order of the Church.

The Ecumenical Patriarch has been accorded specific prerogatives of witness and service from the time of the fourth century. This was a period when the Church was able explicitly to provide for canonical structures following the period of great persecution of the first three centuries. These prerogatives form the basis for his ministry to the entire Orthodox Church and distinguish the responsibilities of the Ecumenical Patriarch from other bishops. They clearly accord to him a primacy (first ranking status) among the bishops of the Church. This primacy of service brings with it significant authority and responsibilities.

There are those who challenge the leadership and responsibilities of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. They challenge the interpretation of one of the most important canons establishing this leadership, canon 28 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon (451), and related canons and practices. In order to

appreciate properly the significance of this canon, it must be interpreted in the light of other canons and practices of the Church at that time. It is far from being irrelevant as some claim.

Canon 3 of the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople (381) acknowledged that the Bishop of Constantinople enjoys “prerogatives of honor” (*presveia times*). By recognizing that the Bishop of New Rome (Constantinople) ranked after the Bishop of Old Rome, a parallel between the primatial (first ranking) positions of these two bishops was affirmed.

At the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon, the privileges of the Bishop of Constantinople received further elaboration especially in canons 9 and 17. These canons stated that disputes in local churches could be appealed to Constantinople. Canon 28 of Chalcedon continued to draw a parallel between Old Rome and New Rome and reaffirmed the decision of 381. Canon 28 of Chalcedon stated that the Bishop of Constantinople had “equal prerogatives” (*isa presveia*) to those of Old Rome. Over two hundred years later, the distinctive position of Constantinople was also reaffirmed by canon 36 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council “in Trullo” (692).

Furthermore, canon 28 of Chalcedon explicitly granted to the Bishop of Constantinople the pastoral care for those territories beyond the geographical boundaries of the other local (autocephalous) Churches. Their bishops are not permitted to minister beyond these limits. The Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381) in canon 2 clearly states: “Bishops should not invade churches beyond their boundaries for the purpose of governing them...” This principle is also reflected in canons 6 and 7 of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea (325) and in Apostolic Canons 14 and 34, also dating from the fourth century.

The Church invested only the Bishop of Constantinople with the responsibility to organize ecclesial life in the places not

under the care of other local (autocephalous) Churches. This is reflected, for example, in the missions to the Goths and Scythians in the fifth century. The pastoral and missionary activities inaugurated by St. John Chrysostom while Patriarch of Constantinople is especially instructive in this regard. One must also take note of the missionary activity of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Central and Eastern Europe from the ninth century under Patriarch Photios and later on through the sixteenth centuries. In these cases, it acted to spread the Gospel in territories beyond the boundaries of other local Churches. This is when Christianity, due to the missionary efforts of the Church of Constantinople, was first brought to the Kyivan Rus' (forerunners of the modern people of Russia and Ukraine) circa 988.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate granted autocephalous status to the Church of Russia in 1591, which was reaffirmed by a synod in 1593. In the Tomes (official church documents) recognizing this status, the jurisdiction of the Church of Russia was clearly defined. This practice was followed in the Tomes of Autocephaly for all subsequent Autocephalous Churches which were granted their status by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and confirmed by the assent of the other Autocephalous Churches.

History bears this out, as attested to by innumerable examples of initiative undertaken by the Ecumenical Throne to exercise leadership for those local Churches prevented by circumstances from doing so. In this capacity, at various times in history, it has elected patriarchs for other Sees when asked, acted as arbitrator in disputes between Sister Churches, deposed controversial patriarchs and metropolitans beyond its territory, and served on many occasions up to the present as mediator in resolving issues of pan-Orthodox concern.

In our own day, initiatives of the Ecumenical Throne, with the collaboration of other Autocephalous Churches, have led to

significant accomplishments in the life of the Orthodox Church. Among them are the revitalization of the Church of Albania (1992); arbitration in disputed patriarchal elections in the Churches of Bulgaria (1998) and Jerusalem (2005); and facilitating the orderly succession of the Archbishop of Cyprus (2006), to name just these few.

Especially important for the well-being of world Orthodoxy has been the role of the Ecumenical Throne in convening since 1961 the series of pan-Orthodox conferences and other gatherings in preparation for the Holy and Great Council which took place in Crete in 2016. Although all the Autocephalous Churches participated in the preparatory meetings leading up to the Council, four of them unfortunately chose not to take part in it. Besides challenging the role of the Ecumenical Throne to initiate the process leading to pan-Orthodox unity, some also contest the conviction that this and similar privileges are timeless. They thereby render the context for resolving, as in the past, contemporary issues such as the apparent impasse of pan-Orthodox unity meaningless.

