

ORTHODOX UNITY IN AMERICA:
ATTEMPTS, PERCEPTIONS, AND COMMENTS

by

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Introduction

The call for the administrative unity of the Orthodox Churches in America has been a central issue since the turn of the century. Metropolitan (later Patriarch) Tikhon, who headed the Russian mission in North America, stressed institutional unity and eventual independence for the American Church. His vision of unity entailed the basic and moral ecclesiological and canonical condition of "one bishop, one city." Though this is debated by some historians, it is generally accepted that unity -- one church administration -- existed for a limited time during the first two decades of the twentieth century. As is well known, however, by anyone with the slightest understanding of the Orthodox experience in the "new world," Orthodox unity collapsed due to a multitude of factors (e.g. the onslaught of immigration, specifically from the Balkans, the rise of nationalism worldwide, internal affairs such as Church life in Russia after the events of 1917). This, however, did not prevent later attempts for unity.

As has been shown in *Orthodox America, 1794-1976, The Quest for Orthodox Church Unity in America* and other historical studies, unity has been the goal of clergy, theologians, and the faithful for almost seventy years. It is agreed by all that unity is not only desirable from a canonical perspective. It is also essential for a more viable Orthodox witness both for those within and for those outside its fold. All speak of the ideal of one church, though disunity lives on. The first chapter will deal specifically with past attempts at unity. Here the focus will be primarily

on each "vision" of unity and the determining circumstances that caused rejection, abandonment, and ultimate failure.

Chapter two will deal with three major Orthodox publications -- *The Orthodox Observer*, *The Orthodox Church*, and *The Word*. The effort will be to explore how the official publications of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), and the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America (AOCA) addressed the issue of unity, along with some of the many other factors involved (ethnicity, relationship to "mother churches," etc.).

The concluding chapter will be, in the author's understanding, the heart of the presentation: "where do we go from here." At this present time, unity is hidden behind the passivity of the hierarchs and theologians. Constructive dialogue is at a low, if it is going on at all, while hundreds of thousands of Orthodox become more content and uninformed with jurisdictional separation and its implications for the future. Debating canon law, liturgical practice, theological emphases, ethnicity, etc. brings little hope in producing positive steps toward unity. The American situation calls for unique and creative efforts on the part of the whole Church. To this day, all attempts have consciously justified themselves with past precedents, with the strength of each dependent on the accepted interpretation of historical circumstances that have vanished with time. The *Orthodox Catholic Review*, a journal published in 1927 during the unity attempt of Archbishop Aftimios Ofiesh, profoundly deals with this question:

So, for example, we often falsify the facts of history unconsciously, and deceive ourselves in the interest for what we should like history and truth to have been. We rest easy and contented in this world of our delusion, and we are apt to be resentful when the sharpness of unwelcome truth intrudes itself disturbingly into our peace.¹

The present author is not a theologian or historian, and he acknowledges the lack of scholarly achievement in the present work. However, the aim is not to be conclusive, but rather, to elicit constructive thought in realizing the need for "one, holy, catholic and apostolic church" in America.

¹Unsigned editorial, *The Orthodox Catholic Review*, v. 1, n. 3, (Mar. 1927) p.99.

Chapter 1

Attempts at Unity

Over the past eighty years, the Orthodox Churches of America have witnessed six major attempts at unity: 1) Archbishop (and later Patriarch) Tikhon's proposal; 2) Archbishop Aftimios' proposal; 3) the Federation of Orthodox Greek Catholic Churches in America; 4) the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the Americas; 5) the Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA); and 6) the bilateral discussions between the OCA and the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese (AOCA). A brief evaluation of each attempt follows, with a focus on the "vision" of unity presented. Negative results, if determinable, will also be examined in each case.

Bishop (later Archbishop, then Patriarch) Tikhon

Archimandrite Seraphim rightly labeled this first attempt as "Initial Unity" in 1971¹ and the publication *Orthodox America, 1794-1976* has concurred. In fact, all balanced histories of this particular period speak of a united church.² Though *Orthodox America, 1794-1976* stresses this point in the relations between the Greeks and Russians, it has also been argued that the Greeks were never really united with the Russian

¹See table of contents in Archimandrite Serafim Surrency, *The Quest for Orthodox Church Unity in America* (New York: Saints Boris and Gleb Press, 1973).

²Cf. Hiero-monk Boris, "The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America" in *Orthodox Catholic Review* (OCR) v.1, n.1 (January, 1927) p. 16; and *Orthodox America, (OA) 1794-1976* (New York: The Orthodox Church in America, 1976) p. 91.

mission. The majority of articles from the *Orthodox Observer* which deal with the history of the Greeks in America follow this line of thinking.

Vision

Be that as it may, these discrepancies are immaterial to Tikhon's vision. The emphasis of his "vision" can be seen in the English supplement of the *Russian Orthodox American Messenger*, March, 1906, in his "Views of Questions to be examined by the Local Council of the Russian Church."³ Tikhon understood the "peculiar" situation of his diocese and tried to meet its needs. Though obviously conscious of its relationship to the Orthodox Church in Russia (see, for example, the debate in Mayfield, 1907, concerning the name of diocese), Tikhon was tireless in shepherding his pan-Orthodox flock. There are numerous examples of his desire to accommodate the different realities of liturgical expression, language, and customs.⁴ If he had a slogan it would have been "unity in diversity."⁵ Hand in hand with his vision of administrative unity was his stress on the missionary aspect of the Church. His inaugural address and last sermon in America both spoke of the

³OCR, pp. 15-16.

⁴OA, pp. 83-99.

⁵"Some of the mission's priests were anxious for uniformity and regularity in this matter. The Council, however, wholeheartedly agreed with the opinion of Archbishop Tikhon that the existence of these differences was entirely natural since the Orthodox in America came from different areas and countries, and that the priest should explain to parishioners the difference between the essential and the secondary, between dogma and ritual," in OA, p. 99.

Church's mission to the "pagans" and "heterodox." For Tikhon, his vision of the Russian Orthodox mission was more than a federation of different Orthodox nationalities. It was the bringing of the Orthodox faith to the American people.

Results

Many reasons attributed to the failure of this "initial unity", e.g. the transfer of Tikhon; massive immigration of Orthodox peoples from the Balkans (as distinct from Central Europe); hierarchical neglect, as attention of the Russian bishops focused more and more on the return of the Uniates; and above all administrative and financial insecurity as the Boshevik Revolution brought chaos to Church life in Russia and consequently the mission. The Church in America was concerned with survival, and as Tikhon's vision of unity was blurred to the point of secondary importance, the door was opened for the re-evaluation of his vision. This caused individual efforts, such as Aftimios', to be produced. Unfortunately, no one group or individual was capable of understanding, addressing, or acting on the new circumstances that prevailed.

Archbishop Aftimios

Vision

After a detailed survey of the current state of the American Orthodox Church of his day, Aftimios states the following:

America is not *diaspora* in the sense of the Canons and practice of the Church. America is not borderland territory between or on the edge of rival or adjacent jurisdictions. America is not primarily or to any great extent a territory evangelized or

converted by Orthodox; it is chiefly a land into which Orthodox groups from all the existing Patriarchates and National Churches have moved and where they have established communities in the midst of an unchanged pagan or heretical environment. No such land as this was thought of or provided for in the formation of the Canons and Practice of the Church. There is, therefore, no basis on which any National Church can claim exclusive jurisdiction and each Church is free to establish its own American Jurisdiction. This last seems to offer a solution, but the fact remains that overlapping or interpenetrating jurisdictions where two or more Bishops administer the same territory are not permissible under the Canons. Canonically, then, there is no answer to the problem at once strictly correct and also practically applicable to the situation unless American Orthodoxy be independently organized and dispose Her own affairs by Her own Synod's application of Canonical practice to each separate problem.⁶

The next year (1928), a provisional "Constitution of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America with Related Documents of the North American Holy Synod" was published (see Appendix) and sent to all "Orthodox prelates in America" and "to the Chief Pastors of Orthodoxy in every nation."⁷ Aftimios' attempt of unity, which was initially backed by Metropolitan Platon, although rejected by

⁶Archbishop Aftimios, "Present and Future of Orthodoxy in America in Relation to Other Bodies and to Orthodoxy Abroad," OCR, v.1, n.IV-V, p. 155.

⁷See *Constitution of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America with Related Documents of The North American Holy Synod* (New York: *The Orthodox Catholic Review*, 1928) p. 5; cited in its entirety in the appendix.

everyone except his own Syrian diocese, was in line with Tikhon's conception of unity and mission. He, and his advisors, were systematically trying to address the factors and by-products of the failure of Tikhon's vision.

Unfortunately, Aftimios' attempt at Orthodox unity in America has been given very little serious consideration, no doubt because of his own later difficulties; Archmandrite Seraphim Surrency's account is the most complete but is also somewhat misleading.⁸ What seems to be important for understanding Aftimios' vision of unity is the emphasis he placed on the use of English, along with trained pastors who would be able to address needs of the immigrant's American-born children. Here, Aftimios was addressing a concern that was plaguing the Orthodox Church, i.e. the loss of Orthodox faithful to the Roman Catholic and Protestant, namely Episcopal, churches. This was a new problem, one that had not entered into Tikhon's vision of twenty years earlier. Surrency gives no credit to Aftimios for this; however, it should be noted that this issue of addressing the needs of our youth specifically in the English language is still a factor in the discussion of unity and mission today.

Surrency's initial presentation of the Aftimios affair, which is quite detailed, seems to miss an important aspect of Aftimios' vision; namely, that his constitution was deliberately described as provisional; it required acceptance by the heads of churches in America and abroad. Out of context, Surrency concluded that Aftimios was vying to head the

⁸Surrency., pp. 32-42.

independent (autocephalous) church himself. Though this would have happened by Aftimios' interpretation of the Russian Council of Bishops' authorization of February 2, 1927 in accordance with Article VII, Section 1 c, the same section allotted a time frame of seven years for the office of Archbishop, President of the Holy Synod.⁹ Furthermore, Aftimios' cover letter to the heads of the churches states, "The Provisional Constitution provided and officially promulgated . . . pending the first General Convention thereof (at which it may be amended),"¹⁰ provides for change.

Also important for our presentation is Aftimios' conviction that, the first step towards rehabilitation of Orthodox both in American and throughout the world is the firm organization and successful development of a united and independent Orthodox Catholic Church in America.¹¹

Again, he raises an issue that is supported by many American Orthodox today, that the establishment of a united and independent church is for the benefit of all, not just the American Church. This seems to be a central issue today, with many seeing a certain fear of the Mother Churches losing their American flocks - a fear that is reflected on both sides of the ocean.

⁹"Constitution," p. 11.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹¹*Ibid.*

Results

Surrency outlines - with one of Aftimios' former advisors, Archimandrite Boris Burden, as a consultant - the numerous reasons for the Church's rejection of this "vision." He points to the Orthodox in America still being in their own "particular ghettos," the movement lacked priests, the wrong interpretation by Aftimios of the Russian Council of Bishops' support, the lack of finances, the loss of Metropolitan Platon's support, the external factor of the Episcopalians' involvement, and the "various Orthodox groups in America at that time simply were not ready in terms of church consciousness" ¹² Another factor is the uneasiness in which the Council of Bishops authorized Aftimios' responsibility in their "Act" ¹³ It would go without saying that one would be in full communion only with other Orthodox. However, the "Act" in provision I specifically stipulates this and is obviously in reaction to past thoughts or actions on the part of Aftimios or his diocese. Furthermore, a reading of the *Orthodox Catholic Review*, a publication of Aftimios' American Church that had only seven issues, would question their suspicions, though his later actions and those of his movement were considerably suspect. ¹⁴

¹²Surrency, pp. 33-34.

¹³"Constitution," pp. 34-37.

¹⁴Surrency, pp. 40-41.

The Federated Orthodox Greek Catholic Primary Jurisdictions in America

After the time of Aftimios, the Orthodox in America were being traumatized by their own growing pains. Each national group was experiencing internal problems, while the Russians were divided into three separate and antagonistic jurisdictions. With disunity running rampant, a second attempt at some sort of unity was made. This unity was a "federation " of all Orthodox jurisdictions that were dependent on their Mother Church, that is: the Greeks dependent on Constantinople, the Russian group that was dependent on Moscow, the Syrians dependent on Antioch, and the Serbians dependent on Belgrade. Two other groups of Ukrainians and Carpatho-Russians, whose dependence was on Constantinople, were questioned about who this Mother Church was and consequently were questionable in the Federation, and the "Metropolia," - the continuation of the original Russian mission - was not represented at all.

Vision

Unlike the visions of Tikhon and Aftimios, the Federation was initiated by the actions of the United States Government, which was drafting Orthodox clerics into the Armed Forces. Since the Orthodox were not a recognized major faith in America, exemption for military service was not possible. This policy of the government was challenged by a priest of the Antiochian diocese of Metropolitan Antony Bashir, who succeeded in gaining exemption.

From here, the two initiators of the Federation - both of whom were advisors to Aftimios - solicited support from the hierarchs of the above

named jurisdictions. Though there was much fanfare when the Federation was successful in getting legal recognition by New York State in March, 1943, it ceased to function effectively by 1945.¹⁵

The realization that equal religious rights for Orthodox servicemen had been gained during the war only by a united effort no doubt provided practical incentive. Although the cry of "Fourth Major Faith" was a distortion of basic Orthodox ecclesiology, clergy and laity had succeeded in gaining such recognition in most states and by the Federal Government. Archbishop Michael of the Greek Archdiocese became the first Orthodox hierarch to be invited to offer prayers at the presidential inauguration in 1957.

Obviously, the Federation's vision of unity fell far short of Tikhon's and Aftimios'. For example, it did not address such issues as unity-in-diversity and mission to non-Orthodox. However, in an indirect way, the Federation was a catalyst for the next attempt at unity - SCOBA. Interestingly, Metropolitan Antony Bashir was the only hierarch that participated in both attempts. More importantly, he recognized the need for promoting an American expression of Orthodoxy. Besides his personal appearance (use of non-traditional clerical garb, etc.),

he introduced the extensive use of English in worship, encouraged church school education, accepted many converts into the Church and ordained many to the priesthood, and

¹⁵*Ibid.* p. 52.

translated into English and published more than thirty books on the Orthodox faith.¹⁶

Recognizing the need for Orthodox cooperation and unity, he was instrumental in the formation of the Federation and SCOBA. Furthermore, he was the first Orthodox to obtain membership in the NCC and began the controversial Western Rite in his diocese. As an individual promoting a united church, he seems to have been in direct continuity with Aftimios, even though his "jurisdiction" initially was formed in opposition to that of Aftimios and his followers.

Results

Jurisdictional squabbles seem to be at the top of the list of the Federation's concern. These debates ranged from a questionable Orthodox layman being involved to the celebration of a hierarchical Divine Liturgy in a civic auditorium to questions of what defined a "primary jurisdiction."¹⁷ In short, the lack of a trusting relationship with the given circumstances provided for seeing the Federation only as an organization dealing with the secular government and not as a vehicle for a united church.

¹⁶OA, p. 195.

¹⁷Surrency, pp. 48ff.

Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the Americas

Vision

"In spite of its rather informal and clearly only consultative character, the Conference - for the first time since canonical unity in America was broken in 1920 - projected a witness of unity, a desire for closer contact and common action." Fr. Meyendorff goes on to say, "the Orthodox [in America] were taking purely problematic and consultative - but still real - steps towards unity."¹⁸ As can be readily observed, SCOBA was seen not as a united Church, but as a "witness to unity."

It had been 40 years since Aftimios and his plans for a united church. Many of the conditions which prevailed during his time continued, and new ones (e.g. a jurisdiction's relation with its Mother Church, the stability and growth of jurisdictions, etc.) were developing. As a result of these circumstances, SCOBA could be nothing more than a "witness." The initial constitution, as given in Surrency (see Appendix)¹⁹ is a clear statement of the SCOBA's consultative status. It calls for a few observations and evaluation.

The Preamble makes two points that in the years ahead would be of concern: 1) the establishment of Orthodoxy in America was "planted by a handful of Missionaries in Alaska," (territorial primacy) and 2) "Fully integrated in American Society the Church is here to stay, to grow,

¹⁸OA, p. 243.

¹⁹Surrency, "The Constitution of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the Americans adopted on 8th of August 1961," pp. 141-145. See thesis appendix for complete text.

and to bear witness to the true faith" (definition and characteristics of *diaspora*).

The "objective" (Art. I c) envisioned the SCOBA as a forum for discussion of common concerns, coordination, and "the strengthening of Orthodox unity." Church consciousness was not yet strong enough to pursue a higher vision, and as we look back from our vantage point almost thirty years later, nothing has seemed to change the mind of the American Church. At times in SCOBA's history - most notably in the 'sixties - "it became a symbol and a hope for all those who were consciously working towards a united Orthodoxy in America."²⁰ However, the repeated cries to the Mother Churches and to the Ecumenical Patriarchate - who claimed (Canon 28 of Chalcedon) jurisdiction over all the Orthodox in America - were unanswered or non-supportive in seeing SCOBA as a step in the right direction. SCOBA and its individual members seemed to deal with one crisis after another that required immense amounts of time and energy. Ironically, major issues were dealt with in a circular matter. An example of this was the presence of the Metropolia, which had irregular relations with its Mother Church in Moscow. It was deemed necessary that relations with the Mother Church become normalized. The Ecumenical Patriarchate "forced" the Metropolia into discussions with Moscow which ultimately led to the autocephaly of the OCA (formerly the Metropolia).²¹ The point

²⁰OA, p. 243.

²¹Surrency, pp. 82-86.

being made is not that of history (it can be read elsewhere), but of SCOBA's inability to deal with major issues.

It must be noted SCOBA was aware of "mission," though the mission was quite different from the vision of Tikhon and Aftimios. It consisted formally in two forms: 1) the American Orthodox Committee on Relations with non-Orthodox bodies, and 2) a Missionary Commission that was supposed to study the external and internal mission fields of the Church, along with providing evaluations and information (Art. IV, Sec. 2, No. 4 and 11 respectively). The first was incorporated into the Study and Planning Committee. It bore fruit with its publication of Guidelines to Ecumenical Relations, a united representation in the NCC, and various consultations with Non-Orthodox. The second is believed to have vanished in the sunset.

Results

Many might regard it as presumptuous even to consider attempting a critical evaluation of SCOBA, since they still see SCOBA as the only viable avenue for Orthodox unity in America. The same can be said of the next two attempts - the autocephaly of the OCA and the Bilateral Commission of the OCA and the Antiochians (which at present is not meeting). However, our understanding of the continued disunity in America must evaluate the strengths and limitations of each. Furthermore, it is by examining the weaknesses of each that a more positive direction can be attained.

The first point, which is stressed time and again by all, is the "non-canonical" status of SCOBA. The Conference was planned as a voluntary association organized to coordinate the efforts of the members in

common pastoral concerns, though it was also hoped that it might serve as a catalyst for administrative unity. Since it never could obtain canonical status from the Mother Churches as some type of Synod, i.e. "Holy" in 1965 and "Provisional Provincial" in 1970, decisions of an abundance of issues could never be authorized - it had no authority. Consequently, movement toward unity in a canonical manner (no doubt this was the desire) proved an impossibility and an impasse which continues to exist.

On a more practical level of cooperation, which SCOBA could address, initial work was prosperous. The commissions on Christian Education (OCEC), the Boy Scouts, College Work (OCF), Ecumenical Relations, Military Chaplaincy, and Clergy Fellowships provided for inter-jurisdictional relations.²² Depending on the "vision" of individuals in each commission, positive growth was worked out. But since much effort of SCOBA itself was directed at the canonical level, a sense of direction, support, and "vision" never filtered down to the practical level. Moreover, the SCOBA's "blindness" to this basic administrative responsibility caused later impotency and dysfunction. The impressive list of Commissions and Committees in Art. IV, Sec. 2 points to a wholistic approach in realizing necessary areas in which a fostering of unity was imperative. Twenty-seven years later - for whatever reasons - we see a tragic failure in most, if not all, of these areas. (As a point of information, the Exarch to the Ecumenical Patriarchate; Archbishop

²²OA, p. 242ff.

Iakovos, has been its only chairman and the last individual member who participated in its inception.)

Autocephaly of the OCA

It first must be stated that this presentation will deal specifically with the Tomos of 1970 which granted autocephaly to the Metropolia. References to other documents will be made to understand more fully the vision which was being advanced. The uproar caused by the Tomos is self-evident in any of the literature written at that time (e.g. letters between the Patriarchates of Moscow and Constantinople,²³ letters sent by SCOBA,²⁴ articles,²⁵ and books²⁶). More specifically, however, it seems that it was not the text of the Tomos (see Appendix) that was in question and debated, but the method and process in which autocephaly was granted. At this time, Orthodoxy in America and abroad witnessed

²³"Letter of Patriarch Athenagoras to Patriarch Alexis," "Letter of Patriarch Alexis to Patriarch Athenagoras," "Letter of Patriarch Athenagoras to Metropolitan Pimen," "Letter of Metropolitan Pimen to Patriarch Athenagoras," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, v. 15, n. 1/2 (1971), pp. 55-80.

²⁴Surrency, pp. 151-155; documents pertaining to SCOBA's request of foreign autocephalous churches to address the American situation after the OCA's autocephaly.

²⁵Cf. Andrew T. Kopan, "The Autocephaly of the Russian Metropolia," *The Orthodox Observer*, Nov. 1970, pp. 7-8.

²⁶Panagiotes N. Trempelas, *The Autocephaly of the Metropolia in America*, edited and translated by G. Bebis, R. Stephanopoulos, and N. Vaporis (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Press, 1973).

the height of polemical discussions *with respect to the American situation.

Vision

The Tomos itself "it is hoped . . . will be beneficial to the Holy Catholic Orthodox Church of Christ and will make possible the growth of relations between the local parts of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church" did not speak of the autocephaly as an end to the jurisdictional problem. In other words, the Tomos was not a panacea. Its immediate effects were restricted only to the present jurisdictions of the Moscow Patriarchate (i.e. the Metropolia and the Exarchate of Moscow). It acknowledged that the OCA

must be in brotherly relations with all the Orthodox Churches . . . who until the present time preserve their factual, actual, canonical and jurisdictional dependence on their national Churches.²⁷

The reality of the American situation is stressed. The Tomos laid no claims to territorial primacy in America or rights over other jurisdictions. It was seen by its signators as a step in the right direction. Basically it granted the already self-governing Church legitimacy. Though many might get excited about this observation, it is commonly described as such. The Tomos was acknowledging in words what had in actuality existed for almost 50 years. In terms of mission, Section 2c in an obvious reference to ecumenism, allowed for relations with any faith.

²⁷*Tomos of Autocephaly*, see Appendix for complete text.

More important for our presentation is the understanding of the OCA's vision. Unlike any other American jurisdiction, it acknowledged a historical link to Tikhon and his vision. This link - whether it was founded on his ethnic background or vision - has been central to the OCA's understanding of its role in American Orthodoxy.²⁸ Calls for "unity in diversity" and mission to non-Orthodox were the focus of many editorials of the OCA's official publication (which will be addressed in the next chapter). As can be seen in the agreements in its fold (Romanian, Albanian, and Bulgarian), unity is not expressed in terms of uniformity of rites or traditions, but rather in terms of pluralism. "Mission" was the theme of the Fourth Triennial All-American Council in 1975. This addressed "itself to the very purpose of the existence of the Church in America: the Orthodox mission to America in light of the eternal beauty and power of the saving Gospel of Christ."²⁹

Results

Like SCOBA, the OCA is an open-ended evolution. The cost of autocephaly brought the many issues between Constantinople and Moscow to the forefront of the American debate. More unfortunate was the wait-and-see attitude of many of the other autocephalous Orthodox Churches. After 18 years, the relationship between SCOBA and the OCA is still ambiguous. On pure technicalities, the Primate of the OCA cannot attend a SCOBA meeting since it is chaired by the Patriarchal

²⁸OA, pp. 267-271.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 284.

Exarch Plenipotentiary who was granted this title and the right to preside by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1971. Further, and of a higher degree of mockery to the faith, is the fact that the two hierarchs cannot (or will not!) concelebrate the Divine Liturgy. This is based on the debate of who would preside - the Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate or the Primate of the OCA, whom Constantinople does not recognize as autocephalous. On the other hand, the OCA "believes that SCOBA can remain the forum" for furthering Orthodox unity.³⁰ Furthermore, from the minutes of the May 1, 1980 meeting of SCOBA's Study and Planning Commission, the OCA will "propose an amendment to the Standing Conference Constitution to fix the Chairmanship permanently with the Exarch of the Ecumenical Throne." Another example of these unbelievable tales is dated December 14, 1986 in which the author was present. At St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn (Antiochian), the twentieth anniversary of Metropolitan Philip's consecration took place. The presiding Hierarch was Metropolitan Philip (consequently the Exarch of Constantinople and Primate of the OCA could not concelebrate). When it came time for communion the Exarch motioned for the Primate to partake before him. To the delight of an eminent Orthodox priest/theologian of the OCA, it was said to the author that "progress is being made." The "progress" will be very slow if it depends on such symbolic - or perhaps simply spontaneous - gestures.

Since autocephaly, it is necessary to acknowledge two lines of approach to the question of Orthodox unity in America - SCOBA and the

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 244.

OCA. Neither has, on a practical and concrete level, shown itself to be better or worse as an instrument of unity. At the inception of both, there was much enthusiasm and hope. However, the American situation again reached a *status quo*, and passivity prevailed both here and abroad. Those who were once integral to the desire for unity have either passed to their reward or are part of this period of inactivity.

Bilateral Commission of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) and the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese (AOCA)

On February 24, 1981, bilateral discussions on unity were initiated between the OCA and the AOCA. This was a tremendous step for both churches. The history of each in America has shown great concern for unity, and both hold to the same missionary outlook. The commission, which was made up of three priests from each church, reflected a spirit of openness and honesty along with a realistic approach to the American ecclesiastical situation. The committee organized a conference of departmental heads of each diocese, which was held on October 25-27, 1983.

Vision

The essence of the commission's vision is outlined in its minutes. Focus was given for unity on the level of the episcopate. A paper was presented at the Second meeting by V. Rev. John Meyendorff on the "Basic Positions on Orthodox Unity Realized through the Episcopate." As the minutes attest: 1) the unity of the episcopate is the main canonical issue, 2) "structure of unity" does not imply merger, and 3) the title of "Exarch" given to the AOCA Metropolitan would allow for ties to the See

of Antioch while being a member of the American Synod. (Precedent for this was pointed out by Meyendorff's paper, i.e. the role of the Metropolitan of Kiev as "Exarch" to Constantinople and member of the Russian Synod after 1683, and the canonical status of Northern Greece.)

At other meetings, the following points were made: 1) "unity in diversity" is essential; 2) the general goal of American unity needs to be clearly stated so that the bilaterals would not be seen as directed against anyone, 3) the position of the AOCA is different from the uncanonical groups which found a canonical haven in the OCA; 4) while members of the Greek Archdiocese are making important contributions to Orthodox unity, it is impossible for the Archdiocese to propose or implement a creative canonical initiative; 5) mission was at the top of the list for cooperative effort; 6) great stress was made that American Orthodox unity, and specifically the unity of the OCA/AOCA, is built on a solid foundation which is already laid, so that nothing needs to be invented or created out of nothing; 7) cooperation on the practical level to find ways that are open to unify effort and programs; 8) OCA/AOCA unity is "open-ended," i.e. an invitation to all Orthodox in America; 9) both have a common commitment to Orthodox unity in America, along with the same Orthodox mission to America without destroying the immigrant communities.

From the Second Meeting (June 1981), to the Conference (October 1983), the proposed number of departments for joint meetings rose from four to ten. As the press release states, "A spirit of mutual trust, understanding, cooperation, and enthusiastic willingness for joining work characterized the conference . . . conferences expressed sincere

appreciation to participate in concrete efforts for Orthodox unity and wholeheartedly supported the past, present, and future work of the Commission." The report of the Conference showed many areas of immediate or future cooperation.³¹ A second Conference was planned, but never held, and the last meeting of the Commission was held in January, 1986.

Results

What happened?! Some members of the Commission (in personal conversations) suggested that the Conference was much more than expected. Departmental members who were there spoke of the excitement and intensity that pervaded throughout the three days. Everyone knew what was happening. It was not just another meeting, it was for the growth, progress, and development of a "concept." At no time in the history of the Church in America had such a gathering, for such a purpose, taken place. Twenty-two years of SCOBA rhetoric and thirteen years of the OCA's struggle for acceptance were finally coming to an end. The two jurisdictions, whose past visions and leadership were at the forefront of initiating unity, were providing a forum for the clergy and laity to experience what unity could be. In a concrete and practical way, hierarchs in America - perhaps for the first time - were blessing, supporting, and encouraging their flocks to look beyond their

³¹Information on the Bilateral Commission taken from the archival records of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, Englewood, New Jersey. See Appendix for extracts of Commission minutes after the Conference.

jurisdictional mentalities and see their faith beyond their borders. Hierarchs and theologians had dominated the direction of American disunity for decades. Now, the opportunity was given for the clergy and laity. Unaware, or without putting an overemphasis on ecclesiastical politics, cheap talk, or polemics, the Church as a whole (i.e. Bishops, priests, theologians, and laity) addressed the problem.

The by-product seems to have been too much for the initiators to handle and understand. Three days of an authentic desire for unity had done more than Constantinople's sixty years of not knowing what to do with Canon 28 of Chalcedon, two decades of fifteen to twenty church leaders discussing issues the Mother Churches would not give them authority to act on, and/or thirteen years

one woke up to see if it was true. There has been a breather for five years, God willing the commission will become active again and the whole Church in a second Conference will continue on the road to unity.

This brief presentation of past and ongoing attempts for unity has show much diversity and creative thinking. Though all failed, or have become inactive, one striking observation can be made which sheds a positive light on the road to unity - the relentless struggle of individuals to make the best of a dismal situation. Furthermore, one sees a specific emphasis in each attempt, i.e. a reason(s) for unity. Each period contained many knowable and unknowable characteristics which led to a "living" vision of unity, a vision of unity that arose from particular needs at a particular time. Today's discussions of territorial primacy, canonical interpretation and administrative "cooperation" have gradually become major issues. An intense desire for manifesting the truth of "one church"

lay at the cornerstone fo each, though circumstances and different ideologies inhibited steps toward this ultimate goal. The outcome of each successive attempt has, unfortunately, been an abundance of historical material to interpret and misuse.

Chapter 2

The American Situation: Journalistic Perceptions

Preceding our brief survey of three major Orthodox publications (*The Orthodox Observer* (1934-), *The Orthodox Church* (1965-), and *The Word* (English, 1957-)), a word must be said concerning the methodology used and its limitations.

The time frame which was researched covered the period of the 'sixties and 'seventies. This was the height of concern for the issue of unity, except for a few references in the 1980's, which will be noted. The author took note of articles, editorials, letters to the editor, summarizations of SCOBA meetings, reports of jurisdictional convocations, etc. In other words, whatever was laid between the front and back cover dealing with any aspect noteworthy to our subject was observed. Though all three publications reported on direct and indirect factors relating to our issue of unity, each had a different *slant*. Examination only of individual articles would not do justice to the *context* in which each is brought forth and perceived by the reader. Therefore, the point of the detailed research was to present the broader context of each publication's understanding of unity and how to achieve it.

In terms of limitations, the author regrets knowing only the English language. Consequently, the survey of the Greek Archdiocesan bilingual (English/Greek) publication, *The Orthodox Observer*, will not be complete. However, it may be assumed that both the English and Greek sections reflect the publication's views of this most important issue.

More competent research in this area would determine whether this assumption is correct or not.

Another acknowledged limitation is the fact that we are dealing with archdiocesan publications. Unlike the Antiochian Archdiocese which entails a coast to coast diocese, the Greek and OCA jurisdictions have many dioceses within the archdiocese. Hence, publications of a given Greek or OCA diocese might or might not follow or perceive the issue in the same way. Therefore, it is appropriate to note that differences may exist between dioceses and the archdioceses of the Greeks and OCA.

Though it was impossible to refer to every "pan-Orthodox" article or reference, what is cited will give the general focus of each publication.

The Orthodox Observer

Throughout our time frame of research, the obvious observation is the abundance of articles dealing with 1) ecumenism, and 2) Greek heritage. To find mention of the issue of Orthodox unity is rare and sporadic. When presented, focus is put on Archbishop Iakovos' role as chairman of SCOBA or on activities of SCOBA.

Before laying out the publication's view on unity, it was of great interest to find such an emphasis on ethnicity. At first glance, the general stereotype of a Greek-American seemed correct, i.e. worship in Greek, bilingual publication, propagation of Hellenistic values, culture, etc. However, the more ethnicity was presented, the greater an understanding of why this clinging to the past prevails. Time and again, Christianity's birth into a Hellenistic society was mentioned, along with

the Greek fathers of the Church and the history of the Orthodox Church in a hellenized world (i.e. Byzantium). For example, in an article entitled "Hellenism: The Key to Meaningful Theology" (February 1968) it was considered as a given that one could not "do" theology unless one had the mindset of a Greek. This argument for an emphasis on the Greek heritage may have some justification. With the Greeks, as distinct from the other ethnic jurisdictions in America, the author -- for the first time -- could appreciate the complexity of the ethnic issue. Unlike being Arab, Russian, Serbian, or any other traditional Orthodox national identity, being Greek was directly tied to being Orthodox. This was evident in the Aims and Purposes section of the amendments to the Constitution in the December 1962 issue.¹ Section B reads, "To educate their children in accordance with the religious and cultural heritage of the Greek Orthodox Church." The faith and culture are linked together. The point is not whether nationalism (phyletism) is being applied, but rather that the delineation between faith and culture is not so self-evident in the Greek jurisdiction as it would be for other ethnic groups. To be sure, many articles overemphasized the cultural aspects to the point that the only criterion for the faith was the culture. (The complexity of this issue has been observed² and will be addressed in the next chapter.)

¹"Resolutions Adopted at the 16th Ecclesiastical Congress: Boston, Mass., June 23-30, 1962," OO, v. 28, n. 512 (Dec. 1962) p. 369.

²Alexander Schmemmann, "A Meaningful Storm: Some Reflections on Autocephaly, Tradition and Ecclesiology," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, v. 15, n. 1/2 (1971) pp. 18-21.

Unfortunately, *The Orthodox Observer* never really brought to the reader's attention the situation in America. In fact, the few and far between acknowledgements were in passing. The eulogy for Metropolitan Antony Bashir by Archbishop Iakovos speaks of unity, but there were no programs or process on which he acted.³ The February 1967 issue focused on an "All-American Tribute" to Iakovos. To the author's dismay, it was "all-American" in the sense of the acceptance of the Greek jurisdiction into the status of a major religious force in America. Pages were spent reflecting pats-on-the-back from public officials. In terms of Orthodox participation, only three lines of praise were given from other jurisdictions.⁴ The stress of the publication was triumphalistic in the sense that the Archdiocese had gained civil recognition in a pluralistic society.

December 1967 brought some hope when a letter to the editor expressed concern over the publication's irresponsibility in not presenting issues concerned with unity.⁵ Fr. Vasile Hategan (Romanian diocese) who wrote the letter, expressed sarcasm two years earlier when the Greeks sent a professor from Holy Cross Seminary to Greece

³"In Memoriam: The Most Reverend Metropolitan Antony Bashir, Primate of the Syrian Antiochian Archdiocese of New York and North America, 1898-1966," OO, v. 32, n. 552 (Mar. 1966) p. 86.

⁴"World Leaders Laud His Eminence Iakovas," OO, v. 33, n. 563 (Feb. 1967) p. 57.

⁵"Letters to the Editor," OO, v. 33, n. 573 (Dec. 1967) p. 357.

to seek high level discussions on problems involving the teaching of Greek in the U. S. A. . . . even the Greeks are having difficulties with perpetuating the Greek language . . . in the meantime, let us at least preserve the Faith in English, if necessary!⁶

It is evident that language was an issue of tension in the Archdiocese. At the Clergy/Laity Congress held in Athens during the summer of 1968, Iakavos expressed to the people of Greece, in an apology for his Archdiocese's assimilation into American society to the extent of denying it had happened. He emphasized the twofold education program of the Archdiocese which taught the 1) faith and 2) the Greek language.⁷ A later point in the Congress shows the real tension within the Archdiocese when it was reported by the Religious News Service (RNS) -- and copied by *The Orthodox Observer* on the page after Iakavos' above statement -- that "U.S. Orthodox Group Debates Ties with Greece." In it, a Greek American priest called for no assimilation (Greek language forever!) because it constitutes "the chief danger to the continued vitality of our Greek Orthodox way of life . . . preservation of national identities is important for the health of Orthodoxy."⁸ This continuing debate reached its height at the 1970 Clergy/Laity Congress when it was resolved to submit a request to the Ecumenical Patriarchate to use English in the church services. The November issue of the same year published the

⁶*The Word*, v. 9, n. 3, Mar. 1965, p. 28.

⁷"Our Congress in Athens," *OO*, v. 34, n. 582 (Sept. 1968) p. 9ff.

⁸"U.S. Orthodox Group Debates Ties With Greece," *OO*, v. 34, n. 582 (Sept. 1968) p. 11.

Patriarch's reply. Though he did not say yes or no, he reiterated that Greek is "the language of the Great Mother Church of Christ."⁹

It is within the above context that the life of the Archdiocese was existing. Other jurisdictions had been using English for years or even decades. This, however, was never mentioned. The Greeks, by choice, were struggling by themselves with an identity crisis. There was, to a degree, a justifiable argument for retaining a portion of the Greek heritage which the immigrants brought to America. Nevertheless, criteria to discern what was of value to the essence of the faith did not come about.

The issues revolving around unity were interestingly never brought out until it was time for the Greek Archdiocese to comment on events which forced the issue. We are speaking here of two specific events -- the Autocephaly of the OCA and the Bilateral Commission of the OCA/AOCA.

The granting of autocephaly was in April 1970. Taking into consideration the importance of this event, it was curious that *The Orthodox Observer* took four months to relay this major shift in the ecclesiastical life of the Church to its readers. Furthermore, the May 1970 editorial by N.D. Patrinos on American Orthodoxy states,

"Our Archdiocese has studied this subject seriously and unequivocally and has been led to the conclusion that the creation of ONE Orthodox Church in the Americas is possible only as a result of all national jurisdictions uniting, and spiritually and

⁹OO, Nov. 1970, pp. 3-5.

canonically becoming related to the nationally neutral Ecumenical Patriarchate.¹⁰

There are obvious questions that could be asked (e.g., how nationally "neutral" is the Ecumenical Patriarchate?). However, the point is not to debate the issue, but to reflect what the reader would be informed about. Throughout the decade, *The Orthodox Observer* was not addressing unity, or for that matter acknowledging that it was an issue for the Archdiocese. Then, on the "eve" of the OCA's autocephaly (assuming the May issue was at the printers already), the publication at last implies that it has been an issue.

After the publication reported the autocephaly in August 1970 -- a short paragraph that was part of Iakavos' address at the Congress -- the whole of the debate between Constantinople and Moscow began to surface in America. The next issue had articles on Constantinople's refusal to recognize the autocephaly and Iakavos' disappointment over the divided state of Orthodoxy in America.¹¹ A RNS article on the same page, though not speaking of the issue, states, "His Holiness, Athenagoras I, Ecumenical Patriarch, is leader of the 250,000,000 faithful of the Orthodox Church."

¹⁰OO, May, 1970, p. 10.

¹¹Elliott Wright (RNS), "Patriarch Refuses to Recognize Independent Church in the U.S.," OO, v.36, n. 606 (Sept. 1970) pp. 18; "Where Lies Unity For American Orthodoxy?," OO, v. 36, n. 606 (Sept. 1970) pp. 19-20.

The next one and a half years saw at least one article in each issue concerning the OCA, autocephaly, territorial primacy, role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, SCOBA, the uncanonical move by Moscow, etc. Unfortunately, the reader of *The Orthodox Observer* was overwhelmed with the polemics. The most positive aspect was that the reader's level of awareness of the issue was raised. Regrettably, however, the viewpoint of Constantinople was the only one put forward. The October/November /December 1971 issue contained in the first 27 pages, documents referring to the autocephaly. Four of the documents were condemnations by the four ancient patriarchates -- the other documents had the same attitude. The circumstances of the Metropolia (e.g. relations with Moscow) and their communications were never mentioned. This issue of *The Orthodox Observer* was the last devoted to American unity. From that time to the present, the factors involved with the American situation were hardly presented again. Mention was only given to the work of SCOBA and its chairman, Archbishop Iakovos, along with two editorials.¹²

The Orthodox Church

This publication, by far, brought out the issue of unity in America. Besides sporadic articles, the bulk of material was presented as

¹²"Orthodox Unity - At What Price," OO, v. 47, n. 866 (June 3, 1981) p. 20 and "They Preach, But Do They Practice?," OO, v. 47, n. 868 (July 15, 1981) p. 20. For further information, see below.

editorials written by the editor, the V. Rev. John Meyendorff.¹³ Here, *The Orthodox Church*, emphasized all the factors involved, with particular stress on missionary commitment and responsibility to the Church's presence in America.¹⁴ Editorials spoke of canonical administrative unity prior to 1921,¹⁵ the issue of phyletism was consistently brought to the forefront as *the* factor which inhibits unity,¹⁶ and the role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate¹⁷ and a "unity in diversity"¹⁸ were addressed.

These issues were spoken of by a man who was (and is) respected as an authoritative theologian and historian committed to an American Church. Unfortunately, many of the editorials could be read in a polemical way, particularly when they referred to events and actions that

¹³Conveniently located in John Meyendorff's *Vision of Unity*, (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987).

¹⁴Eg. OC, Jan. 1974, p. 4 and Nov., 1974, p. 4.

¹⁵Eg. John Meyendorff, "Orthodox America, 1794-1976," OC, v. 12, n. 2 (Feb. 1976) p. 4; John Meyendorff, "An "American" Church," OC, v. 6, n. 1 (Jan. 1970) p. 4; John Meyendorff, "Towards Autocephaly," OC, v. 5, n. 10 (Dec. 1969) p. 4.