What is needed in this debate is a reminder of the wise words of Metropolitan Maximos of Sardis of blessed memory (in his classic study, *The Ecumenical Patriarchate in the Orthodox Church*, Thessaloniki 1976, 236): “The Patriarch of Constantinople rejects any *plenitudo potestatis ecclesiae* (“claim of universal authority”) and holds his supreme ecclesiastical power not as *episcopus ecclesiae universalis* (“Bishop of the Universal Church”), but as Ecumenical Patriarch, the senior and most important bishop in the East. He does not wield unrestricted administrative power. He is not an infallible judge of matters of faith. Always the presupposition of his power is that in using it he will hold to two principles: conciliarity (adherence to the authority of councils) and collegiality (collaborative role with fellow bishops) in the responsibilities of the

Church and non-intervention in the internal affairs of the other churches...”

With these observations in mind, the following must be noted with regard to the distinctive primacy of the Ecumenical Patriarch. Firstly, all of the Autocephalous Churches recognize the Ecumenical Patriarch as the ‘first bishop’ of the Church. He has specific responsibilities for coordinating a common witness among the Autocephalous Churches. As such, he exercises this ministry first of all in relationship with the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Patriarch is the president of this Synod. He does not act over or above the other bishops. According to the Orthodox perspective, primacy involves conciliarity. He always acts together with the other bishops of the Patriarchal Synod. Likewise, in his relationship with other Orthodox primates, he is honored as the *protos*, the first Bishop of the Church. This position gives him the special responsibility for identifying issues requiring the attention of the entire Church and for convening appropriate meetings to address these issues. When the Orthodox primates meet in a Synaxis (assembly of bishops), the Ecumenical Patriarch is the presiding bishop of that meeting.

Conclusions

It is the firm conviction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate that it possesses distinctive prerogatives to serve the unity and witness of the entire Orthodox Church in accordance with the canons and *praxis* of the Church. Since the fourth century, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has acted in accordance with the canons to maintain and strengthen the “unity of spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4.3) among the Autocephalous Churches.

Directly related to the situation at hand are the canons mentioned in this brief overview. Although they deal with specific

situations of their time, they nevertheless safeguard principles which constitute the basis of permanent aspects of our canonical tradition. Canon 28 of Chalcedon confirms what in practice was already in progress at that time – a primacy of honor among equals for the Bishop of Constantinople, expressed in a way which reflected this reality. One might also consider canon 6 of the First Ecumenical Council (Nicaea, 325) or 39 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council “in Trullo” (692) among others. In the first instance, an established order of church government is confirmed; in the second, an adjustment of church order is made to accommodate a special need. In both instances, principles are provided which reveal the manner in which the Church expresses herself in different situations. They are principles which are central to the way in which the Orthodox Church governs herself and are timeless in their application.

It is praiseworthy that much is made of Orthodox unity and the role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in achieving it. This is good and hopeful, in view of the fact that it keeps alive and at the forefront of our concerns the quest for this noble goal. At the same time, however, it raises, once more, the issue about the way in which this unity should be achieved. At the center of this discussion is our Mother Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and the understanding of its role in initiating the process of the goal towards unity.

Would that all, both clergy and laity of all the Autocephalous Churches, might fervently pray for unity at this time of crisis and commit to words and deeds of healing and reconciliation so that our good and loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be honored and glorified now and forever.

*See Lewis J. Patsavos, *Primacy and Conciliarity: Studies in the Primacy of the See of Constantinople and the Synodical Structure of the Orthodox Church*, Brookline, 1995.



Reflections on Autocephaly by a Member of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

DR. GAYLE E. WOLOSCHAK

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA (UOC-USA) has awaited the granting of autocephaly to the Church in Ukraine for decades. While numerous approaches for autocephaly were discussed, the decisions for this were considered to reside with the Church in Ukraine. It was not until the UOC-USA was accepted under the *omophorion* of the Ecumenical Patriarch in the 1980's that the long wait became even most intense.

It had long been considered by the UOC-USA membership that Russian domination of the Ukrainian Church inhibited its development, progression, and freedom of expression. In addition, this oppressive environment had led to a chaotic situation in Ukraine with multiple and often competing jurisdictions co-existing simultaneously. Each jurisdiction claimed authority and claimed to be autocephalous, but none except the one under the Russian Orthodox Church were recognized as being canonical.