¹⁶Eg. John Meyendorff, "Orthodox Unity: Where Do We Stand?," OC, v. 11, n. 1 (Jan. 1975) p. 4; John Meyendorff, "Blind Phyletism," OC, v. 13, n. 5 (May, 1977) p. 4.

¹⁷Eg. John Meyendorff, "NEEDED: The Ecumenical Patriarchate," OC, v. 14, n. 4 (Apr. 1978) p. 4; John Meyendorff, "Building," OC, v. 6, n. 6 (June/July 1970) p. 4.

¹⁸Eg. OC, Aug/Sept 1966, p. 4; John Meyendorff, "Against Myths," OC, v. 6, n. 10 (Dec. 1970) p. 4.

were happening around the world. For the average reader, they could have been seen as a rallying cry to defend our "rights" against foreign decision-makers who lacked an understanding of the situation in America or as suggesting that our "Americanness" was better than their "foreignness." These are obvious generalizations which lack substance or truth when seen in the context of the whole debate. The point is, however, that the average reader never did, and still does not understand the context or the extent and depth of the unity issue. The editorials raised the rights issues, but was it in a way which could constructively be used by the faithful to build relations with their fellow Orthodox of different jurisdictions in local parishes? This remains to be seen. In fact, the research could possibly support an answer of "no." To be sure, the same could be applied to *The Orthodox Observer*. Emotionally sensitive areas of parishioner concerns were seen as being attacked. "Their way doesn't allow English or mission," "we are free in this country to do what is our God-given right," or "They want to be an ethnic club, not the Church." These types of distortions could easily be picked up and applied with no pastoral sensitivity by those who knew nothing or very little about the ecclesiastical situation. What could be the possibility of thoughts after reading.

Those Orthodox who wanted to define themselves in strictly ecclesiastical and canonical terms, without losing anything in their culture, but simply admitting that the Church, being the Church of God and not of men, is above ethnicity, now know where they belong; those, on the other hand, who considered

ethnicity as the prevailing factor, could stay in the jurisdictions dependent upon ecclesiastical centers abroad.¹⁹

Positively speaking, the editorials of *The Orthodox Church* saw ethnicity in the light of the Church's missionary command. Unlike the Greeks, whose "mission," generally speaking, is limited to the non-Orthodox spouse in a mixed marriage, the OCA's history, and in fact beginnings, rested on mission. The use of the vernacular, along with the notion that ethnicity is not bad unless it leads to phyletism, was always at the heart of the OCA's understanding of the unity issue. Prior to autocephaly, *The Orthodox Church*, in a sense, was preparing its jurisdiction for an ultimately united Church. It had no qualms about different liturgical practices, languages, and customs "which need to be kept."²⁰ It presented spiritual, canonical, and practical reasons of why Orthodox unity is necessary,

Spiritually, it is obvious that when we confess our belief in "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church," this belief is meant to be the guiding principle of our lives: God is one, the Lord Jesus Christ is one, and the Church must be one also . . . Canonically, the rules and canons of *all* churches strictly forbid the existence of parallel ecclesiastical organizations on the same territory. Practically, the Orthodox witness in this country will be immensely strengthened if the three million Orthodox pray and work together; if others are able really to see in us the One True

¹⁹John Meyendorff, "The Ukrainian Issue," OC, v. 9, n. 7 (Aug/Sept 1973) p. 4.

²⁰OC, Aug/Sept 1966, p. 4.

Church, and not a conglomeration of mutually exclusive factions; if we can all join our forces in the education of our youth.²¹

It spoke of a unified Church not forgetting the heritage and plight of world Orthodoxy, "on the contrary, a strong Orthodoxy in America would be able to help the Mother Churches much more efficiently."²²

In addition to the above factors being pointed out time and again, the editions of *The Orthodox Church* after the April 1970 granting of autocephaly, stressed that this was not the end or goal, but the beginning of a unified Church. The Encyclical Letter of the Great Council of Bishops listed a threefold task which autocephaly provided, the first on the list was "the task of uniting all the Orthodox Christians of America into one Church."²³ Since it was a beginning, SCOBA was still to be -- with the OCA -- as a member.²⁴

The Word

This publication, unlike the previous, was above all practical rather than theoretical in its approach to the American situation.

²¹John Meyendorff, "Unity of Orthodoxy," OC, v. 1, n. 2 (Feb. 1965) p. 4.

²²John Meyendorff, "The Future of Our Church," OC, v. 3, n. 6 (June/July 1967) p. 4.

²³"Encyclical Letter of the Great Council of Bishops to the Orthodox Faithful," OC, v. 6, n. 4 (Apr. 1970) p. 6.

²⁴John Meyendorff, "Against Myths," OC, v. 6, n. 10 (Dec. 1970) p. 4.

We ask that, in deference to one of the major goals of Metropolitan Antony's career, and in his loving memory, the year 1967 be consecrated in prayer and thought and action to "Inter-Orthodox Cooperation in America." In this ecumenical age, when the Church turns in love to other Christians, let us remember that we should demonstrate our unity as Orthodox before we invite others to unity with us. In full loyalty to our Mother See of Antioch let us strive to promote, encourage and cultivate peace, harmony and union in American Orthodoxy. So that this most important ideal, so dear to the heart of Metropolitan Antony, will live among us, each pastor is instructed to institute this program in his parish:

- a) Schedule one event or activity for each month remaining in 1967 designed to contribute directly to inter-Orthodox cooperation or understanding.
- b) Cooperate with any other national Orthodox parishes in your community, either through a Fellowship, where one exists, or directly where there is none. Do not wait for the invitation of others, lead the way undismayed by the reticence, reluctance or hesitations of others.
- c) Organize joint services, and joint social events where all of our people may worship together and learn other customs while witnessing to their own. Learn to know your brother priests of other dioceses.
- d) By lectures and discussion groups strive to teach your people about other national traditions, Orthodox missions, the Standing Conference of Bishops, CEOYLA, the seminaries, the facts of our existence in this land and our possibilities in the future.

- e) Wherever possible seek to serve the isolated faithful of other Orthodox traditions without breaking or weakening any ties they may have with their own shepherds.²⁵

Though somewhat extended, this gives a general picture of *The Word's* presentation of unity. Following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Metropolitan Philip had much experience (as a parish priest in Cleveland, Ohio) in dealing with the local level of this issue. His statement reflects what Metropolitan Antony Bashir had done while editing *The Word*. During the nine-year period of Bashir's editorship (1957-66), this periodical publicized the diversity of Orthodox tradition in America. The third English issue stated, "one function of *The Word* is to instruct our people, and another is to contribute to the progress of Orthodoxy in America."²⁶ The issue of ethnicity and language was addressed,

we are tied to no sacred language, we recognize all tongues as the creation of God, . . . We have no desire to perpetuate anything but the Gospel of Christ, and that we can do as effectively in English as in any other tongue.²⁷

²⁵"Metropolitan Philip's Epistle," *Word*, v. 11, n. 1 (Jan. 1967) p. 4.

²⁶*Word*, Mar. 1957, p. 59.

²⁷Antony Bashir, "The Antiochian Orthodox Church and Christian Unity," *Word*, v. 1, n.6 (June 1957) p. 145. Cf. "Why English Must Be Adopted in the Eastern Orthodox Church of America," *Word*, v. 2, n. 6 (June 1958) p. 4.

The Word time and again drew attention to Pan-Orthodox activities in America; e.g. Pan-Orthodox parishes,²⁸ Pan-Orthodox services,²⁹ Pan-Orthodox cooperation³⁰ (CEOYLA, Boy Scouts, OCEC, Clergy fellowships, etc. under the auspices of SCOBA), and the Pan-Orthodox make-up of "our" seminary -- St. Vladimir's.³¹ It utilized the experiences or talents from other jurisdictions such as the Greek, Metropolia, and Romanian.³² The minutes of the Archdiocesan Conventions reflected, whether in

²⁸Eg. "Parish News," *Word*, v. 1, n. 1 (Jan. 1957) p. 18; "News of the Parishes," *Word*, v. 11, n. 5 (May 1967) p. 17ff.

²⁹Eg. "Hundreds Attend Pontifical Liturgy on Orthodox Sunday, Worcester, Mass.," *Word*, v. 1, n. 4 (Apr. 1957) p. 99; Ernest A. Villas, "Behold His Glory," *Word*, v. 7, n. 9 (Nov. 1963) p. 19.

³⁰Eg. George Rados, "The Orthodox Christian Education Commission," *Word*, v.2, n. 5 (May 1958) p. 12; Bebe Lafka, "First Annual Pan-Orthodox Festival," *Word*, v. 4, n. 2 (Feb. 1960) p. 13; Antony Bashir, "The Bishops Meet," *Word*, v. 4, n. 5 (May 1960) p. 3; "News of the Parishes," *Word*, v. 5, n.9 (Nov. 1961) p. 25; "Council of Eastern Orthodox Youth Leaders of The Americas," *Word*, v. 6, n.1 (Jan. 1962) p. 17; May 1965, p. 8; Theodora, D. Argue, "Clergy, Laity Convene in Los Angeles for Pan-Orthodox Teachers' Conference," *Word*, v. 11, n. 7 (Sept. 1967) p. 24.

³¹Eg. "The Metropolitan Antony Education Building at St. Vladimir's Seminary," *Word*, v.6, n.9 (Nov. 1962) pp. 24-25; Metropolitan Philip, "Metropolitan Philip's Epistle," *Word*, v. 11, n. 8 (Oct. 1967) pp. 4-5.

³²Eg. Stephen Upson, "Saints of the Month...", *Word*, v. 2, n. 3 (Mar. 1958) p. 12; Michael Irvin, "Why I Became Orthodox," *Word*, v. 3, n. 8 (Oct. 1959) p. 7ff; *Word*, v. 7, n. 10 (Dec. 1963) pp. 9-10; Alexander, Schmemmann, "Orthodoxy and America," v. 10, n. 6-7 (June/Sept. 1966) p. 13.

departmental reports or the Metropolitan's report, a profound awareness of the scope of Orthodoxy's presence in America.³³ For *The Word* specifically, and the Archdiocese in general, the "whole" church -- from the Metropolitan to the laity -- realized the presence of other Orthodox bodies beyond this jurisdiction in a concrete way. In other words, *The Orthodox Observer* in passing would mention this, *The Orthodox Church* in theory or generalities would acknowledge this, but *The Word* in practice and action would live by it.

This sounds high winded, but a few examples will suffice in illustrating the point: 1) the 1957 Convention passed a resolution to form a Pan-Orthodox liturgical commission to unify English translations;³⁴ 2) the commitment to St. Vladimir's was so great that a building fund was established, and the Dean spoke at several conventions promoting the similar views of the seminary (Metropolitan/OCA) and the Antiochians;³⁵ 3) the Department of Public Relations encouraged the establishment of a central Orthodox

³³See minutes of the Archdiocesan Conventions in the October or November issue of the *Word* each year.

³⁴*Word*, "The 1957 Archdiocesan Convention," v. 1, n. 8 (Oct. 1957) p. 221.

³⁵Eg. "Archdiocesan Office," *Word*, v. 2, n. 4 (Apr. 1958) p. 25; "Archdiocesan Office," *Word*, v. 2, n. 11 (Nov. 1958) p. 19; "The Metropolitan Antony Education Building at St. Vladimir's Seminary," *Word*, v. 6, n.9 (Nov. 1962) p. 24ff; Ted Greedban and Annette Milkovich, "St. Vladimir's Becomes a Permanent Home," *Word*, v. 7, n. 3 (Mar. 1963) pp. 3-4.

information office under SCOBA's direction;³⁶ 4) the Archdiocese held back on revising its constitution and those of local parishes because SCOBA was drafting a standardized constitution to suit the needs of every jurisdiction;³⁷ 5) Resolutions had been passed from 1963 to the last convention in 1987 with the desire for the Archdiocese to be in favor of establishing a united Church in America which would include all jurisdictions and be blessed by the Mother Church of Antioch.³⁸

It is important to note that whether the above happened or not, *The Word* was projecting to its readers concrete relations with other Orthodox bodies with the eventual unification of all. Even the autocephaly of the OCA was presented not in the negative debates and polemics as in *The Orthodox Observer*, but in an historical and positive way which emphasized SCOBA's failure in America and abroad; the special circumstances of the Metropolia; the pastoral reasons for the abolition of the Exarchate of Moscow and establishment of the Patriarchal parishes; the past "glamor" of Constantinople's role, along with a role of "honor" and nothing more (i.e. "primacy"); and finally the following:

³⁶"Minutes of the Meetings of the General Assembly of the Seventeenth Annual Archdiocese Convention," *Word*, v. 6, n. 9 (Nov. 1962) p. 20.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁸See minutes of the Archdiocesan Conventions in the October or November issue of the *Word* for all Resolutions.

The Central issue . . . is an independent American Orthodox Church. As such it transcends all claims of primacy or precedence from any source and depends on cooperation among the Orthodox in this country. By keeping this principal in sight, any and all false issues are exposed for what they are. This position is the only clear direction as the process toward full autocephaly develops, and it must guide us as an Archdiocese, as it should guide all of those who pray for and desire one, united, autocephalous American Orthodox Church.³⁹

Press on the Bilateral Commission

The Orthodox Church and *The Word* had very positive articles and editorials for this short-lived Commission. The press releases from the meetings of the Commission and Departmental Conference were enthusiastically presented, along with statements from the two Primates.⁴⁰ *The Orthodox Observer*, as already noted, published two editorials that contained 1) an attack on the editor of *The Orthodox Church* (i.e. Meyendorff),⁴¹ and 2) a description of the Greek Archdiocese's own attitude and actions for unity.⁴² Further action

³⁹"Minutes of the General Assembly of the XXV Annual Convention of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of New York and All North America," *Word*, v. 14, n. 8 (Oct. 1970) p. 7.

⁴⁰Many internal issues, specific to each jurisdiction, were published by the other jurisdiction.

⁴¹"Orthodox Unity - At What Price," *OO*, v. 47, n. 868 (July 15, 1981) p. 20.

⁴²"They Preach, But Do They Practice?," *OO*, v. 47, n. 866 (June 3, 1981), p. 20.

directly related to the Commission took place in the form of two letters to the editor of *The Orthodox Church* by the V. Rev. Stanley S. Harakas.⁴³ Here Fr. Harakas questioned the idea of a bishop being an "Exarch" of one Synod (Antioch) while participating in another Synod (OCA).

Such comments are interesting not only in themselves but also as examples of Greek reaction to a challenge from outside. *The Orthodox Observer* had spent little print in discussing unity until 1) the autocephaly of the OCA, and/or 2) the institution of the Bilateral Commission. In a sense, *The Orthodox Observer* was only "awakened" to discuss the American situation after it had been "jolted" or "pushed" by an external factor. Could it be that unity was not an issue to be discussed in the press until the *status quo* was being threatened? Without more specific evidence, which the journalistic media did not provide, the question remains unanswered.

The 1980's, save the first few years, has had nothing or little in newsworthy events concerning unity. Issues and factors that plague the Church in America have conspicuously been forgotten. With the "crises" in the AOCA's reception of the former Evangelical Orthodox Church -- currently the Antiochian Evangelical Orthodox Mission (AEOM) -- jurisdictional cooperation and joint activity has been reduced to such things as unproductive meetings of SCOBA or non-essential Pan-Orthodox endeavors (e.g. common OCA/AOCA calendar of the St. Vladimir's Theological Foundation).

⁴³"Letters to the Editor," OC, v. 18, n. 2 (Feb. 1982) p. 1; "Letters to the Editor," OC, v. 18, n. 5 (May, 1982) p. 8.

Chapter 3

Factors, Observations, Ideas for the Future

So, where do we go from here? First, we must recognize that a multitude of historical, theological and practical factors are directly or indirectly related in formulating an answer. Some have been dealt with in varying degrees in the preceding chapters, while others have not been brought into the discussion. This concluding chapter will (1) look at some of these factors with the hope of providing a realistic foundation; and (2) give concrete ideas for resurrecting "unity" as an issue to be addressed.

A. Factors

In modern theological discussion there is little agreement on an appropriate point of departure for evaluating the American situation or, for that matter, the general issue of the "diaspora". Basically, there are two distinct views which currently predominant. Both claim to find, in the history and tradition of the Church, pillars to support their theological principals. Ironically, this allows for little rational discussion. These views are in indirect conflict with each other, which regrettably causes defensive thoughts and accusations on both sides.

One view is held by the Ecumenical Patriarchate (and those who are in its care in the diaspora), the Patriarchates of Alexandria and Jerusalem, and the Churches of Greece and Cyprus. As an observation made by all, this view incorporates, and is supported by, churches which are predominantly, if not exclusively, of Greek background. On the other

hand, we have the rest of the Orthodox churches, which in varying degrees have questioned this "Greek" theology.

Most unfortunate for us is the diaspora - and also for the well being of the entire Church - are the by-products and implications this conflict has engendered. It should first be noted that this conflict revolves around the ecclesiological question of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's role in the Orthodox Church. Is this role to be understood simply in terms of "priority in honor" or does it imply an authoritative capacity with respect to the universal Church? An abundance of literature shows that extremes to these two understandings are possible and that they appear frustratingly unreconcilable at the present level of discussion. Nevertheless, this one issue permeates the very life of Orthodoxy, both in the relationships between "sister churches" and in witness to the world. The stalemate between these two views has virtually halted constructive dialogue toward eliminating tension and conflict. Furthermore, this one unresolved issue pours over into other issues that are at the heart of the Church in America's continued disunity. Unlike the "mother churches" who have built-in barriers -- geography and isolation -- that encourage them to uphold the *status quo* and to ignore this issue, the major jurisdictions in America have consistently chosen to live side-by-side without discussion of the issue. In fact, the Orthodox Theological Society of America (OTSA) -- the only

forum for such discussion -- addressed this issue only once, and, to say the least, discussion then was inconclusive.¹

Besides the basic ecclesiological principle of "one city, one bishop" which all claim to support, most other theological and historical issues relating to America are tainted or set in the above mentioned context. Consequently, there are at least two sides to these issues, prompting endless debate. Examples of this are the issue of territorial primacy (who came to North America first?) and autocephaly (who can grant it?). These primary issues have been hashed and rehashed causing each side to be ingrained in its own view and close-minded toward the other. Furthermore, unless something happens short of a miracle, no end is in sight. What complicates this issue further is the fact that the American situation specifically would call for the universal Church to decide its fate: universal, in the sense that those who are independent in American would need to have a say, along with those whose ties are with a "mother church". The decision-making process, however, has excluded the autocephalous church in America (the OCA and its national jurisdictions). Consequently, trying to find a solution along the traditional canonical path leads to nowhere.

Another issue hotly debated in America is the factor of ethnicity. We have seen that the unity attempts of Tikhon, Aftimios, the OCA, and to a degree, the Bilaterals held a vision calling for an "American" Church

¹Cf. John Meyendorff, "The Ecumenical Patriarchate, Seen in the Light of Orthodox Ecclesiology and History," and Nomikos Michael Vaporis, "The Ecumenical Patriarchate, Seen in the Light of Orthodox Ecclesiology and History: A Response," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, v. 24, n. 2/3, (Summer/Fall 1979) pp. 226-243, pp. 244-246.

with a specific missionary aspect. Some emphasis was placed on holding on to the language, customs, and liturgical traditions of the various nationalities, but this was to be done in a united church. By focusing on the faith as expressed in unity and mission to the world, these visions went beyond phyletistic (nationalistic) boundaries. Furthermore, the survey of the official publications of the OCA and AOCA provided much insight into and reinforcement of this same idea, though in different ways. What we find in the SCOBA attempt and the official publication of the Greek Archdiocese, however, is quite different. The issue of ethnicity is not as black and white. This interconnection between faith and culture may be regarded as justifiable to some degree, but the question remains "to what degree?"

It must first be noted that this issue was never an issue until the Orthodox of varying nationalities came to America. The Greeks, Russians, or Arabs -- in their own geographic location -- would never have been forced to consider the relationship between their faith and their culture. One lived according to the faith which was literally handed down from the apostles and saints for hundreds of years. Customs, culture, and life itself were permeated, generally speaking, with one form or expression of Christianity.

The Orthodox exodus to the West, however, radically shifted the understanding of culture and its relationship to faith. The pioneers for an "American" Church were on one hand condemning the nation of the "old country" for phyletism, yet at times they seemed to want to replace one ethnicity (Greek, Russian, Arab, etc.) with another ("American"). Since criteria for determining the culture/faith issue had never been

established, different understandings of being "American" surfaced. The most destructive for a united Church has been the one propagated by *The Orthodox Observer*. In the few times and little space which that paper has devoted to the American situation, it has attacked the notion of an "American" Church by insinuating that this "church" would incorporate uncritically the values, norms, customs, etc. of American society.² Fault is not being levelled at the Greeks *per se*, but at all who have not dealt with this issue in a systematic way. Consequently, an answer "to what degree?" is unattainable.

To this point, nothing has been conclusive -- far from it. The above theological and historical factors give no hope for a united Church. Answers to these questions would help tremendously, but this is not easy or realistic. Though pressure could be exerted to encourage the hierarchs and theologians to address them, these issues, unfortunately, are not readily resolvable. This, I believe, is the number one cause for the passivity and inactivity of the hierarchs and theologians at the present time.

B. Observations

What about the clergy and laity? As we have seen, the most productive attempt at unity -- the Bilateral Commission of the OCA/AOCA -- included the extensive involvement of the parish clergy and laity. It may be that their very lack of knowledge concerning the historical and theological arena gave them an honest desire, without

²N.D.P. "New Horizons for American Orthodoxy," *The Orthodox Observer*, Feb. 1971, p. 7.

suspicion, for collaboration. Unfortunately there has been a lull in the work of the Commission. If and when this passes, cooperation on the departmental level may begin to progress again.

Our survey in Chapter 2 found much publicity in respect to local fellowship. Pan-Orthodox clergy associations sprang up throughout the country in the 'sixties and in some places are still going strong. Activities such as Sunday Vespers during Lent, priest exchanges, and clergy and/or laity retreats and workshops have stimulated a semblance of Pan-Orthodox witness. The extent of success can be ascribed to individuals who realize the practical need and positive outcome in minimizing jurisdictional separation. Even though congregationalism and ethnicism (foreign or domestic) deeply affect the local circumstances, activities of any nature at least give an opportunity for the faithful to be open-minded. These initiatives by individuals or groups provide situations where one can see and experience the diversity of Orthodoxy in America. Unlike the institutional relationships of archdioceses and seminaries, with their different philosophies and ideologies, local relations are built on a more personal level.

While visiting America in 1985, Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch expressed an interesting answer to the question of a unified Church in America. He spoke of the Church "incarnating" unity on its own. In other words, his premise pointed to the cries from American about unity -- someone to "give" it to us -- when we ourselves are not striving for it or living it out. This, of course, is an exaggeration. However, it is perfectly logical. If at some point unity on the local level is part of Orthodoxy's very life in America, what more could be "given"? The most optimistic

predictions of a future time still would call for unity to be forced on someone. Whether it is structurally implemented from the top (e.g. a canonical body along the lines of what SCOBA has sought to become) or "incarnated" on the bottom (e.g. unity without it being recognized as such), unity would be pressed upon a disunited faction within the Church. It seems reasonable that the latter, in the long run, would be more desirable. It is hard to imagine a hierarchical unity, let alone a parallel progress between the two. Avenues working for both are to be encouraged and hoped for.

C. Ideas

Except for a few who have been innovative and persistent, the clergy are educated in a "jurisdictional" way. In other words, a priest's seminary experience propagates a lack of understanding for different liturgical traditions, customs, cultures, and mind-sets. Consequently, as with all human behavior, the most familiar is the most accepted and defended.

It is in the education and experience of those who will be local leaders that change can and should occur. For example, graduates from a seminary such as St. Vladimir's must be in some way aware of liturgical differences which are practiced by its students of different backgrounds. This awareness must be more than a "right or wrong" theological and historical perspective. Rather, emphasis should be placed on what is the practice. In a systematic way, a class could be taught surveying the different customs at weddings, baptisms, funerals, etc. Guest speakers, if the present faculty is unable, could present these

differences along with peculiarities of each jurisdiction (e.g. the Serbian slava). This would not entail a change in the core curriculum, instead an elective would be added. Along these same lines, a class or forum could be implemented to raise the consciousness of the unity issue for faculty and students. The student exchange with Holy Cross Seminary could be advanced to include more than one student a semester or a faculty exchange could be introduced. The seminary's outreach to the New York area or nationally through the Octet could include non-traditional visitations. Locally, choir trips could systematically be made to a variety of jurisdictional churches. Nationally, visits could be made to more Greek parishes and camps.

These are but a few ideas for attempting to instill an awareness of unity to students, faculty, and the Seminary's mission to the Church. Many more ideas surely would develop if this issue was addressed in a systematic way. Unlike other areas of Church life in America, where external factors influence the direction of things, the Seminary is much more independent. As an intellectual center and one of a few viable Pan-Orthodox communities in America, St. Vladimir's has an advantage and responsibility to further the cause of one Orthodox Church in America. The Alumni Association of St. Vladimir's would be an excellent forum for these Pan-Orthodox efforts.

On the jurisdictional level, past national or diocesan (regional) convocations have had "observers" from other jurisdictions. This practice should begin anew with each jurisdiction represented at each convocation. Different than past observers, these roles could be instituted to provide a consistent awareness of jurisdictional separatism.

They would not play a "political" role, but rather a role witnessing to the American ecclesiastical situation. They would be permanent and administered by a Department of Unity designed and organized in each jurisdiction. This department would be an information center designed to encourage, develop, support, and direct Pan-Orthodox activities on the national, diocesan, and local levels of church life. Concern would not be focused on ecclesiological disputes and/or personal factors. With the initial approval of the hierarchs, each department would be mandated to maintain Pan-Orthodox cooperation. In other words, conflicts on an ecclesiological level or personal level between hierarchs, clergy or laity, would not have to impede the department's work in such areas as youth ministry, religious education, public relations, etc. In this way, a methodology with certain objective criteria could be developed and adopted to insure continued collaboration. Instead of dwelling on things that disunite, emphasis would always be on the unity factors, such as the faith and mission of the Church. The department, composed of clergy and laity, would maintain relations with its counterparts in other jurisdictions. It would be an umbrella department for all departments focusing on the practical application in utilizing limited resources from each archdiocese.

Conclusion

We live at a point in American Orthodoxy's history where innovative and ambitious thinking is necessary. For too long, Church unity in this hemisphere has been hampered by a multitude of factors which have inhibited progressive and positive development. The aim of

this presentation has not been to provide quick and easy solutions. On the contrary, it is hoped that the reader "tasted" the complexity which surrounds Church life in America and abroad. It is not enough, however, to just understand the life of the Church; one has to act on this understanding so that the Church can have life. If some are not willing to act because of despair or circular arguments that have no end, be assured that others are thinking and acting to attain "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic" church in America.

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Constitution

of

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with

Related Documents

of

The North American Holy Synod

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+ Optavits

Archbishop President

Brooklyn, N. Y.
Day of the Holy Nativity
1927.

The North American Holy Synod
Archbishop President,
The Eastern, Most Holy Synod, Athens
Archbishop of Greece
Reverend Father H. Karaman
January 26, 1927.



The Holy Eastern Orthodox
Synod and American Clergy
in North America
Office of
The Archbishop President
145 West Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.
December 19, 1927.

Your Eminence,
Most Reverend and Obedient Prelate
and Beloved Brother in Christ.

On behalf of our Holy Faith and Church
in America I herewith transmit for your distinguished
consideration the Greetings and Epistle of the newly
established Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic
Church in North America, together with the Constitution
officially promulgated for the organization and govern-
ment of American Orthodoxy and the Report and Resolutions
of the Convention of the Syrian Greek Orthodox Mission in
North America recommending and endorsing the same.

Trusting that our North American Holy
Synod will shortly receive notice of the favorable
consideration and action of your Eminence and your
fellow Hierarchs in that portion of the Holy Orthodox
Church which our Lord Christ has committed to your
responsibility.

I am, with all prayers and most sincere
Greetings in the name of our New Born Saviour Christ,

Your Eminence's Brother in Holy Church.

+ Optavits

3 3 A 1
Archbishop of Brooklyn,
Archbishop President of The
North American Holy Synod.

Addressed to
The Most Reverend
Head of Governing Synod of
Each Autocephalous National
Orthodox Catholic Church.



Document No. 16.
Brooklyn, N. Y.
December 19, 1927.

*To the Most Reverend
Governing Prelates, Synods,
Authorities, and Bishops of
All Orthodox Catholic Churches
and Jurisdictions.*

*Most Reverend and Beloved Brothers in Christ and Fellow-Shepherds of
His Orthodox Flocks:*

Greeting in the joy of the Holy Nativity of our Incarnate Lord and
God, Jesus Christ!

As the presiding Archbishop of the newly-born and youngest member
of Christ's Holy Family of Orthodox Churches I have the honor to
address the Heads of all Orthodox Establishments at this blessed season
of our Lord's Holy Nativity.

Through my humility The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and
Apostolic Church in North America sends to all the churches of the
Holy Orthodox Faith its first message of fraternal greeting and good-
will on its first celebration of the Holy Birthday of Our Lord.

For over a hundred years the Eastern Orthodox Faithful have held
and spread our Holy Faith in America under the canonically established
Orthodox Bishops of North American Dioceses. During all this time the
number of Faithful has increased by missionary activity and by the im-
migration of families of Faithful from every Orthodox nation and
Diocese in Europe and the East. The diverse and varied nationality,
language, and ecclesiastical allegiance of the Orthodox immigrant groups,
together with the chaotic and helpless condition of the Patriarchate of
Moscow and All-Russia since the World War, has resulted in the forma-
tion of numerous independent and overlapping missions and Dioceses
representing and paying allegiance to the various national Churches and
Orthodox authorities abroad from which Orthodox families in America
originated.

Each of these foreign national missions or dioceses has concerned
itself primarily, if not exclusively, with the needs and affairs peculiar to
those people in America speaking the language of the foreign country
whose Church it represented. Consequently, there have grown up in
America numerous rival Orthodox Jurisdictions over people in the same
cities and districts, contrary to the Sacred Canons, and disastrous to

any united coöperation or coördination of effort and administration in
the work of Holy Church in this country.

The children of immigrant groups, moreover, being reared and
educated in an American environment and in English-speaking schools,
and associating socially and in business life with Americans of Western
origin, do not retain, use, or understand the languages and characteristic
customs peculiar to their parental nationalities. They rapidly become
typically American and primarily English-speaking. The national
churches of their parents, making no provision for this change of
language and characteristics, become foreign and unintelligible to the
generations of Orthodox people born and reared in America.

Thus canonically Orthodoxy in America is violating its Sacred
Ecumenical prescriptions, and practically is failing to provide for its
children or for the extension of its Holy Faith in the language and among
the people of the Western Hemisphere. Already there are resident in
America over three million persons from Orthodox families abroad or
born of Orthodox parents in this country, and these are inadequately
ministered unto by diverse and often warring factional nationalistic ad-
ministrations under eighteen different overlapping and uncoördinated
missions representing various factions or divisions, canonical or other-
wise, in ten different Orthodox National Churches or Bodies in Europe
and the Near East. Many of the Orthodox clergy as well as laity in
America, and all those non-Orthodox people who are interested in or
wish to join our Holy Church, are at a loss to know which, among the
discordant Orthodox administrations in this country, have ecclesiastically
lawful and canonical authority and jurisdiction.

Under existing circumstances it is and will remain practically im-
possible to draw all the Orthodox groups in this country into a united
body under the sole authority of any one of the national Churches or
Patriarchates having dioceses or missions in America. Yet, for the
sake of our Holy Church and Her children in America, and to remove
the scandal of divided and rival bishoprics functioning, contrary to the
Sacred Canons, in the same cities, it is imperative that America have
its own united Orthodox Jurisdiction uniting and consolidating under
one canonical and effective administration the three millions of Orthodox
Faithful now divided and dispersed among the eighteen different and
disputant groups administered by the twenty Bishops or asserted
Bishops of Orthodox consecration, and numerous other administrators of
more or less doubtful canonical regularity and standing, resident in
America.

Only a Synodical American Administration representing all Orthodox
groups and nationalities in this country and governing all by its own
independent (autocephalous) and autonomous authority can unite all
Orthodoxy in America and exert an influence and discipline at once
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ful and their children in America to assist in the formation and success of

such an independent Orthodox Church for all Orthodox Faithful resident in America.

Furthermore, with its rapidly increasing millions of Faithful entering into the educational and commercial life of America, and with its youth trained in American colleges and industries, such an American Orthodox Church would soon be strong enough in spiritual, moral, educational, and financial resources to become the supporter and patron of the necessary renaissance and reconstruction in devastated and disorganized Orthodox nations and peoples in the Eastern homelands of Orthodoxy. The first step towards the rehabilitation of Orthodoxy both in America and throughout the world is the firm organization and successful development of a united and independent Orthodox Catholic Church in America.

The canonical Russian Bishops and Archbishops in North America, whose line of predecessors in North American Sees of the Patriarchate of Moscow and All Russia covers a hundred and thirty years of uninterrupted administration of Orthodox American Dioceses, and who now number a Metropolitan, an Archbishop, and four Diocesan Bishops, controlling over three hundred parishes and nearly a million communicants of the Orthodox Church, have recognized the facts and necessities of the condition of Orthodoxy in America.

In order to provide for the future of American Orthodoxy the Canonical Russian Bishops in America in Synod, under the Russian Metropolitan, exercising autonomously the authority of the Patriarchate of Moscow and all Russia, have authorized and directed the organization and establishment of an independent, autonomous, and autocephalous Orthodox Church in and for America. The Synodical Acts of February second and September 14th, 1927, authorizing and confirming the establishment of such a new and independent American unit of the Orthodox Church are appended to the Constitution of The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America as officially promulgated December 1, 1927.

The Provisional Constitution provided and officially promulgated for the organization and government of the independent American Orthodox Church pending the first General Convention thereof (at which it may be amended) is designed to safeguard the rights and interests of each national or linguistic group in Orthodoxy in America by giving each of them representation on the permanent governing Holy Synod. The President of this governing body is elected for a term of six years and is the Acting Head and Presiding Archbishop of the American Church.

An examination of the Constitution in detail will show many provisions for the unifying of the various groups in such a way as still to preserve their freedom of self-administration and those local peculiarities of national customs, language and habits so dear to the first generation of immigrant peoples. It is not desired to deprive the older generation, or any group, no matter how few in numbers, of any of the linguistic, racial, cultural, or national peculiarities and preferences which are dear to them and in no way contrary or inimical to their Orthodox Faith and practice in religion.

But at the same time it is seen as the Church's most imperative duty to translate the values and benefits of Orthodox religious truth and experience into terms of the life, language, and thought of the rising

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generation of American Orthodox children and of those millions of Americans to whom the saving Grace of Holy Church is now denied by reason of our Church's foreign language and foreign national affiliations, which isolate the church and ourselves from practical religious or missionary contact with those who are earnestly seeking after the true Faith and assured Sacramental Life and Grace to be found so freely and abundantly in Our Holy Mother Church.

To this high task which is laid upon us in America by Holy Church and by our Divine Master we dedicate all our energy, our labor, our hope, and our prayer. For its accomplishment we require the united cooperation of all Orthodox groups and missions in America. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ demands such cooperation as the duty of the Shepherds of His Flock. Such cooperation in gathering into one Fold the scattered children of the Flock of Christ in America should be encouraged and insisted upon by the Chief Shepherds of Orthodox Patriarchates and National Churches. Orthodox Bishops and leaders in America should enter into this work boldly and without hesitation or reservation, and require the approval of their superior foreign authorities for it as the only course open for the success of Orthodoxy in America.

With all our heart, in the name of our Lord Christ and His Holy Church, and for the sake of His children in America, we appeal most earnestly to all our Brother Prelates in America to join with us in the Holy Synod of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America.

And we likewise appeal to the Chief Pastors of Orthodoxy in every nation to accept this our brotherly Salutation and Greeting and to respond to our appeal with their brotherly love and fellowship at this Holy Season of Peace and Good-will in Christ our Lord by synodically and officially committing unto the exclusive care and sole jurisdiction of our Holy Synod in North America their clergy and Faithful immigrant or resident in the New World.

Our prayer at this season of the Holy Birth of our Incarnate Lord is that all the Faithful Pastors of His Church may unite in Peace and Good-will to welcome the birth and to support the growth and strength of the newly-born Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Whose Peace and Grace be upon all His Faithful Servants now and unto ages of ages.

+ APTINIOS

SEAL
Archbishop of Brooklyn,
Archbishop President of
The North American Synod.

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Constitution

of

The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America

(The American Orthodox Catholic Church)

Preamble

Thatasmuch as it is laid upon us, both as Shepherds of the Flock of Christ and as Missionaries and Teachers of His One True Church and Gospel unto all men, to fulfill in humble love and service our duty both to the Faithful of the Fold and their children under our care and to those others outside Holy Church who are seeking the Way, the Light, and the Truth which Christ has committed unto the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church for the benefit and guidance unto salvation of all men; and further:

Thatasmuch as we are persuaded in heart and conscience that the task of preserving the Orthodox Catholic Faith among the American born and English speaking children of our people in this country, securing to them the Salvation of their souls through the Holy Church of their Fathers, can be performed only by us who have labored through the early days of Orthodox Catholic Missions in America, have grown with the Church and Her problems here, and have learned by actual experience in founding, maintaining, and administering parishes, missions, churches, and dioceses in America how peculiar and very difficult are the needs and conditions that accompany the transition of immigrant Orthodox Catholic People and their children from the lands of their native environment, culture, religion and language to a land totally alien and radically different in its general environment, education, language, and diverse religious influences; and further:

Thatasmuch as we are persuaded also that upon the Orthodox Catholic Bishops in America and upon them alone as Missionary Bishops and Apostolic Messengers of our Holy Church to the New World rests the duty, responsibility, and full authority of Holy Church for the founding, establishing, and propagating of our Holy Faith and Church in the language and among the people of North America as well as among the Orthodox immigrants and their children; and

Thatasmuch as we are convinced that it is impossible for any foreign National Church or Patriarchate of the Orthodox Catholic Communion to maintain either effective or unchallenged jurisdiction, administration, or authority for the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church and faithful in America in the face of the chaotic conditions and conflicting claims existing in Orthodoxy both here and abroad; and

Thatasmuch as in the lamentable state of affairs now existing in our Holy Church in America thousands of our faithful and their children are being lost to heresy and unbelief while no effective or constructive missionary effort among non-Orthodox people is possible;

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Thatasmuch as we are constrained by a conscientious conviction that the responsibilities laid upon us by our Lord Jesus Christ for His Holy Church require that we delay no longer the beginning of the work of founding an Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church to meet the peculiar needs and conditions of our faithful and of all earnest seekers after the comforts and certainties of our Holy Church and Faith in this country; and therefore,

Thatasmuch as we are empowered by the Act of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Patriarchal Jurisdiction in North America of February Second, 1927, having its canonical and jurisdictional basis in the authority granted to the Russo-American Diocesan Bishops by the Patriarchate of Moscow and all Russia by the various successive acts and letters of authority from the Holy Synod, from the Patriarch, and from the Patriarchal Locum Tenens now acting,

Thatasmuch as we are empowered by the organization and government of parishes and dioceses of the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Faith now existing or to be created in America the following Constitution; and

Thatasmuch as we are empowered by the organization and government of parishes and dioceses of the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Faith now existing or to be created in America the following Constitution; and

Thatasmuch as we are empowered by the organization and government of parishes and dioceses of the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Faith now existing or to be created in America the following Constitution; and

Constitution

of

The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America

(The American Orthodox Catholic Church)

ARTICLE I.

Name:

The religious body organized hereunder shall be known both ecclesiastically and in civil law (by incorporation) as THE HOLY EASTERN ORTHODOX CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA (THE AMERICAN ORTHODOX CATHOLIC CHURCH). Either the first part of this legal title or the shorter second part enclosed in parentheses shall be deemed sufficient designation to point out this body to the exclusion of any other in all cases except where the full corporate title is required for purposes of civil legal documents.

ARTICLE II.

Purpose:

The purpose of this organization is the establishment of an indigenous, native, American administration and ecclesiastical authority and

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government in accordance with the Ecumenical Canons, Traditions, Usages, and Practice of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church for all Christians of the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Faith and Confession or Communion resident in the New World.

ARTICLE III.

Supreme Authority, Law, Obedience:

Section 1. THE HOLY EASTERN ORTHODOX CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA (THE AMERICAN ORTHODOX CATHOLIC CHURCH) is independent (autocephalous) and autonomous in its authority in the same sense and to the same extent as are the Orthodox Patriarchates of the East and the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches now existing.

Section 2. The Supreme Authority within America for the American Orthodox Catholic Church lies in its own Synod and Ecclesiastical Courts as provided under this Constitution. Outside America the Supreme Authority to which final appeal must be made lies only in a Council acknowledged as Ecumenical by all Orthodoxy and in which The American Orthodox Catholic Church is represented on an equality with other independent national Orthodox Churches.

Section 3. The ecclesiastical canon law of The American Orthodox Catholic Church shall be based upon the fundamental Ecumenical Canons, Traditions, and Practice universally received as authoritative throughout the Orthodox Catholic Church at large. The codification and adaptation of the Pedalion rendering of these so as to form a Code of Canon Law for The American Orthodox Catholic Church shall be in the power of the Synod of Bishops which shall prepare a preliminary Code within one year from the promulgation of this Constitution.

Section 4. Strict obedience to the ecclesiastical authority and law established hereunder is the duty of all the Clergy and laity of The American Orthodox Catholic Church. Disobedience to such authority shall subject the offender to the Ecclesiastical Courts, disregard of whose judgment and decision shall result in the cutting off of the offender from office or Communion or both.