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew urged patience, but yearly at the annual meeting of the Metropolitan Council the topic of Ukrainian autocephaly was discussed for several hours. In addition, at each Sobor of the UOC-USA (held every three years), the topic was discussed at length with special committees and sessions held to encourage and support

autocephaly for Ukraine. As such, this was long-awaited and strongly supported by the UOC-USA – not only by Church leadership but also by the general membership and faithful.

The Russian war in Crimea, which is still on-going, changed much about the relationship between the two nations and is having a lasting impact on the relationship of the people of Ukraine and the Russian Orthodox Church. The war resulted in heightened tensions between the Church in Ukrainian and the Church in Russia. The Russian Church applied pressure on clergy to support the Russian side in the war and eventually the Russian Orthodox Church became a propaganda tool for President Putin's ideas. The Russian Church was no longer primarily serving the needs of the Ukrainian people, but rather the needs of the Russian state; the Church was not supporting the people of Ukraine as its primary goal. The Church in Ukraine was in a difficult situation: it had no freedom to manage its own affairs yet at the same time had no approach or process to gain its own freedom. In 2016 (just before the convening of the Holy and Great Council in Crete) the people of Ukraine through the legislature (Supreme Rada) and the President (at that time President Poroshenko) appealed to the Ecumenical Patriarch to intervene in the situation. This was raised before the Great Council in hopes that the assembled hierarchs would take up the issue at that time; despite this hope, the agenda for the Council had been set, and the matter could not be discussed. In its letter, however, the government argued that as a sovereign state Ukraine deserved to have its own Church – consistent with the recent historical process for other predominately Orthodox countries in Eastern Europe. It is not clear when or how the Ecumenical Patriarch made his decision, although it was clearly done with consultation of the Holy and Sacred Synod;

when it was announced that autocephaly would be granted there was enthusiasm and even excitement among the faithful in the UOC-UCA.

The build-up to the granting of autocephaly led to broad discussions within Church leadership of the UOC-USA, all asking for approaches to support autocephaly and facilitate the process if it should be possible. His Eminence Archbishop Daniel of the UOC of USA was selected as one of the exarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarch to the Church in Ukraine; he facilitated the election of a primate (First Hierarchy) and also helped in developing firm relationships for the Church in Ukraine. Church membership in the USA was proud of Archbishop Daniel's role and supportive of his efforts. Information flowed from His Eminence to the Church in the United States through articles, photos, and eventually through discussions. When autocephaly was officially bestowed upon the Church in the person of the newly elected Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kyiv and all Ukraine at the Phanar on January 6, 2019, Archbishop Daniel and I were the only two members of the UOC-USA present at the historic event. Had there been more planning there would have been a large delegation present, but the speedy nature of the inception and fruition of the event necessitated a subdued response from the Church abroad. In fact, while the UOC-USA had long held hopes for autocephaly close, the event was specifically for the Church in Ukraine and not the Church in the diaspora.

Following the granting of autocephaly, discussion continued broadly in the UOC-USA about the event. Archbishop Daniel made a formal presentation to the Metropolitan Council on the events that transpired in Ukraine and the group questioned him with excitement and joy about the events. After this the emphasis of the discussion moved from the joy of the event to questions about how the Church in the United States could be

supportive of autocephaly; the need for a building up of the Church in Ukraine to be independent and self-ruling was considered necessary and difficult. The UOC-USA offered help to facilitate these processes, including having two bishops from the UOC-USA attend the formal enthronement of Metropolitan Epiphanius in Kyiv and address the gathering.

What will the future hold for the Orthodox Church in Ukraine? It is hoped that the time ahead will lead to a stabilization and growth of the Church. It will be a difficult time because much unrest has been sown since the fall of Communism and the establishment of Ukraine as a free nation-state; healing the divisions and uniting the people will be a long process that to some extent must be carried out by Ukraine itself and not by the involvement of outsiders, even if those outsiders are well-meaning. Inasmuch as the UOC-USA and other well-intentioned supporters can help the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, no doubt the support will be welcomed; all the same, the Ukraine must grow and develop its own Church in its own way for the enrichment and betterment of the faithful there.



Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos for the Bestowal
of the Ecclesiastical Status of Autocephaly
to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine

Bartholomew, by God’s mercy Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch:

“You have come to Mount Zion . . . and to the Church of the first-born” (Heb. 12.22–23), as the blessed Paul, apostle to the nations, declares to all the faithful, appropriately likening the Church to a mountain to affirm conviction and recognition as well as steadfastness and stability. For although the Church of God both is and is called one flock and one body of Christ—everywhere sharing the confession of Orthodox faith, the communion through the sacraments in the Holy Spirit, and the constancy of apostolic succession and canonical order—already from the earliest apostolic times it also consists of local and native Churches internally self-administered by their own shepherds, teachers and servants of the Gospel of Christ, namely, their regional Bishops, not only for the historical and secular significance of these cities and lands, but also for the particular pastoral needs of these places.

Therefore, inasmuch as the most devout and divinely-protected country of Ukraine has been fortified and magnified by heavenly providence, while also acquiring comprehensive political independence, and inasmuch as its civil and church leaders have

avidly sought its ecclesiastical self-administration over more than thirty years—thereby further echoing previous similar requests periodically addressed by its people to the most holy Apostolic Throne of Constantinople, which is obliged by a lengthy canonical tradition to care for the holy Orthodox Churches facing difficulties, especially those with which it has always been associated through canonical bonds, such as the historical Metropolis of Kyiv—our Modesty, along with our most reverend Metropolitans and most honorable beloved brothers and concelebrants in the Holy Spirit, in the imperative concern of the Great Church of Christ within the Orthodox world for healing long standing schisms and divisions in the local Churches, unanimously determine and declare that the entire Orthodox Church contained within the boundaries of the politically constituted and wholly independent State of Ukraine, with its sacred Metropolitan, Archdiocesan and Episcopal sees, its monasteries and parishes, as well as all the ecclesiastical institutions therein, operating under the Founder of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, our Godman Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, shall hereafter exist as canonically a u t o c e p h a l o u s, independent and self-administered, having and recognizing as its First Hierarch in all church matters its presiding canonical Primate, who shall bear the title “His Beatitude Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine,” without any lawful addition or deletion to this title without permission from the Church of Constantinople. This Primate shall preside over the Holy Synod, annually comprised of Hierarchs invited by rotation and seniority from those serving within the geographical boundaries of Ukraine. This is how the affairs of the Church shall be governed in this land, as the sacred and holy Canons declare, freely and in the Holy Spirit and unimpeded, far from any other external interference.

Moreover, we recognize and declare this Autocephalous Church, established within the boundaries of the sovereign territory of Ukraine by means of this signed Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos, as our spiritual daughter, and recommend that all Orthodox Churches throughout the world acknowledge and commemorate it by the name “Most Holy Church of Ukraine” with its see in the historic city of Kyiv, without being henceforth entitled to establish bishops or found extraterritorial altars in regions already lawfully dependent on the Ecumenical Throne, which bears canonical competence over the Diaspora, but instead restricting its proper jurisdiction within the territories of the State of Ukraine. Indeed, we bestow upon this autocephalous ecclesiastical Authority all the attending privileges and sovereign rights, so that from this day the Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine shall commemorate “Every Orthodox Diocese” during the liturgy, while the surrounding choir of most holy Hierarchs shall commemorate his name as First Hierarch and Primate of the most holy Church in Ukraine. As for matters related to internal ecclesiastical administration, these shall be arbitrated, adjudicated and determined absolutely by the Primate and the Holy Synod, adhering to the evangelical and other teachings—in accordance with sacred Tradition and the venerable canonical regulations of our Holy Orthodox Church, as well as the teaching and injunction of Canon 6 of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, which dictates that “whereas the common vote of all is reasonable and in accordance with the ecclesiastical canon, in cases where two or three disagree by reason of personal rivalry, let the vote of the majority prevail” —while further preserving the right of all Hierarchs and other clergy to address petitions of appeal to the Ecumenical Patriarch, who bears the canonical responsibility of irrevocably passing judgment over matters related to bishops and other clergy in local Churches, in accordance with the sacred Canons 9 and 17 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon.

In addition to the above, we declare that the Autocephalous Church in Ukraine knows as its head the most holy Apostolic and Patriarchal Ecumenical Throne, just as the rest of the Patriarchs and Primates also do, while having along with its other canonical obligations and responsibilities, as its foremost mission, the preservation of our Orthodox Faith inviolable as well as the canonical unity and communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the other local Orthodox Churches unwavering. Furthermore, the Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine, as well as the Hierarchs of the most holy Church of Ukraine, are from now on elected in accordance with the provisions of the holy and sacred Canons as well as the relevant regulations of its Constitutional Charter, along with mandatory agreement in all matters on the regulations of the present Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos. All the Hierarchs have the duty to shepherd the people of God in a manner pleasing to God, advancing, in the fear of God, peace and concord in their country and Church.