Section 5. The civil secular authority and government, and the civil law to which Orthodox Catholic Christians owe strict obedience and allegiance as commanded by Christ and His Church is in all cases that of the land in which they reside at any given time, no matter whether they be citizens of the government of such land or not. The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America enjoins upon all Her Clergy and Laity the duty of obedience and loyalty to the government and law of the land in which they reside. The American Orthodox Catholic Church has no political activities or preferences, and permits none in Her activities. The Clergy and Laity are strictly forbidden to make use of the Church, or of any office or position or influence therein, for any political purpose whatsoever either at home or abroad. The voice and influence of the Church and of all Christian people must ever be on the side of righteousness, morality, justice, and social well being under any government or political regime. But the form of government, the personnel of political administration, or the purely political or civil means employed to attain these ends in any given state is not the concern of the Church, or of Her Clergy or members as such, and must not become the subjects of Church activities.

ARTICLE IV.

Territorial Jurisdiction:

Section 1. THE HOLY EASTERN ORTHODOX CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA has original and primary jurisdiction in its own name and right over all Orthodox Catholic Christians of the Eastern Churches and Rite residing or visiting in the United States and Alaska and the other territories of the United States, in Canada, Mexico, and all North America.

Section 2. Throughout the rest of the New World exclusive of North America proper the American Orthodox Catholic Church has Missionary jurisdiction and is the patron protector of Orthodox Catholic Faithful and missions in all countries of the New World and in all Territories, colonial possessions, or protectorates of nations of the New World.

ARTICLE V.

Relation to Other Orthodox Churches and to Other Religious Bodies:

Section 1. THE HOLY EASTERN ORTHODOX CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA constitutes a complete independent unit of the Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church of the East with full autonomy and autocephaly; that is to say, the American Orthodox Catholic Church is an Orthodox Catholic Eastern Jurisdiction complete in all its parts and in all its phases, separate and distinct from, and completely independent of, any other Jurisdiction within the Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church of the East, or any other Jurisdiction or body outside the Same, on terms of complete equality with all other independent and autocephalous Orthodox Bodies.

Section 2. THE AMERICAN ORTHODOX CATHOLIC CHURCH is in full Orthodox Catholic Sacramental Communion and Brotherly Fellowship with each and all of those other independent and autonomous or autocephalous units which, taken together, constitute the Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church of the East. To the Great Eastern Patriarchates and to the Autonomous and Autocephalous Orthodox National Churches the American Orthodox Catholic Church accords that rank and precedence of dignity and honor which has been granted them by the Sacred Canons of the Holy Ecumenical Councils, by Orthodox usage and custom, and by the precedence of age of their foundations. Among them the American Orthodox Catholic Church takes its own place and rank as a full and equal member of the family of Orthodox Churches, according to each of them the due rights and privileges for their jurisdictions which inhere in the American Orthodox Authority for its independent Jurisdiction in and over the New World.

Section 3. In so far as possible under the Sacred Canons of the Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church and the Holy Tradition and Sacred Discipline and Order of the Orthodox Catholic Church of the East, the American Orthodox Catholic Church shall cooperate with other religious organizations for social and moral purposes and shall seek to enlarge in them the perception of the Grace and Divine Authority of the Historic Undivided Church to the end that they also may be drawn of the Holy Spirit to accept and enter that Unity of the Church which exists alone in the Orthodox Catholic Church and which our Lord prayed might

be the continual heritage of all those who believe on Him. Without their acceptance of the Authority, Order, Faith, Teaching, Discipline, and Tradition of the Orthodox Catholic East it is impossible that the American Orthodox Catholic Church should have any Sacramental or ecclesiastical relations with other religious bodies or organizations, but friendly cooperation in other respects shall be maintained wherever possible.

ARTICLE VI.

Organization and Administration:

Section 1. For the direction, supervision, and government of the American Orthodox Catholic Church at large and locally the administrative, judicial, and legislative organization is divided into four administrations, viz: General, Diocesan, District, and Parish, each having its own special sphere and function.

Section 2. The General Administration, headed by the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod and consisting of the Holy Synod, the Council of Bishops, and the General Convention; has full control of all the affairs which concern the Church at large, such as general legislation, the relation between and the division of dioceses, the relations with Bishops or Churches in Orthodoxy outside of the American Orthodox Catholic Church, the relations with other religious bodies and non-Orthodox organizations and ministries or clergy, the determination of all questions of canon law or discipline which may be appealed by permission of the Diocesan Bishop under whom they originate, the administration of discipline involving the degradation or suspension for more than three months of any clergy or the excommunication of any person or charges of any sort against any Bishop, the determination of standard requirements for candidates for the Priesthood and the supervision of the training and examination of all such candidates, the control and direction of schools and seminaries of the Church, the censorship of all publications for or in the name of the Church or by any of the Clergy, the authorization of all liturgical books, usages, and directions, the authorization and supervision of all societies, clubs, or other organizations designed to operate or to have branches or members in more than one diocese, and in general all matters or questions which affect the Church beyond the limits of a single diocese.

Section 3. The Diocesan Administration; headed by the Diocesan Bishop or Archbishop or Coadjutor Bishops jointly, and consisting of the Diocesan Prelate, the Diocesan Council of Clergy, and the Diocesan Convention; has full charge of such matters as concern the well being and progress of the Church within the territorial limits of the Diocese as established by the General Administration, the organization of parishes and missions, the supervision of the parishes and clergy of the diocese, the administration of discipline except such as is reserved to the General Administration, and in general the care of matters which are beyond the scope of the local Parish Priest or in which he requires direction.

Section 4. The District Administration; presided over by a Chairman appointed by the Diocesan Prelate and consisting of a Board of District Deans; has for its especial duty the care of members of the several racial or linguistic groups, individuals, clergy, and parishes, whose needs cannot be fully or satisfactorily met by the local Parish Priest not speaking their language or by the Diocesan Prelate of another language.

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The District Deans will take such direct administration of linguistic groups as may be assigned to them by the Diocesan Administration or by the General Administration with the consent of the Diocesan Prelate and will have charge, under the Diocesan, of the adjustment of difficulties arising from the difference of language and national or racial derivation. The District Administration is to act as a bridge both between the Diocesan and the Parish as well as between the Diocesan and General Administration and between the local racial or nationalistic groups. Its recommendations will go to the Diocesan Prelate and to the General Administration, and its directions will come from each of these with the approval or consent of the other in each case.

Section 5. The Parish Administration; headed by the local Parish Priest, and consisting of the Priest-in-charge under appointment from the Diocesan Prelate, the Parish Council or Committee confirmed by the Diocesan Prelate, and the Parish Meeting of Voting Members; has full charge of all matters affecting the welfare of the local parish congregation except in so far as its administration is subject to the approval or consent of the Diocesan Administration.

ARTICLE VII.

General Administration:

Section 1. (A). The head of the General Administration of the American Orthodox Catholic Church, i.e., the Primate and Governing Head of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America, is the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod of North America.

(B) The Archbishop President of the Holy Synod has all the Powers and rights accorded by the Sacred Canons of the Oecumenical Councils to Metropolitanans of Provinces and is of equal authority and rank with Heads of Autonomous Orthodox Catholic Churches as these exist in the East. All powers and authority in the General Administration and government of the American Orthodox Catholic Church not specifically assigned to or limited by the rights of the Holy Synod, Council of Bishops, and General Convention shall inhere in and be exercised by the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod at his sole discretion.

(C) The first Archbishop President of the Holy Synod is His Eminence, the Most Reverend Attimios, Archbishop of Brooklyn, in accordance with his designation as Primate and Governing Head of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America by the Act of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Patriarchal Jurisdiction in North America of February Second, 1927, authorizing the establishment of the independent American Orthodox Catholic Church. The Most Reverend Attimios, Archbishop of Brooklyn, shall continue to hold the office of Archbishop President of the Holy Synod for a period of seven years after the first assembling of the General Convention.

(D) At the third General Convention of the American Orthodox Catholic Church and at every second General Convention thereafter the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod for the next succeeding term of six years beginning one year from that date shall be chosen in the following manner:

At the common assembly of the General Convention next preceding the closing day of the Convention each delegate and each Bishop or Dio-

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cesan Administrator shall cast one vote for three nominees for the office of Archbishop President of the Holy Synod. The nominees shall be members of the Council of Bishops. From these ballots the three names having the highest number of votes shall be presented by the President of the General Convention to an electoral college of all members of the Council of Bishops or their certified proxies on the following day. The Council of Bishops, as an electoral college, shall choose by written vote one of the three nominees. Should the nominee chosen not be an Archbishop the Holy Synod will elevate him to that rank at once and he shall have a seat in the Holy Synod thereafter and shall be instituted one year later as President of the Holy Synod. The Archbishop President of the Holy Synod may be elected to succeed himself in that office.

(E) The Archbishop President of the Holy Synod may designate any Bishop as his representative for specific occasions and functions with specified powers and duties, but the temporary substitute or Locum Tenens in case of incapacity or death shall take office as provided in Article Eleven of this Constitution and is not subject to designation.

(F) The Archbishop President of the Holy Synod or his designee is ex officio presiding judge of all ecclesiastical courts of the General Administration except such as must deal with charges against or involving himself, which shall be presided over by the Locum Tenens.

(G) The Archbishop President of the Holy Synod shall take no action affecting the whole Church or any national or linguistic group other than that to which he belongs without the consent and advice of the Holy Synod. In case of special interest of any particular group the consent of its National Administrator or Advisor to the Holy Synod, or of all the other members of the Council of Bishops at three successive regular meetings, must be obtained. In case of a division of opinion in the Holy Synod either party shall have the right to demand the approval of three-fourths of the Council of Bishops before any action seriously affecting or committing the whole Church be taken.

Section 2. (A). The supreme, executive, legislative, and judicial body and court of last appeal in the administration of government and authority in the American Orthodox Catholic Church is the Holy Synod of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America, otherwise known as The North American Holy Synod, which is a permanent body meeting at the call of the Archbishop President.

(B) The North American Holy Synod shall be composed of the Ranking Prelates in each of the racial, national, or linguistic groups in the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America together with National Administrators or advisors appointed by the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod for the affairs of national, racial, or linguistic groups not having Bishops in the American Orthodox Catholic Church.

(C) The presiding and executive officer, spokesman, and presiding judge in all sessions and activities of the North American Holy Synod, executive, legislative, or judicial, shall be the Archbishop President (or Locum Tenens of the Presidency) of the Holy Synod, or his special representative appointed by him for the particular occasion.

(D) All decisions, declarations, pronouncements, judgments, resolutions, and acts of the Holy Synod shall require the approval and signature of the Archbishop President (or Locum Tenens of the Presidency)

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of the Holy Synod, and shall be issued only by the Archbishop President (or Locum Tenens of the Presidency) of the Holy Synod.

(E) Any decision, judgment, act, or pronouncement of the Holy Synod affecting primarily or particularly the especial interest or field of a single national, racial, or linguistic group in the American Orthodox Catholic Church shall require, in addition to that of the Archbishop President (or Locum Tenens of the Presidency), the approval and signature of the Ranking Prelate or National Administrator or Advisor member of the Holy Synod from that group.

(F) In matters not especially affecting the special interests or field of any particular group a three-fourths vote in the Holy Synod with the confirmation of the Archbishop President shall be binding, unless the dissenting minority shall appeal at once to their right to require the confirmation of three-fourths of the Council of Bishops. In case the Archbishop President or a National Administrator or Ranking Prelate for a group whose interest or field is particularly affected does not approve the vote of the Holy Synod a unanimous vote both of the rest of the Holy Synod and of the Council of Bishops at three successive regular sessions of the Council of Bishops shall be required to compel the Archbishop President or the dissenting National Administrator, Advisor, or Ranking Prelate of the especially interested group to give formal approval and signature to the act, judgment, or pronouncement in dispute in order to make same effective.

(G) It is within the power of the Holy Synod to determine what matters in the General Administration not specified in this constitution belong to the sole discretion and authority of the Archbishop President; what to the Holy Synod with the approval of the Archbishop President; what to the Council of Bishops; and what to the General Convention. Resolutions of the Holy Synod determining such division of powers and duties when properly approved and rendered effective, shall be appended to this article as By-Laws of the General Administration. Such By-Laws, once in force, may be changed or amended only in the manner provided for changing or amending this Constitution.

Section 3. (A). Twice each year, before Easter and in the Fall—as provided in the Sacred Canons—the North American Holy Synod shall meet with all the Bishops of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America as the Council of Bishops of the American Orthodox Catholic Church. The Locum Tenens for a vacant diocese shall hold membership in the Council of Bishops.

(B) The Council of Bishops shall hear reports and recommendations from the Ranking Prelates and National Administrators and Advisors of the various racial, national, and linguistic groups on the affairs and condition of the respective groups in the American Orthodox Catholic Church, from the Diocesan Prelates on the affairs and condition of the Church in each Diocese; and from the various Boards of District Deans. The Council shall also hear the statement of the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod on the general state of the Church at large and the affairs of the General Administration. On such matters as may be deemed of sufficient importance the Council shall adopt resolutions or recommendations which its president shall present to the Holy Synod for its confirmation or amendment. The action of the Holy Synod confirmed by the Archbishop President shall be final.

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(C) The Council of Bishops shall adopt, subject to the approval of the Archbishop President, By-Laws for its own procedure.

Section 4. (A). In the third year after the formal proclamation of this Constitution by the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod and every third year thereafter at the time and place of the Fall meeting of the Council of Bishops, the General Convention of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America shall assemble under the presidency of the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod or his appointed representative or of the Locum Tenens.

(B) The General Convention shall be composed of representatives of the General, Diocesan, and District Administrations and laity, as follows:

The Diocesan Prelates and other Bishops and the National Administrators or Advisors for the various groups with the stewards of each of these.

From each Diocese seven clergy and seven laymen; one of each of these elected by each District Convention and the rest elected by the Diocesan Convention. One clergyman elected by each Diocesan Council from its own membership.

All the District Deans, together with one layman for each Dean, nominated by the Dean from the group he represents and confirmed by vote of the District Convention.

The Bishop of the Diocese shall certify each representative from within that Diocese whether chosen by Diocesan or District Administration and any difficulty arising between Diocesan Bishops and District Deans over representation shall be settled by agreement between the Diocesan Bishop and the Ranking Prelate or National Administrator of the group concerned. If necessary the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod shall dictate this agreement.

(C) The general Convention shall acquaint itself, and through its membership the clergy and laity at large, with the state of the Church and Her needs, opportunities, and problems; shall renew the spiritual life and thought of its members; shall discuss the life and work of the Church; and shall consider and take appropriate action upon such matters as may be brought to its attention by the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod.

(D) The General Convention shall meet in Common Assembly of all its members, or in divided sessions of the Council of Bishops and the Assembly of Clerical and Lay Delegates according to the business before it, as directed by the Holy Synod in its Schedule of Business for the General Convention; but there shall be not less than three meetings in Common Assembly at each General Convention, one of which shall be the opening session and another the closing session of the Convention.

(E) It shall be the duty of the Holy Synod to prepare, subject to the approval of the Archbishop President, a set of By-Laws for the conduct and procedure of the General Convention, and these may be amended and amplified by the General Convention subject to the approval of the Archbishop President.

(F) The Pre-Easter meeting of the Council of Bishops in years of General Conventions shall propose subjects to be brought before the General Convention and from these, with its own matters, the Holy Synod shall prepare, subject to the amendment and approval of the Archbishop President, a schedule of Business and Discussion for the guidance

of the General Convention to be published three months before the date set for assembling the General Convention. This schedule may be extended at any time by the Archbishop President at his discretion or on advice of the Holy Synod.

(G) The expenses of the General Convention and of National Administrators and Advisors shall be met by the General Administration. The expenses of all other members shall be met by the Dioceses from which they come, but the Diocesan Administration may require each District Dean either to raise from his own group the expenses of the lay representative to accompany him or to appoint as proxy some other lay delegate.

Section 5. (A). For the affairs of each distinct national, racial, or linguistic group of communicants in the American Orthodox Catholic Church having more than two Priests, but no Bishop whose sole or preferred language of religious teaching and sacramental ministrations corresponds to the preferred language of such group, the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod shall appoint from the clergy of such group either a National Administrator or an Advisor to the Holy Synod.

(B) The term of office of National Administrators and Advisors to the Holy Synod shall be seven years with eligibility to reappointment and they shall be removable from office only on decision of the Council of Bishops confirmed by the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod after hearing complaints against them and their reply to such complaints.

(C) Groups having five or more distinct parishes, a majority of whose communicants use primarily the language of the group, shall be entitled to a National Administrator. Groups or linguistic missions having less than five distinct parishes, or whose members exist chiefly within parishes primarily of other languages and whose clergy are engaged chiefly in non-parochial work, shall have only an Advisor to the Holy Synod for their special affairs or peculiar interests unless the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod with the advice of the Holy Synod shall determine that such Advisor should be a National Administrator.

(D) National Administrators and Advisors to the Holy Synod shall be members of the Holy Synod in lieu of Ranking Prelates of National, Racial, or Linguistic groups and the National Administrator or Advisor to the Holy Synod for any particular group shall be relieved of his duties and office as such whenever there is a Bishop from such group in the American Orthodox Catholic Church.

(E) The National Administrators shall administer the affairs of clergy and parishes of their respective groups with the same measure of authority and freedom as do the Ranking Prelates of groups and their recommendations and decisions shall have the same weight as those of Ranking Prelates. They may call on any of the Bishops for such services as require a Bishop provided the Diocesan Prelate concerned grants the canonical formal invitation.

(F) Advisors to the Holy Synod shall act for their group only on the specific authority and consent of the Archbishop President (or Locum Tenens of the Presidency) of the Holy Synod, or of the specially appointed representative of the Presidency, and in all matters of their respective groups must follow the counsel of the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod. They shall have full freedom and rights as mem-

bers both of the Council of Bishops and of the Holy Synod but no independent administration of group affairs.

(G) Expenses of National Administrators and Advisors to the Holy Synod incident to their office and administration as such shall be paid by the General Administration.

Section 6. (A). Education, Clerical Training, and the Official Publications of the American Orthodox Catholic Church shall be under the direct control of the Holy Synod exercised through the Bureau of Education, of which the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod is ex officio chairman, and the Director of which is appointed by and directly responsible to the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod. In the absence, inability, or lack of a Director of the Bureau of Education his duties and administration shall devolve upon the Secretary of the Holy Synod.

(B) The sub-divisions of the Bureau of Education, such as the Division of Sunday Schools, the Division of Seminaries and Clerical Training, the Division of General Publicity, the Division of Liturgical Books, Usages, and Translations, and the Division of Periodical Publications and Tracts, etc., shall be established by the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod and the Director of the Bureau and certified to the Secretary of the Holy Synod with the definition of their respective functions and officers.

(C) The expenses of the Bureau of Education and the Divisions under it shall be met by special funds of the General Administration provided according to the next section and supplemented, if necessary, at the discretion of the Holy Synod from the General Finances.

Section 7. (A). The Finances of the General Administration shall be under the guardianship of a Steward to the Holy Synod, nominated by the Archbishop President and confirmed by the Holy Synod for a term of seven years and bonded for the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars.

(B) All drafts or checks on the funds of the General Administration shall be signed by the Archbishop President and by the Secretary of the Holy Synod as well as by the Steward, and shall be issued only in accordance with duplicate expense vouchers certified by the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod and filed both with the Secretary and with the Steward of the Holy Synod and entered in the records both of the Archbishop President and of the account from which they originate.

(C) The General Administration Finances shall be derived from the Orthodox Sunday contribution of One Dollar for each communicant in the American Orthodox Catholic Church, which contribution is to be returned by the District Deans before Easter with their annual reports to the Secretary of the Holy Synod; and from such other sources as may be devised by the Holy Synod or authorized by the Archbishop President.

(D) Special funds for the Education, Clerical Training, and Official Publications shall be kept by the Steward in a separate account for the Bureau of Education and shall be disbursed only on authority of special vouchers of the Bureau countersigned by the Director as well as by the Archbishop President and filed with both the Secretary and Steward to the Holy Synod and entered in the records of the Bureau of Education.

(E) Special funds for the Bureau of Education shall be derived from such sources as may be devised by its various divisions and authorized by the Director and the Archbishop President in addition to the following fixed annual collections.

1. *One Thousand Dollars for each Diocese to be returned by its Steward before Easter to the Director of Education.*
2. *One Thousand Dollars from each District to be returned by the District Deans before Easter to the Director of Education.*
3. *One Thousand Dollars for every thousand adult communicants of each racial, national or linguistic group to be returned by the Steward of its Ranking Prelate or National Administrator to the Director of Education annually before Easter.*

(F) Ten per cent of the funds received by the General Administration each year shall be set aside in the General Endowment Fund. Ten per cent of the receipts of the Bureau of Education Special Funds shall be set aside as the Orthodox Education Endowment, and an additional ten per cent as the Orthodox Publication Endowment. Such endowments shall be permanent and shall be invested on advice of the Financial Advisors to the General Administration.

(G) The Council of Bishops shall select some competent nationally known Bank and Trust Company and designate it as the depository of funds and secure its services as official Financial Advisors to the General Administration.

Section 8. (A). The Steward with the Archbishop President and the Secretary of the Holy Synod and the Director of the Bureau of Education shall prepare annually in September proposed budgets for the General Administration expenditures and for the expenditures of the Bureau of Education for the ensuing year.

(B) Such proposed Budgets shall be presented to the Holy Synod and to the Fall meeting of the Council of Bishops for revision and, when completed and approved by the Holy Synod, by the Archbishop President, and by the Steward, shall be published in the official organ of the Church and sent to the head of each Administration.

(C) Such Budgets may be revised at the Pre-Easter meeting of the Council of Bishops if the Report of the Steward indicates such a step is necessary. Income from Endowment Funds may be used to meet shortages in the Budgets from which such Endowments originated.

(D) Each Annual Budget shall include an item for the Permanent Endowment Fund either for Education or for American Orthodoxy, as the case may be, which shall be not less than ten per cent of the total budget. The Bureau of Education Budget shall include an additional ten per cent item for the Orthodox Publications Endowment Fund.

(E) Endowment Funds shall be kept in a separate account and may not be expended in whole or in part without the consent of the Financial Advisors, the Steward, the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod and three-fourths vote of the Holy Synod and Council of Bishops and of the General Convention. Except in case of shortage in the Budgets for the year the income accruing from Endowment Funds shall be added to the Fund each year.

(F) Each Budget shall include a ten per cent addition for emergency expenses and margin on estimates.

(G) The Steward shall prepare reports for the regular meetings of the Council of Bishops and for the General Convention.

ARTICLE VIII.

Diocesan Administration:

Section 1. (A). The territorial jurisdiction of the General Administration of the American Orthodox Catholic Church as defined in Article IV shall be divided by the Council of Bishops geographically as may seem expedient subject to the confirmation of the Holy Synod and the approval of the Archbishop President thereof. Except in the case of islands or of small territorial possessions or small nations lying adjacent to each other and similar in cultural characteristics Dioceses shall not cut across international boundary lines or include parts of two countries.

(B) Dioceses shall be designated by names of Cities and defined in territorial extent either by enumeration of the provinces, states, counties, cities, or boroughs which they include or by specification of their boundary lines in convenient and specific, clearly intelligible terms.

(C) Upon the petition of ten established parishes with resident Parish Priests in contiguous territory having not less than two thousand adult or five thousand chrismated resident members of the American Orthodox Catholic Church and lying entirely within one nation or comprising islands or small nations lying close to each other the Holy Synod may appoint a Diocesan Foundation Committee to prepare for the erection of a new diocese to include such territory and parishes.

(D) With the consent of the Diocesan Prelate or upon the order of the Council of Bishops the territory designed to form a new diocese may be relieved of diocesan assessments the year following the appointment of such Diocesan Foundation Committee and a Provisional Administration established by the Holy Synod provided that such division of the existing diocese shall leave to the latter not less than twenty parishes which may be re-districted into four districts advantageously.

(E) If before or within the third year from the establishment of the Provisional Administration the territory designed for a new diocese shall have paid in general assessments to the General Administration not less than Twenty Thousand Dollars and shall have in its general funds a surplus of Ten Thousand Dollars, it shall be erected into a Diocese by the Council of Bishops and one of the three candidates nominated by its first Diocesan Convention shall be elected and Consecrated its Bishop.

(F) Should the Provisional Administration fail to meet the above requirements by the end of the third year the territory shall be returned to the existing diocese to which it belonged and its funds shall be divided equally between the Diocesan Endowment Fund of that diocese and the General Administration Endowment Funds unless the General Convention of the territory petition the Holy Synod for continued existence as a Provisional Administration.

(G) Upon the petition from the General Convention of a Provisional Administration the Holy Synod may grant continuance of the territory in that status for two years additional time with the provision that for

each additional year the general assessments shall be Ten Thousand Dollars a year and that the required annual deposits in the Diocesan Endowment Fund and in the surplus of the general funds shall be Two Thousand Dollars each in addition to the payment, within the two years, of the arrears in the requirements for the first three years, and the payment, during the period of the extension, of One Thousand Dollars annually for the Provisional Administration expenses. In no case shall a territory be permitted to continue more than seven years under a Provisional Administration.

Section 2. (A). The head of the Diocesan Administration in each diocese is the Diocesan Prelate (Bishop, Archbishop, or Coadjutor Bishops, designated by the title of its See City). Should the Council of Bishops with the approval of the Holy Synod and Archbishop President find it advisable to place more than one Bishop in a City or Diocese on account of the difficulties of racial or linguistic groups the Bishops so placed shall be of equal rank and shall each have the title of Bishop Coadjutor and all papers or acts of the Office of the Diocesan Prelate shall be issued in the name and with the signatures of all such Coadjutor Bishops. Each Coadjutor shall have a voice and vote in the Council of Bishops.

(B) Diocesan Prelates shall have all the rights, privileges, duties, and responsibilities accorded to Bishops by the Sacred Canons of the Holy Ecumenical Councils.

(C) When a Diocesan Prelate is also Archbishop President of the Holy Synod, or has other heavy duties, he may be granted one or more assistant Bishops upon his request to the Council of Bishops if the Holy Synod approves such action. Assistant Bishops shall be nominated by the Diocesan Prelate whom they are to assist and confirmed by vote of the Council of Bishops. They shall be given the title of Bishop of a city designated by the Diocesan Prelate and approved by the Council of Bishops as the center of a future diocese and known as the Titular See of such Assistant Bishop. As Assistant Bishops they shall have no independent or separate administration or authority except such as is specifically assigned to them by the Diocesan Prelate. Neither shall they ordain, consecrate, vote in any Councils, or exercise any other functions without the direction of the Diocesan Prelate. However, in sessions of the Council of Bishops they have an independent voice and vote.

(D) Upon the petition of ten established parishes with resident Parish Priests in territory contiguous to the Titular See of an Assistant Bishop and meeting the requirements of Pars. C and D of the preceding Section such Assistant Bishop may be appointed head of a Provisional Administration under the same requirements and privileges laid down in the preceding section for Provisional Administrations.

(E) Whenever the Provisional Administration under an Assistant Bishop shall have paid in any one year a total General Assessment of Ten Thousand Dollars and has Ten Thousand Dollars surplus in its general funds and Ten Thousand Dollars in the Diocesan Endowment Fund in addition to having paid Provisional Administration expenses and salaries of not less than Five Thousand Dollars in the same year, it may petition through its General Convention to be granted full Diocesan standing. Upon the endorsement of such petition by the Holy Synod the Council of Bishops shall grant full diocesan standing to the territory and its titular Bishop shall become Diocesan Prelate.

(F) The provisions set forth in this and the preceding section for the erection of dioceses and the elevation of Assistant Bishops to the status of Diocesan Prelates shall be applied also to the division of dioceses administered by Coadjutor Bishops into separate Dioceses and the elevation of each of such Coadjutors to the status of a Diocesan Prelate.

(G) In every case of the division of a Diocese or the erection of a new Diocese the old diocese shall be left not less than twenty parishes divided into four districts and the new diocese shall have at least ten parishes divided into two districts.

Section 3. (A). The Diocesan Prelate shall be advised and assisted in the administration of the Diocese by the Diocesan Council of Clergy which, subject to the approval of the Diocesan Prelate, is the Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Organ of the Diocesan Administration. All acts of the Diocesan Council shall require the confirmation of the Diocesan Prelate to be effective.

(B) The Diocesan Council of Clergy shall be composed of seven members who sit under the presidency of the Diocesan Prelate, or of their own elected Vice-President, quarterly in regular session and in special session at the call of the Diocesan Prelate.

(C) The Diocesan Council of Clergy shall be composed of one clergyman elected by the District Convention of each District in the Diocese annually and sufficient additional clergy elected by the Diocesan Convention annually to complete the required membership of seven.

(D) The Diocesan Council of Clergy shall elect one of its members Secretary and keep an accurate record of all its proceedings.

(E) At its regular meeting nearest to Mid-summer the Diocesan Council shall prepare and publish under the approval of the Bishop a proposed programme for the Diocesan Convention.

(F) The Fall meeting of the Diocesan Council shall coincide with the Diocesan Convention.

(G) In years of General Conventions the Diocesan Council at its Fall meeting shall elect one of its members as delegate to the General Convention and pass resolutions on the matters to come before the Convention.

Section 4. (A). At least two weeks before the Fall meeting of the Council of Bishops or of the General Convention in years of its meeting, the Diocesan Convention shall meet under the presidency of the Diocesan Prelate.

(B) The Diocesan Convention shall be composed of all the clergy of the diocese together with one lay representative of each parish elected by the parish meeting of voting members and one lay representative for each hundred adults of each group in each district nominated by the District Dean for such group and elected by the District Convention.

(C) The Diocesan Convention shall meet in common assembly of all delegates, and in divided session of the House of Laity and House of Clergy according to the business before it, at the direction of the Diocesan Prelate and in accordance with provisions of Canon Law.

(D) Final Action on all legislation for the diocese shall be in the House of Clergy, but the House of Laity may originate proposals on any subject and may pass resolutions. All legislation shall require a majority

of the votes of the common assembly and a two-thirds majority of the House of Clergy.

(E) The opening and closing sessions of the Diocesan Convention shall be common assemblies presided over and addressed by the Diocesan Prelate.

(F) All acts of the Diocesan Convention shall require ratification by the Diocesan Prelate to make them effective.

(G) The Diocesan Convention shall adopt, subject to the approval of the Diocesan Council and Diocesan Prelate, by-laws for its own procedure and activities.

Section 5. (A). The Diocesan finances shall be under the guardianship of a Diocesan Steward elected by the Council of Clergy of the diocese for a term of seven years and confirmed by the Diocesan Prelate and placed under bond in the sum of Twenty-five Thousand Dollars.

(B) The Steward, together with the Diocesan Prelate and the Diocesan Council, shall prepare an annual Budget estimate for the coming year at the Fall meeting of the Diocesan Council. To this Budget ten per cent shall be added for emergencies and ten per cent for deposit in the Diocesan Endowment Fund.

(C) The total Budget shall be assessed equitably among the parishes and missions of the Diocese according to their membership based on the latest report of the District Deans; Parishes and Mission Clergy will be held responsible for the payment of such assessments. Any parish in arrears in its assessments shall forfeit its lay representation in the Diocesan Convention.

(D) Disbursements of Diocesan funds shall be by check signed by the Diocesan Prelate and the Steward and issued only on authority of expense vouchers in triplicate endorsed by the Diocesan Prelate and Secretary of the Diocesan Council and filed with the Steward, the Secretary of the Diocesan Council, and the Diocesan Prelate and entered in the records of the accounts from which they originate.

(E) The funds of the Diocese may be augmented in such other ways as may be approved by the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Prelate. Income from the Diocesan Endowment Fund may be added to the current funds if needed to meet shortage.

(F) The Steward shall make an annual report as of December 1st, which shall be presented to the Diocesan Prelate, to the Diocesan Council, and to the Diocesan Convention.

(G) The Diocesan Endowment Fund shall be kept in a separate account from the Diocesan finances and shall be subject to withdrawals only on three-fourths vote of the Council of Bishops endorsed by the Holy Synod and Archbishop President, in addition to three-fourths vote of the Diocesan Convention, three-fourths vote of the Diocesan Council, and approval of the Diocesan Prelate. The investment or withdrawal of any part of the Diocesan Endowment Fund shall require the advice of the Financial Advisors of the General Administration. Income accruing from the Diocesan Endowment fund may be added to the current income of the Diocese in case of shortage in meeting the annual budget but otherwise shall be added to the Endowment Fund each year.

ARTICLE IX.

District Administration:

Section 1. (A). For the coordination of General and Diocesan Administrations and the adjustment of the difficulties incident to the co-existence in dioceses and parishes of various racial, national, and linguistic groups the Council of Bishops shall divide each diocese into not less than two nor more than four Districts according to the number of parishes and extent of territory it comprises.

(B) A diocese having less than fifteen established parishes with resident parish priests shall be divided into only two districts. A diocese having more than fifteen established parishes with resident parish priests may, on advice of the Holy Synod, be divided into three districts. A diocese having over twenty parishes with resident parish priests may, on advice of the Holy Synod, be divided into four districts. A diocese having forty or more parishes shall be divided into not less than four districts.

(C) The Diocesan Prelate, or any National Administrator or Ranking Prelate of any group having parishes in the diocese, may present to the Holy Synod a petition for the re-districting of any diocese for stated reasons. In such case the Holy Synod shall appoint a committee, representative of all the groups interested in the diocese, to meet with the Diocesan Prelate thereof and prepare recommendations for the action of the Council of Bishops.

Section 2. (A). The District Administration shall be in the hands of a Board of District Deans representing all the various groups having three or more parishes or five hundred adult communicants in the district. Affairs of groups having less than three parishes or five hundred adult communicants in the district shall be administered through a special missionary appointed by the Ranking Prelate or National Administrator.

(B) The District Deans shall be appointed by the Ranking Prelate or National Administrator of the group which they represent with the advice and confirmation both of the Holy Synod and of the Diocesan Prelate who shall himself appoint the Dean for the group to which he belongs.

(C) In each district the District Dean appointed by the Diocesan Prelate shall be Chairman of the Board of District Deans.

Section 3. (A). The Board of District Deans shall meet in regular sessions four times annually as follows:

1. *Between Orthodox Sunday and Easter but before the meeting of the Council of Bishops and Diocesan Council;*
2. *During the fortnight midway between Easter and September First;*
3. *During the first fortnight in September;*
4. *During the first fortnight in December; and in special sessions on call of the Chairman.*

(B) At its first regular meeting of the year, i.e., between Orthodox Sunday and Easter, the Board of District Deans shall prepare its Annual Report in triplicate for submission to the Secretary of the Holy Synod with the collection of the annual Orthodox Sunday assessment for the Steward of the Holy Synod, to the Council of Bishops, and to

the Diocesan Prelate. A copy of this report shall be kept in the records of the District Board. This meeting of the District Board shall forward to the Director of Education the One Thousand Dollar annual assessment for the District.

(C) At its second regular meeting of the year—i.e., midway between Easter and September—the District Board shall consider the reports of the Council of Bishops and of the Diocesan Council.

(D) At its third regular meeting of the year—i.e., in September—the District Board shall prepare for the District Convention to be held during that month and prepare the preliminary draft of its reports to the Diocesan Convention and to the Fall meeting of the Council of Bishops and to the Fall meeting of the Diocesan Council. This report shall be completed at a special session on the closing day of the District Convention.

(E) At its fourth regular meeting of the year—i.e., in December—the District Board shall prepare a statement of the outstanding deficit for the expenses of the District Administration for the year current and a budget for the coming year and shall assess this total expense fund equitably among the parishes of the district. Likewise the assessments and collections to be returned by the District Board shall be collected among the parishes and added to the budget assessment to be collected in each parish before Easter.

(F) At special meetings the District Board shall take up such matters as may be presented to it by the Diocesan Prelate, by any of the Ranking Prelates or Administrators of Groups, by the General Administration, or by any parish, priest, or group in the district.

(G) A District Dean shall attend the meeting of the Parish Council of each Parish in the District quarterly and report to the following meeting of the Board.

Section 4. (A). Each District Dean shall be responsible through the Diocesan Prelate to the Prelate or National Administrator by whom he was appointed and whose group he represents and supervises in his district.

(B) The District Deans shall act only on those orders coming to them through the Diocesan Prelate or with his approval, but all orders of the Diocesan Prelate affecting in particular the members of any group other than his own must have the approval of the Ranking Prelate or National Administrator of such group.

(C) Each District Dean shall make a report on the condition and affairs of his group in his district not later than September first of each year. This report shall be sent to the Chairman of the District Board, to the Ranking Prelate or National Administrator of the group, to the Diocesan Prelate, and to the Secretary of the Holy Synod.

Section 5. (A). The District Deans shall be responsible for collecting the following assessments annually for the General Administration:

- One Thousand Dollars for the Bureau of Education.*
- One Dollar from each adult member of each racial or linguistic group for Bureau of Education.*
- One Dollar for each christened, Orthodox person on District Reports as the Orthodox Sunday Assessment for General Administration.*

(B) All these collections shall be returned in the form of checks payable to the Steward of the Holy Synod and sent to the Director of the Bureau of Education if for the special funds of that Bureau or to the Secretary of the Holy Synod if for general funds of the General Administration before Easter.

(C) The Funds collected by District Deans shall be in the keeping of a District Steward elected for a term of seven years by the District Convention and confirmed by the Board of Deans and by the Diocesan Prelate and bonded in the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars.

(D) Disbursements of District Funds shall be by check signed by both the District Steward and the Chairman of the Board of Deans and issued only on authority of vouchers signed by all the District Deans at a meeting of the Board.

Section 6. (A). The Board of District Deans shall elect one of its members Secretary and keep an accurate record of all its proceedings.

(B) Decisions of the Board of Deans shall be binding upon communicants, parishes, priests, and groups within the district, but are subject to review by (1) The Diocesan Prelate, (2) The Council of Bishops, and (3) The Holy Synod.

(C) The Board of District Deans shall adopt By-laws to govern its own procedure and administration subject to the approval of the Diocesan Prelate and of the Holy Synod.

Section 7. (A). In September, not more than ten days after the meeting of the District Deans, the District Convention shall assemble under the presidency of the Chairman of the Board of District Deans.

(B) The District Convention shall be composed of all the clergy of the District together with four lay representatives elected from each parish having not over one hundred voting members and one additional representative for each additional twenty-five voting members in any parish.

(C) Any Parish in arrears in its assessments due to the District Funds shall forfeit its lay representation in the District Convention.

(D) The District Convention shall elect its proportion of the members of the Diocesan Council and of the Diocesan Convention and in General Convention years its representatives to the General Convention. Every Seventh year the District Convention shall elect a District Steward.

(E) The District Convention shall consider matters likely to be brought before those conventions and councils to which it elects representatives and may pass resolutions for the advice of such meetings but may not bind its representatives to any specified positive action in such meeting beyond the presentation of its resolutions or views.

ARTICLE X.

Parish Administration:

Section 1. (A). The Parish is the local congregation or unit organization of the Faithful of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America.

(B) The Parish includes all chrismated Eastern Orthodox Catholic communicants resident in the community who by themselves or by their

sponsors or parents acknowledge themselves under the jurisdiction of the American Orthodox Catholic Church and its Holy Synod and the authority of this constitution through the local congregation, regardless of age, sex, race, citizenship, ancestry, language or any other consideration or circumstances external to religious faith and obedience.

(C) The jurisdiction of the parish, its duty to minister to members of various groups, and the duty of laity to adhere to the parish in cases of conflict between two or more parishes or of difficulties of linguistic, national, or other groups in a community shall be settled by the District Deans of the groups whose members are concerned after consultation with the local clergy and parties in difficulty.

(D) In no case shall membership, voting, office, or any rights or privileges in the parish be denied or prejudiced by reason of the race, ancestry, nationality, native or ancestral language, or citizenship of any Orthodox Catholic Communicant.

Section 2. (A). The head of the Parish Administration is the resident parish Priest under appointment from the Diocesan Prelate.

(B) The Priest has full charge and control of all matters affecting the services held in the church and the administration of sacraments, religious rites and ceremonies, and the imparting of religious instruction; and no member or members of the Parish may call another Priest for services or ministrations of any sort without the consent of the Parish Priest or the order of the Diocesan Prelate except in emergencies in the absence of the Parish Priest. Services and ministrations in languages not spoken by the Parish Priest will be arranged by the District Deans in conference with the Parish Priest.

(C) The Priest is President of the Parish Council, of the meeting of voting members, and ex officio chairman of all committees of the Parish.

(D) All acts of the Parish Council or of the trustees of the legal corporation which represents the parish shall require the assent of the Priest.

(E) The Priest may not withdraw from the Parish without the consent of the Diocesan Prelate.

(F) The Priest may not be removed from the Parish nor his control thereof superseded or suspended without the written order of the Diocesan Prelate.

(G) The Priest is strictly accountable for the conduct of Services, Sacramental ministrations, and religious teaching, and for the exercise of his office and authority in accordance with this Constitution and the By-laws thereunder, with the Canons, faith, usage and discipline of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church, with the Canon Law of the American Orthodox Catholic Church, and with the instructions of his Diocesan Prelate.

Section 3. (A). The Priest shall be assisted and advised in his administration of the Parish by the Parish Council or Committee which meets under his presidency regularly once each month and in special session at his call.

(B) The Parish Council shall consist of seven laymen elected an-

nally by the Parish meeting of voting members of the Parish and confirmed by the Diocesan Prelate together with the Parish Steward.

(C) The officers of the Parish Council shall be designated by the electing Parish meeting and shall be as follows: Vice-President, Secretary, Registrar. The Parish Priest is ex officio President of the Parish Council and the Steward is permanent Treasurer of the Parish Council.

(D) Two thirds of the membership of the Parish Council shall constitute a quorum for business and a three fourths vote of those present together with the sanction of the Priest shall be required to make its decisions binding.

(E) The Parish Council is responsible for the care and upkeep of the Parish property and for the providing of all things needed for the proper conduct of the services and work of the Church within the Parish.

(F) The Parish Council, in conference with the District Deans is responsible for the securing of a Priest and for the payment of his salary. The Parish Council, by a three-fourths vote of all its members, may petition the Diocesan Prelate for a Priest of its choice or for the removal of the Parish Priest. When a Parish falls vacant, a committee of the Parish Council shall confer with the District Deans and may confer with the Diocesan Prelate concerning the securing of a new Priest.