Nonetheless, in order that the bond of spiritual unity and association of the holy Churches of God may remain in every way undiminished—for we have been instructed “to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4.3)—His Beatitude the presiding Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine is required to commemorate, in accordance with the ancient traditions of our holy Fathers, the Ecumenical Patriarch, Their Beatitudes the Patriarchs and other Primates of the local Autocephalous Churches, in the sequence of the Diptychs, according to canonical order, assuming his proper place after the Primate of the Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia both in the sacred Diptychs and church assemblies.

At the same time, the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, through its Primate or else the canonical locum tenens on the Throne of Kyiv, is obliged to participate in periodical Inter-Orthodox consultations on significant canonical, doctrinal and other issues, in accordance with the sacred custom of the Fathers that has prevailed from the outset. The First Hierarchy, after being installed, must also immediately dispatch the necessary Irenic Letters concerning his establishment both to the Ecumenical Patriarch and the other Primates, just as he is also entitled to receive the same from these, while commencing his irenic journey as customary from the First-Throne Church of Constantinople, wherefrom it will likewise receive the Holy Myron as affirmation of its spiritual unity with the latter. In the case of major issues of ecclesiastical, doctrinal and canonical nature, His Beatitude the Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine must, on behalf of the Holy Synod of his Church, address our most holy Patriarchal and Ecumenical Throne, seeking its authoritative opinion and conclusive support, while the prerogatives of the Ecumenical Throne over the Exarchate and Sacred Stavropegial institutions in Ukraine shall be preserved unmitigated.

Consequently, on the basis of all the above and on the basis of these conditions, our Holy Great Church of Christ blesses and declares the Orthodox Church in Ukraine as Autocephalous, invoking the abundant gifts of God and boundless treasures of the All-Holy Spirit upon the venerable Hierarchy, the righteous clergy and pious people throughout the land of Ukraine, and praying that the First and Great High Priest Jesus Christ—through the intercessions of our all-holy and most blessed lady, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary; the holy and glorious prince Vladimir, equal to the apostles; the holy and glorious queen Olga; our venerable and God-bearing Fathers, the ascetics and monastics of the Kyiv

Lavra and all the Monasteries—may forever support the Autocephalous Church of Ukraine, now reckoned in the body of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and grant it stability, unity, peace and increase for His glory and that of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

These things, then, are deemed and determined, joyfully proclaimed to you from the venerable Center of Orthodoxy, having been ratified in synod, whereas this Patriarchal and Synodal Tome is issued for permanent protection, being recorded and signed in the Code of the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople, delivered in an identical and accurate copy to His Beatitude Epifanios, the Primate of the Most Holy Church of Ukraine, and to His Excellency the President of Ukraine, Mr. Petro Poroshenko, for abiding verification and permanent confirmation.

On this sixth day of the month January of the year two thousand and nineteen,

Of the XII indiction

- + Bartholomew of Constantinople, hereby determines in Christ God
- + Panteleimon of Vryoula
- + Gennadios of Italy and Malta
- + Avgoustinos of Germany
- + Germanos of Tranoupolis
- + Evangelos of New Jersey
- + Kyrillos of Rhodes
- + Evgenios of Rethymnon and Avlopotamos
- + Ambrose of Korea
- + Konstantinos of Singapore
- + Arsenios of Austria
- + Chrysostomos of Symi
- + Nathanael of Chicago



Contributors

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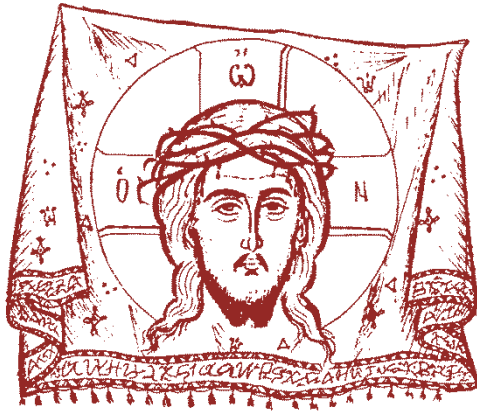
liturgical theology at the Institute of Postgraduate Studies in Orthodox Theology of the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy (Geneva) and lecturer at the Catholic University of Paris. In 2019, Archbishop Job was appointed Dean of the Institute for Orthodox Theology Higher Studies at Chambésy (Geneva).

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