(G) The Parish Council is responsible for the raising or collection of the assessments due from the parish membership to the General, Diocesan, and District Administrations and for the fulfilling by the Parish of all its duties under this constitution and the By-laws thereof and such obligations as may be imposed upon it by authority thereof.

Section 4. (A) Parish records shall be kept by the Priest, Secretary, Steward, and Registrar of the Parish.

(B) The Priest shall keep on forms secured from the Diocesan Prelate, records of all Baptisms, Christmations, Receptions into the Church, marriages, and funerals in the Parish and shall render an annual report of same on forms secured from the Diocesan Prelate.

(C) The Secretary shall keep full and accurate records of all actions and proceedings of the Parish Council and Parish meeting of Voting members and official communications received or sent by the Parish.

(D) The Registrar shall keep an accurate register of the members of the Parish on forms secured from the General Administration and shall summarize this register twice a year on report forms supplied by the District Deans.

(E) The Steward shall keep an accurate record of the source, amounts and dates of all income of the Parish and of all accounts received and moneys expended and shall render a report twice a year at the time of the Registrar's Reports.

(F) Copies of all reports made from the Parish Records shall be sent to the Board of District Deans, to the Diocesan Administration, and to the Secretary of the Holy Synod, and kept on file by the Secretary of the Parish.

(G) A list of the Voting Membership of the Parish Meeting shall be determined from the records of the Parish in accordance with the Parish constitution not later than the first of August of each year and

attested by the Parish Priest, Steward, Secretary, and Registrar and passed upon by the Parish Council.

Section 5. (A). Not later than the first week in September and at least ten days before the time appointed for the meeting of the District Convention the Parish Meeting of Voting Members shall assemble under the presidency of the Parish Priest.

(B) Notice of the date, time, place, and principal business of the Parish meeting shall be given by the Parish Priest at the regular services in the Church, on not less than two Sundays before the date of such meeting and by writing sent by the Secretary by mail to all the Voting Members on the latest official list of Voting Membership at least one week before the date of such meeting.

(C) The Parish Meeting shall elect the officers and other members of the Parish Council for the coming year and also such representatives and delegates to the District and Diocesan Conventions as are allotted to it under this constitution.

(D) The Parish meeting shall hear the reports of the Priest, the Secretary, the Registrar, and the Steward and shall consider the business which these reports and any special communications may bring before it.

(E) All actions of the Parish Meeting shall require the sanction of the Priest, and the elections of officers and members of the Parish Council require the confirmation of the Diocesan Prelate.

(F) The Secretary of the Parish Council shall be Secretary of the Parish Meeting and keep an accurate record of its proceedings.

(G) The Parish Meeting may be called in special session on request either of the Diocesan Prelate, of the District Dean, of the Parish Priest, or of three fourths of the Parish Council.

Section 6. (A). The Parish finances shall be in the custody of the Parish Steward who is elected by the Parish Meeting from among three nominees approved by the Parish Priest, the District Deans, and the Diocesan Prelate.

(B) Upon election the Parish Steward is commissioned by the Diocesan Prelate for a period of seven years and bonded in the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars.

(C) The Parish Steward is ex officio member of the Parish Council and no action involving the expenditure of Parish funds may be taken without his approval unless ordered by the Diocesan Prelate.

(D) The Steward shall keep separate accounts for the general funds of the parish and for each of the General, Education, District and Diocesan Assessments which pass through his hands.

(E) The various assessment funds shall be paid over to the proper authorities in the form of checks without the necessity of Parish expense vouchers, but the Steward shall not disburse any general Parish funds without the authority of duplicate vouchers endorsed by the Parish Priest and Secretary of the Parish Council. Such vouchers when paid shall be so endorsed by the Steward with the check number of the check drawn in payment and shall be filed in the records of the Steward and of the Secretary.

(F) All checks drawn by the Steward on any funds shall require the signature of the Parish Priest and Secretary of the Parish Council

and shall specify both on the stub and on the body of the check the purpose for which drawn.

(G) The Steward with the Secretary and the Parish Priest shall prepare a proposed budget in August of each year for the following year. When approved by the Parish Council this budget shall be presented to the Parish Meeting with the Steward's Report.

Section 7. (A). A Priest is forbidden either to consent that our Faithful should seek ministrations outside the Holy Eastern Church, or to give the Sacraments to any who are not numbered among the Faithful of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church except in such specified emergencies as the Canon Law prescribes or his Bishop may direct.

(B) The Priest is forbidden to attend any religious service not under the jurisdiction of the Holy Synod, except by written permission from his Bishop.

(C) The Priest is forbidden to permit anyone to speak in his Church or to give religious instruction to his people who is not a member of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church.

(D) The Priest shall be held strictly accountable if he give the Sacraments under conditions, to persons, or at times, forbidden by the Holy Canons.

(E) The Priest is forbidden to ask any money for the performance of any Priestly duty, but a Priest is permitted to receive gifts from those who wish to give to him. However, his being permitted to receive gifts is a privilege which may be revoked by the Bishop for a time to discipline him, if it is ever proved against him before the Bishop that he demanded money in return for the performance of any Priestly duty, or failed to respond with the Comforts of Mother Church to the call of the poor and needy.

(F) The Priest is entitled to a salary which will permit him to educate his children and to live according to American standards. It shall be the duty of the Bishop to see to it that the Priests under his obedience are paid at least as well as are the ministers of the other religious organizations in the same community.

(G) A Priest shall have the right to ask for transfer. If he desires to leave the Diocese the Bishop must dismiss him without prejudice, provided that the Priest is of good reputation and can show that another Bishop will receive him.

ARTICLE XI.

Election of Bishops: Filling of Diocesan and Holy Synod Vacancies:

Section 1. (A). Bishops of new Dioceses shall be elected by the Council of Bishops, sitting as an Electoral College, from a list of nominees suggested by the District Deans and Parish Councils of the Parishes included in the new diocese, and approved and supplemented by the Holy Synod.

(B) When the Council of Bishops sits as an Electoral College, each member thereof either must be present in person or must delegate his ballot to some other member by means of a written proxy attested by two witnesses.

(C) If a member who cannot attend the sessions of the Electoral Col-

lege has not deposited a written and attested proxy by the time the sessions are formally opened, his right to vote shall inure to the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod or to the Locum Tenens.

(D) Two-thirds of the number of ballots cast shall suffice to elect provided such election is confirmed by the Holy Synod.

(E) A man elected to be Bishop of a diocese shall be put into possession of the authority and dignity as Diocesan Prelate thereof within seven weeks after his election.

(F) Thereafter the Diocesan Prelate may not be absent from his diocese for a period longer than thirty days without permission of the Holy Synod.

(G) When a diocese falls vacant the Holy Synod shall designate a locum tenens. Where a Diocesan Prelate has an Assistant Bishop the Assistant shall become locum tenens on the vacancy of the Diocese. Where the office of Diocesan Prelate is administered by Coadjutors either remaining coadjutor becomes locum tenens for the Diocesan Prelate and for the affairs of the other coadjutor on the death or incapacity of one coadjutor.

Section 2. (A). A diocese may fall vacant for any of the following reasons:

a) *Death of the Diocesan Prelate,*

b) *Permanent incapacity of the Diocesan Prelate,*

c) *Resignation of the Diocesan Prelate,*

d) *Translation of the Diocesan Prelate.*

(B) If the Diocesan Prelate of a Diocese die, the locum tenens, if there be one, or if there be no locum tenens, the Senior Priest of the Diocesan Prelate's Cathedral, shall report the death to the Holy Synod without delay.

(C) Within five days after he assumes his duties as head of a vacant Diocese, the locum tenens shall call the Diocesan Council to meet in special session under his Presidency on a specified date which must fall within the ten days next following the date of the call.

(D) The Diocesan Council at a special session called in accordance with the preceding paragraph shall nominate three men of whom they desire to have one chosen to be their Diocesan Prelate; and the locum tenens shall send the list, attested by the Secretary of the Diocesan Council, to the Holy Synod.

(E) The names presented in accordance with the preceding paragraph should be those of Clerics canonically eligible and who command general respect for their piety, conservatism, administrative ability, and learning. Only one of them may be that of a Bishop already consecrated or of a Bishop-elect.

(F) After the nominations sent by a Diocesan Council, in accordance with Paragraph D, have been received by the Holy Synod, the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod or the Locum Tenens shall summon the Council of the Bishops to sit as an Electoral College, in accordance with the preceding section, at a time not later than thirty days after the receipt of the nominations.

(G) If the Electoral College decides that none of the nominees for a vacant Diocese is fitted for the dignity of the Episcopate, and that a Bishop nominated cannot be translated without damage to the Church,

one of the members of the Holy Synod shall go to the See of the vacant Diocese and there confer in person with the Diocesan Council.

Section 3. (A). If the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod be permanently incapacitated or die, election shall proceed as hereinafter provided; and until an election has resulted in the installation of a successor, or until a temporary incapacity has ceased; that Prelate of the Holy Synod senior by consecration shall alternate with the Prelate next eldest by Consecration as Locum Tenens for the Presidency for periods of thirty days each.

(B) When a Diocesan Prelate who is also a member, or Archbishop President, of the Holy Synod becomes incapacitated or dies, the Bishop senior by consecration, or otherwise of highest rank, in the Racial, National or Linguistic group whose Ranking Prelate was the deceased or incapacitated Diocesan Prelate shall hold membership in the Holy Synod. If there be no other Bishop of such a group the locum tenens for the vacant diocese shall hold membership in the Holy Synod.

(C) Any Diocesan Prelate shall be held to be incapacitated under the intent of this Constitution either on his own declaration of his incapacity, or on the testimony of an attending physician that disability is likely to continue for a period of time longer than fifteen days.

(D) In the event that the Presidency of the Holy Synod shall fall vacant, the procedure shall be as follows:

Immediately upon the death, resignation, or formally declared permanent incapacity of the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod, and in no event more than three hours thereafter, the Locum Tenens, or in his absence the Senior Priest of the Cathedral of the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod, shall send an official notification to each Bishop of the American Orthodox Catholic Church by telegraph or other speedy means of communication.

(E) Each Diocesan Prelate or his Locum Tenens on receipt of notice that the Presidency of the Holy Synod has fallen vacant shall immediately convene his Diocesan Council or require a designated representative to convene it. Within three days after issuing of the call for its meeting, the Diocesan Council must deposit with the Holy Synod directly or by telegraph, a single nomination for the vacancy. If the nomination be sent by telegraph it must be confirmed by the later deposit of the nomination in writing, attested by the Secretary of the Diocesan Council. All nominations for the Presidency of the Holy Synod must be chosen from the membership of the Council of Bishops.

(F) On the eighth day after the Bishops have been notified of the vacancy of the Presidency of the Holy Synod, the Council of Bishops shall sit as an Electoral College. From the names submitted in nomination by the Diocesan Councils of the several Dioceses, the Electoral College shall choose one, in accordance with the Canons and usages of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church.

(G) He that is chosen by the Electoral College to be President of the Holy Synod in accordance with this Section shall be instituted as such within fifteen days following his election; and if not an Archbishop shall be elevated to that dignity at the same time; and shall hold office for the remainder of the unexpired term of the deceased or incapacitated Archbishop President.

ARTICLE XII. *Miscellaneous Provisions:*

Section 1. (A). Ecclesiastical Courts and discipline shall accord with the general usage and canons of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church as to organization, membership, authority, rules of testimony, rights of appeal and rights of the accused, and penalties.

(B) The Holy Synod shall be final authority on all matters relating to Ecclesiastical Courts and discipline pending its issuance of the Code of Canon Law and Ecclesiastical Penal Law and shall be the final interpreter of that code after its issuance.

Section 2. (A). The Clergy, including all Prelates, of the American Orthodox Catholic Church after the first General Convention of the Church shall be forbidden to solicit contributions for their support or to travel for the purpose of collecting money for any object except such as may be specifically authorized for a definite time and defined territory by the Holy Synod.

(B) After the first General Convention the clergy, including all Prelates, shall be paid definite salaries annually on the following minimum scale:

<i>Archbishop President of the Holy Synod</i>	\$5,000
<i>Ranking Prelates of Groups</i>	4,500
<i>Other Diocesan Prelates</i>	4,000
<i>Assistant and Coadjutor Bishops, the Director of the Bureau of Education, National Administrators and Advisors to the Holy Synod</i>	3,500
<i>Married Clergy</i>	1,500
<i>Celibate Clergy</i>	1,200

(C) Suitable residence or living quarters with office accommodations shall be provided for all Prelates, Parish Clergy, and Administrators or Advisors and for the Director of the Bureau of Education; and the traveling expenses incident to their offices shall be paid in addition to the salaries.

(D) The difference between the salary of a Diocesan Prelate, paid by his diocese, and that of the Archbishop President or Ranking Prelate member of the Holy Synod, when the Diocesan Prelate also occupies such position, shall be paid by the General Administration.

(E) Wherever the General Administration determines that a diocese requires an Assistant Bishop or Coadjutor Bishops it shall pay Two Thousand Dollars of the additional salary expense which is thereby imposed upon the diocese requiring such Assistant or Coadjutor.

(F) The General Administration shall provide such office and residence for the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod as may be required in addition to that provided by his Diocese.

(G) The General Administration shall pay the expenses and salaries of National Advisors and Administrators and the salary, office, secretarial, or other expenses incident to the conduct of the business and administration under the Holy Synod and its Bureaus.

Section 3. (A). The General Administration of the Church shall retain permanently competent legal advisers and shall consult them in all matters affecting the civil legal status of the Church and Her Affairs.

(B) Such Legal Advisers shall be chosen by the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod and confirmed by the Holy Synod and paid by the General Administration.

Section 4. (A). In all incorporations and charters of the Church secured in the various states or elsewhere, the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod shall be President of the Trustees of the Corporation, and the Secretary of the Holy Synod shall be Secretary of the Corporation. Other incorporators or charter members and trustees shall be designated by the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod.

(B) In the By-laws of such corporations this constitution shall be included in its entirety and there shall be nothing else therein to conflict herewith.

(C) In all incorporations or charters of local churches or congregations the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod and the Secretary of the Holy Synod shall be named as trustees.

(D) In the By-laws of all such local church corporations this constitution shall be included or specified as the basic organic law of the church thus chartered or incorporated.

(E) In all incorporations or charters secured for the Church the exact official title used herein shall be used as the corporate name, civil authority permitting.

(F) In no case shall a national or linguistic adjective be added to the official name of the Church in any charter or incorporation.

(G) In local church or congregation incorporations the corporate name shall include the name of the Saint, festival, or other religious designation of the church, and may include an indication of its location; but it must not include any national limiting adjective.

Section 5. (A). This Constitution secures its authority from its ratification and promulgation by the Archbishop of Brooklyn in accordance with the provision of the Act of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Patriarchal Jurisdiction in North America, adopted February Second, 1927, and under the provisions of that Act requires no other authority.

(B) All persons, parishes, clergy, and Prelates desirous of uniting with the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America are required to signify their acceptance for themselves of this Constitution as the authority and law of the Church to which they owe and will render strict obedience.

Section 6. (A). This constitution may be amended by the Holy Synod with the confirmation of three-fourths of the Council of Bishops at any time before the first General Convention. Such amendment requires the approval of the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod.

(B) After the assembling of the first General Convention no amendment to this Constitution shall become effective until it has been discussed by the General Convention and has received a three-fourths affirmative vote of the Council of Bishops at a session not less than six months subsequent to such discussion in the General Convention. All

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such amendments require the approval of the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod or the unanimous vote of the Council of Bishops.

(C) Proposed amendments to this Constitution to be discussed in the General Convention under the meaning of this Section must have been printed in substance clearly expressed in the schedule of business for the General Convention published by the Holy Synod.

Section 7. (A). By-laws for the General Administration shall be adopted by the Holy Synod with the approval of the Archbishop President.

(B) By-laws for the conduct of any part of the General Administration, or of any of its divisions or Bureaus, shall be adopted by such divisions or Bureaus, subject to the approval of the Holy Synod and Archbishop President.

(C) Constitutions and By-laws for Diocesan Administration may be adopted by the various dioceses provided they do not conflict with the provisions herein and provided that they receive the approval of the Holy Synod.

(D) By-laws for District Administration must receive the approval of the Council of Bishops, of the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod, and of the Diocesan Prelate of the Diocese in which the District Administration functions.

(E) Parish Constitutions and By-laws must conform to the provisions of this Constitution and receive the approval of the Holy Synod and of the Diocesan Prelate as well as of the Archbishop President.

(F) All constitutions and By-laws of all Administrations must be in strict conformity with the laws of the local and national civil governments under which they operate, with this Constitution, and with the Code of Canon Law and Ecclesiastical Penal Law issued by the Holy Synod.

(G) By-laws under this Constitution may be amended in the same manner as this Constitution itself, i.e., as provided in Section Six of this Article.

* * *

The Constitution as above set forth for the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America is hereby approved, ratified, proclaimed and promulgated under my hand and seal this first day of December, 1927, by canonical authority.

ARCHBISHOP
SEAL
OF BROOKLYN
+ AFTIMIOS,
Archbishop of Brooklyn



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Appendix to the Constitution

Section 1.

Holy Synod Document No. 1.

An Act of the Synod of Bishops

OF

The American Dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church

In the Name of The Father, and of The Son, and of The Holy Ghost, Amen.

Whereas: The manifest and increasing needs of the large and rapidly growing body of Orthodox Catholic young people, English-speaking only or primarily, and estranged from the Church by the fact that they do not understand its foreign language, are obviously beyond the sphere of activity of any one of the several national or linguistic branches of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church now functioning among people of the various languages of Orthodox population in America; and

Whereas: This large body of American Orthodox souls has and under existing conditions can have no adequate or congenial and suitable church connection or pastoral care without the formation and formal establishment of a peculiarly American and primarily English-speaking branch of the Orthodox Catholic Church; and

Whereas: It is and has ever been a prime consideration of Holy Mother Church that all Her faithful of whatever language or cultural derivation or preference should have the Church in all Her manifestations and fulness in a form and language congenial and closely akin to their common speech and national cultural peculiarities so as to render Her Truths and Life more readily understandable and assimilable to the common people; and

Whereas: The Russian branch of the Orthodox Catholic Church has the oldest and most numerous establishment of Orthodox Catholic faithful and churches in America and by reason of its first evangelization of American natives and its century of sole Orthodox Mission Hierarchy in America is canonically responsible for the care and development of, as well as authority over Orthodoxy in America:

Therefore: Mindful of the responsibility and authority of the Russian Church and of the painful fact that She is now unable to either discharge that responsibility or to exercise that authority in any regular or sure manner; and mindful further of the fact that both this responsibility and immediate de facto authority in America rests on us as the canonical Russian Bishops in America; and conscious that the present sad state of Russian Patriarchal chaos and inability may continue indefinitely, and that continued delay means the loss of the benefits of Holy Church to thousands of Her American Children; and

Further: Having the definite and canonical warrant and sufficient authorization for this act in the Patriarchal admonition and instruction issued by His Eminence, Metropolitan Sergios, Acting Patriarchal Locum

Tenem, under date of August 30/September 12, 1926,¹ addressed to Russian Bishops Outside Russia and reading:

"My Dear Bishops:

"You asked me to be an arbiter or judge in a case of which I know nothing. I do not know who constitute your Synod and Sobor and the prerogatives thereof. Furthermore, I do not know the reasons for the differences between this Synod and Metropolitan Evlogius. It is plain I could not be a judge between you.

"Your letter makes it possible for me to ask the following questions: Is the Patriarchate of Moscow in position to govern the life of all the Orthodox emigrants when in fact there are no relations between us? It occurs to me that the good of the Church requires either (1) that you should unanimously constitute for yourselves a central body for the government of the Church, which body should have sufficient authority to settle all misunderstandings and friction and also the power to subdue all insubordinations without being in need of our help (there will always be grounds to suspect the genuineness of our orders or to give them only a partial interpretation. Some would recognize them, others would not. For instance, Metropolitan Evlogius, as you inform me, recognizes the order of the Patriarch of the year 1922, while you recognize the order of 1920, etc.) or (2) should the creation of such a body recognized by all emigrants prove impossible, in that case it would be better to submit to the Will of God and to acknowledge that the Emigrant Church is not capable of organizing itself and leading its own individual life and that therefore the time has arrived for all of you to stand upon the Canons of the Church and to submit (say temporarily) to the authority of the local Orthodox Church, for example, in Serbia to the Serbian Patriarch, working for the good of that part of the Orthodox Church which gave you refuge."

"Think of this, please. Such an arrangement evidently would be in keeping with the present state of affairs and the affairs of our local Church.

"I would like to embrace each one of you and to converse personally with you. It seems that this will become possible for us only outside the pale of this sorrow-laden and hurried life. Forgive me and pray for me.

"May the Lord assist you in carrying the cross of persecution, and may He spare you all ill.

"Your sincere and loving Brother in Christ,

METROPOLITAN SERGIOS.

¹"In countries which are not Orthodox, Autonomous groups, even Churches, could be organized, whose members need not be all Russians. Such separate and individual life can sooner save you misunderstandings and friction than an effort on the part of all to stay together under the authority of an artificially created centre.—M. S.

"Post Script. By the way, I must affirm that in April or March, 1922, His Holiness actually did issue an Order dissolving the Russian Synod Outside Russia.

METROPOLITAN SERGIOS."

Now, THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS OF THE DIOCESES OF THE AMERICAN RUSSIAN JURISDICTION, believing ourselves called of Christ and moved of the Holy Spirit in behalf of Holy Church and Her Children in America, and being fully authorized through the above Let-

¹ See footnote on Page 36.

ter' by the highest Authority in the Church to which we owe and maintain strict obedient loyalty.

Further, on this second day of February (new style) in the year 1927, charge one of our number, His Eminence, the Most Reverend Attimos, Archbishop of Brooklyn, with the full responsibility and duty of caring and providing for American Orthodoxy in the especial sense of Orthodox Catholic people born in America and primarily English-speaking or any American residents or parishes of whatever national or linguistic character or derivation not satisfactorily provided with proper and canonical Orthodox Catholic care, ecclesiastical authority, teaching and administration of the Church or who may wish to attach themselves by the property and legally provided means to an autonomous, independent, American Orthodox Catholic Church. And to that end, that he may discharge the duty and responsibility laid upon the Church and by us upon him, we do hereby permit, empower, authorize and direct the said Archbishop of Brooklyn to found, organize, establish, head, conduct, control, and maintain a distinct, independent and autonomous branch of the Orthodox Catholic Church to be known and legally established and generally recognized as "The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America," with the provisions that (1) such newly-established Orthodox Catholic Church shall be and forever remain in all respects truly Orthodox Catholic in the sense of the Fathers, Councils, Canons and Tradition of the Historic Undivided Church still existing in the several Patriarchates and Autonomous Churches of the one Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Eastern Church, and shall be in full communion and Orthodox Catholic brotherly fellowship with, but only with, Orthodox Catholic Churches, Clergy and Faithful maintaining and strictly observing the full content and form of sound, undefiled Eastern Orthodox Catholic Doctrine, Tradition, Canons, Discipline, Order and Sacramental Communion; and (2) in as much as it is derived from and canonically founded by the Church of Russia through the primary and sole Orthodox Catholic Missionary and evangelistic efforts of the Russian Church in America and fully recognizes the primacy and canonical exclusiveness of the Russian Jurisdiction and hierarchy in America throughout the first century of Orthodox existence in the New World, the newly-established Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America, while entirely autonomous and independent in its organization, constitution, administration, jurisdiction and authority, shall preserve at all times its brotherly and filial relationship to the Orthodox Church of Russia represented in Russia by the Patriarchal Authority of Moscow and All Russia and in America by His Eminence, Metropolitan

Editorial Note—Since this letter, and since the Act of Feb. 2, the Metropolitan Sergius, Acting Patriarchal Locum Tenens of Moscow, and the Patriarchal Synod have recognized and confirmed the independent and autonomous authority of the Bishops of American Dioceses in the decision transmitted under date of July 1/14, 1927, and No. 96, reading in part:

"The Russian Orthodox Church formerly had, outside Russia, Churches to Russian establishments and to the colonies of Russian subjects, and these churches were under the direct jurisdiction of the Holy Synod. Foreign subjects, especially among the clergy, were very few there, and were not taken into account. The missions established by our Church in America, China, and Japan—which evolved afterwards into independent dioceses, and then into Churches—constitute an exception."

This letter, with other pertinent correspondence of the Russian Patriarchal Authorities, is now entered under Document No. 19 in the Records of the North American Holy Synod. See Holy Synod.

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Platon, and his canonically established and recognized successors as Archbishops of the American Jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Moscow and All Russia.

Further: We do hereby, on this second day of February, 1927 (new style), elect and give order for the consecration of the Very Reverend Archbishop Leonid Turkevich to be Bishop in the newly-founded Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America as assistant to its Governing Head, His Eminence, the Most Reverend Attimos, Archbishop of Brooklyn, and by him to be appointed to such position or see as the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America by its Constitution or By-Laws may provide or elect for the first assistant Bishop under its Primate.

May God prosper and Bless this work in His Name and to His Glory. Amen.

Issued under our hands and seals in the City of New York, on the second day of February (new style) in the year of our Lord Nineteen Hundred and twenty-seven.

+ PLATON

*Metropolitan of North America
and Canada*

+ APTIMIOS

Archbishop of Brooklyn

+ THEOPHILOS

Bishop of Chicago

+ AMPHILOCHY

Bishop of Alaska

+ ARSENY

Bishop of Winnipeg

+ ALEXY

Bishop of San Francisco

Partum 2.

Holy Synod Document No. 2.

Petition of Archbishop of Brooklyn

*To the Synod of Bishops of the American
Dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church:*

Right Reverend Colleagues in Holy Church.—

Having accepted the authority and responsibility committed unto me by the Act of Your Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Patriarchal Jurisdiction in America issued February Second, 1927, permitting, empowering, authorizing and directing me to found, organize, establish, head, conduct, control and maintain a distinct, independent and autonomous branch of the Orthodox Catholic Church to be known and legally established and generally recognized as "The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America", and further, electing and ordering the consecration of the Very Reverend Archbishop Leonid Turkevich to be my Assistant Bishop for the same newly-established Church, I regret to inform the Synod that personal matters have prevented the Very Reverend Father Leonid accepting consecration to the office of Bishop up to the present time.

Therefore, being ready finally to perfect and to announce the organization and establishment with the duty of which your Holy Synod charged me in the sessions of February of this year, and needing for this work the help and co-operation of an Assistant Bishop as provided in

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Extracts from the Records of the

Religious Corporation Chartered in the State of Massachusetts

"The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America, Incorporate."

We, whose names are hereto subscribed, do, by this agreement, associate ourselves with the intention of forming a corporation under the provisions of chapter 180 of the General Laws as amended.

The name by which the corporation shall be known is

The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America, Inc.

The purposes and objects for which it is to be formed, are as follows:

To provide sacraments and spiritual ministrations in accordance with the canons, traditions and usages of the Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Churches of the East; for all persons of the Orthodox Catholic faith, residing or visiting in America; to establish for this purpose an autocephalous, independent, self-governing, ecclesiastical body in America, in full communion with other autocephalous Churches and Patriarchates of the Eastern Orthodox Catholic faith throughout the World; to assume ecclesiastical, spiritual, and temporal charge and administration of the affairs of the communicants and missions of the Orthodox Catholic Churches of the East in America, irrespective of the race, nationality, language or previous form of organization or affiliation with, or submission to, the jurisdiction or authority of any branch or establishment of the Orthodox Catholic Church of the East; to provide for the extension and missionary activity of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic faith in America, or elsewhere; to provide for the instruction and training of the spiritual children and adherents of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic Faith in America, and to this end, to establish and operate schools, seminaries, monasteries, orphanages and such other institutions as may be necessary or convenient for this purpose.

To purchase, sell, hold, administer and dispose of real and personal property in and outside of this Commonwealth, for the benefit of such corporation or church or of any parish, congregation, society, church, mission, synod, religious, benevolent, charitable or other educational institution which may hereafter become a part of, or affiliated with this corporation, and to do and perform any religious work or activity, and to do and perform any and all acts necessary and proper to further the purposes and objects hereinbefore contained.

Voted.—That the persons specified in the agreement constitute a Corporation under the statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with the name and purpose set forth in the agreement and that this agreement be kept with the records of the meetings, and that the following be adopted as the By-laws of the Corporation.

the act of your Synod commissioning me to undertake this new establishment of our Church in America, I hereby petition the Synod of Russian Bishops under the authority of the Patriarchate of Moscow and All Russia, represented in America by His Eminence, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Platon, to confirm the election of another candidate for the Holy Episcopate nominated by me as my Assistant Bishop for the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America, and to order two Bishops of your Synod to act with me in the consecration of such Bishop-elect by direction of His Eminence, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Platon.

I hereby present as my choice for such Assistant Bishop the Godly and Right Reverend Archimandrite Emmanuel Abo-Hatab, for many years Administrator of the Canadian Mission to Orthodox Catholic Syrians, and I earnestly request that you, my fellow Bishops, concur in this election and confirm my choice in order that the necessary Assistant Bishop may be provided and Consecrated without delay. I propose that the Assistant Bishop for the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America be given the title of Bishop of Montreal.

Further, I do petition that in view of the continuance of the provision of the Act of February Second of this year for the Consecration of the Very Reverend Archpriest Leonid, now Bishop-elect for the position of Assistant Bishop in the newly-established American Orthodox Catholic Church, the Synod give order at this time that the two Bishops acting with me in the Consecration of Bishop Emmanuel shall act with me also in the Consecration of the same Bishop-elect Leonid Turkevich, or, in the event of his continued inability to accept this Consecration, of any other candidate who may be elected by myself and those working with me in the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America as now established under my supervision. I ask that the assistance of these Bishops be ordered subject to my call and appointment of the time, place, and candidate for such Consecration.

Praying GOD'S Blessing upon His Church and asking your holy prayers for the work which you have committed unto me, I ask also the granting and approval of this my petition and proposals for the assistance of that work.

(Signed) † APTIMIOS,
Archbishop of Brooklyn.

The above petition received and its proposals confirmed by my resolution with order to Bishops Theophilos of Chicago, and Arseny of Winnipeg to assist in the consecration as requested.

(Signed) † PLATON,
Metropolitan of North America and Canada

Provisions of the above petition ratified and approved by the Synod of Bishops of the American Dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Patriarchate of Moscow in session September 14, 1927, at St. Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, Pa.

(Signed) † THEOPHILOS
Bishop of Chicago
‡ ARSENY
Bishop of Winnipeg
‡ ALEXY
Bishop of San Francisco
‡ EMMANUEL
Bishop of Montreal

By-Laws

ARTICLE I

The constitution of The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America, to be proclaimed and promulgated by Archbishop Atimios, of Brooklyn, State of New York, on the first day of December, 1927 (a copy whereof is hereto annexed) is hereby incorporated as a component part of the By-Laws of this corporation.

ARTICLE II.

These By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote of the Holy Synod hereinafter referred to with the approval of the Archbishop President, as provided in Article VII, Section 2 of said Constitution.

ARTICLE III.

The fiscal year shall commence with the first day of January and end with the thirty-first day of December.

ARTICLE IV.

The meetings of the corporation shall be the same as those described in Article VII, Section 4 of said Constitution, shall be held when and as therein provided and business of said meetings shall be conducted in accordance with such provisions of the Constitution.

ARTICLE V.

The officers shall consist of an Archbishop President, or the Locum Tenens of such Archbishop (with the powers and duties of Chairman and President), a Steward (with the powers and duties of a Treasurer), a Secretary, and the Holy Synod (with the powers and duties of Directors or Trustees), the said officers being the same in number and character as provided for in Article VII, Sections 1 to 8, inclusive, and Article XII, Section 4 of said Constitution respectively and having the same powers, duties, terms of office, and being selected, as therein provided.

ARTICLE VI.

The Corporation shall have a common seal, as shown herewith.

ARTICLE VII.

Until the first General Convention referred to in said Constitution is held the officers named as Trustees in the articles of incorporation and in the minutes of the first meeting shall hold office, but on and after the holding of said convention and the appointment of the officers referred to in said constitution, the officers provided for in Article V of these By-Laws shall take office and hold office until their successors are appointed.

ARTICLE VIII.

The members of said corporation shall be those persons who are members of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America, who are parishioners of any of the parishes thereof and who subscribe to or adopt and are bound by said Constitution.

Thereafter the Directors, all being present, and acting as a Directors' meeting, elected by ballot Archbishop Atimios Ofeah, one of the Directors, President.

A true record.

(Signed) REV. BORIS R. BURDEN
Temporary Clerk and Clerk.

SEAL

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Report of the Committee Appointed by

Holy Synod
Document No. 7.

HIS EMINENCE, ARCHBISHOP ATIMIOS

In accordance with the Resolution of the Convention of The Archdiocese of Brooklyn in its Sessions of August 2-5, 1927, and Charged with the Duty of Presenting a Plan for the Independent Organization and Constitution of the Orthodox Church in America.

To the Convention of the Parish Delegates and Clergy of the Archdiocese of Brooklyn and Syrian Orthodox Catholic Mission in North America.
Brothers and Fathers in God:

Having been appointed by His Eminence, Archbishop Atimios, to devise and recommend to this Convention a plan and a Constitution by and under which the constituent parishes which you represent might enter into the formation of an independent Orthodox Catholic Church in America in accordance with the will expressed by this Convention in its sessions in August of this year, We, the undersigned, as your committee, have the honor to present the following report and to recommend and endorse the Constitution attached hereto and to propose the adoption by this Convention of the attached Resolutions commending the acceptance by the constituent parishes of the Archdiocese of Brooklyn of this Constitution and the authority and jurisdiction it organizes.

I

It will be best first to summarize clearly the steps that have been taken authorizing the foundation and constitution of an independent Church for the Orthodox Catholic parishes and people in America and to refer to the official documents by which these steps have been ratified by the proper canonical ecclesiastical authorities.

On February Second, 1927, all the canonical Bishops of the Russian Patriarchal Jurisdiction in North America in Synod session under the Presidency of His Eminence, Metropolitan Platon, adopted a Synodical Act, since that time known and referred to as the Act of February Second, reading in part as follows:

"We, the Synod of Bishops of the Dioceses of the Russian Jurisdiction, do hereby, on this second day of February (new style) in the year 1927, charge one of our number, His Eminence, the Most Reverend Atimios, Archbishop of Brooklyn, with the full responsibility and duty of caring and providing for American Orthodoxy in the especial sense of Orthodox Catholic people born in America and primarily English-speaking or any American residents or parishes of whatever national or linguistic character or derivation not satisfactorily provided with proper and canonical Orthodox Catholic care, ecclesiastical authority, teaching and ministration of the Church or who may wish to attach themselves by the property and legally provided means to an autonomous, independent, American Orthodox Catholic Church. And to that end, that he may discharge the duty and responsibility laid upon the Church and by us upon him, we do hereby permit, empower, authorize and direct the said Archbishop of Brooklyn to found, organize, establish, head,

[41]

conduct, control and maintain a distinct, independent and autonomous branch of the Orthodox Catholic Church to be known and legally established and generally recognized as "The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America." (See Section I of the Appendix to the Constitution hereto attached).

This Act of February Second provided for the Consecration of an Assistant Bishop for the new Church in the following paragraph:

"FURTHER: We do hereby, on this Second day of February, 1927 (new style), elect and give order for the Consecration of the Very Reverend Archpriest Leonid Turkevich to be Bishop in the newly-founded Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America as assistant to its Governing Head, His Eminence, the Most Reverend Atimios, Archbishop of Brooklyn, and by him to be appointed to such position or See as the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America by its Constitution or By-Laws may provide or erect for the first assistant Bishop under its Primate."

This Act was signed by the Metropolitan Platon and by the four Russian Dioceses under his authority and by the Archbishop of Brooklyn as First Vicar of the Russian Jurisdiction in America.

It was found impossible to arrange matters so that Archpriest Leonid Turkevich could accept at once the consecration and office as Assistant Bishop and no further action was taken previous to the assembling of the August sessions of the convention of the Archdiocese of Brooklyn. At those sessions the representatives of the parishes of the Syrian Mission under the Archbishop of Brooklyn unanimously requested action making the Orthodox Church in America an independent and united body and resolved on the appointment of a Committee to devise ways and means to this end.

The Archbishop of Brooklyn appointed such a committee in the persons of the undersigned.

On August 20th the Archbishop of Brooklyn addressed a petition to the Synod Bishops of Russian Patriarchal Dioceses in America and presented it to His Eminence, Metropolitan Platon. (See Section 2 of the Appendix to the Constitution hereto attached).

This petition recited the fact of the acceptance by the Archbishop of Brooklyn of the responsibility and authority imposed upon him by the Act of February Second and informed the Synod of the indefinite delay in the consecration of the Assistant Bishop-elect Leonid Turkevich. In view of these things the Archbishop of Brooklyn requested the confirmation of another candidate elected to be his Assistant Bishop, and the assistance of two Russian Bishops in the immediate consecration of such new Assistant Bishop.

In response to this petition His Eminence, Metropolitan Platon, at once confirmed the requests by his affirmative resolution and ordered Bishop Theophilos of Chicago and Bishop Arseny of Winnipeg to assist Archbishop Atimios of Brooklyn in consecrating the Archmandrite Emmanuel Abo-Hatab as Assistant Bishop in the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America with the title of Bishop of Montreal.

The Petition and its confirmation also carried the provision that the previous order for the Consecration of Archpriest Leonid Turkevich should continue and that the same two Russian Bishops should assist.

on the request of the Archbishop of Brooklyn, in his consecration for the new church, or, should he continue to be unable to accept such consecration, in the consecration of any other candidate elected by the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America under Archbishop Atimios.

In accordance with the order of His Eminence, Metropolitan Platon, the consecration of Bishop Emmanuel Abo-Hatab as assistant to the Head of the New Church with the title of Bishop of Montreal took place on September Eleventh, 1927.

On September 13th and 14th, 1927, in sessions at St. Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, Pa., the Synod of Bishops of the American Dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Patriarchate of Moscow ratified and approved the provisions of the petition as already confirmed and partially carried out by the order of the Metropolitan Platon.

The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America has been duly chartered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a religious corporation under the presidency of Archbishop Atimios as Archbishop President of the Holy Synod. Thereby the new independent organization of the Orthodox Catholic Church in America acquires civil legal, as well as ecclesiastical, reality and existence.

The result of this series of actions is that we have now:

1. An Archbishop, His Eminence, Atimios of Brooklyn, canonically granted the full authority of all the Russian Patriarchal Jurisdiction in America to found, organize, control, head, conduct, constitute and govern, by himself alone and by virtue of his own authority, a completely autonomous and independent Church for all Orthodox in America.

2. An Assistant Bishop consecrated for this Church by the order and with the assistance of the Russian Bishops in America and subject to the direction and authority of Archbishop Atimios as Head of this Church.

3. The standing order of the Metropolitan and Synod of Bishops of the Russian Patriarchal Jurisdiction in America for the assistance of two Russian Bishops in the consecration of either the present Bishop-elect Leonid Turkevich or such substitute as Archbishop Atimios and the Church under his authority may elect.

4. A legal civil corporation chartered in the State of Massachusetts with full rights to operate and hold property and administer parishes throughout all parts of the United States as the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America.

At the same time the Archdiocese of Brooklyn and the Syrian Mission remains under the Russian Jurisdiction exercised by His Eminence, Atimios, as Archbishop of Brooklyn and First Vicar of the Russian Jurisdiction in America. The Syrian parishes under the Russian Jurisdiction exercised by Archbishop Atimios have expressed through vote of their convention a desire to be members of the independent American Church, however, and have secured the appointment by their Archbishop of the undersigned reporting Committee to examine into ways of accomplishing this end and to recommend a suitable constitution for their government and organization under the authority of such a unified Orthodox Church in America.

This committee is now reporting its endorsement of a constitution and its formulation of a feasible and canonical plan for the transfer of the Syrian parishes of the Archdiocese of Brooklyn to the newly estab-

lished and organized independent American Orthodox Catholic Jurisdiction.

II

Your Committee has examined in detail the situation of Orthodoxy in America and the provisions of the Constitution attached hereto and believes that the provisions of this Constitution meet every problem confronting American Orthodoxy. We believe that these problems and all the difficulties we can foresee are met by this Constitution in a manner fair and equitable to the rights and interests of all Orthodox groups in this country and at the same time both ecclesiastically lawful and canonical and practically workable. We therefore urge that this convention upon its acceptance of our report consider this Constitution as attached hereto (in Appendix I) and endorse its approval thereof by adopting the two resolutions which we propose as attached hereto in Appendix II.

Your Committee begs leave to recall to this Convention the fact that it is a convention representing Syrian parishes under an Archdiocese of the existing Russian Jurisdiction in America and as such cannot adopt the Constitution or take any action for the independent Jurisdiction of The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America.

This Convention, may, however, and in our opinion should, endorse and approve the Constitution and recommend by resolution that the Syrian parishes ask their present Diocesan authority to transfer them from the Archdiocese of Brooklyn of the Russian Jurisdiction to the independent Jurisdiction under this Constitution.

Each Syrian Parish should then petition the Archdiocese of Brooklyn through a petition addressed to Archbishop Aftimios as Head of the Syrian Greek Orthodox Catholic Mission and signed by the Parish Priest and council and adopted by the voting meeting of the Parish to transfer the Parish with its Priest to the independent American Orthodox Catholic Church.

At the same time each Parish should, in the same manner, petition the Holy Synod of The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America, by a petition addressed to His Eminence, Aftimios, Archbishop President of the Holy Synod, and setting forth the acceptance by the Parish and the Priest of this Constitution and the Authority and Jurisdiction thereof, for admission to the independent American Orthodox Catholic Church.

The Archbishop of Brooklyn will transfer the petitioning Parish and Priest to the Jurisdiction of the American Holy Synod and the Archbishop President of the Holy Synod will thereafter administer such parishes and clergy directly until the Holy Synod establishes Dioceses and appoints Diocesan Prelates.

In the same way the Holy Synod through its Archbishop President will receive upon transfer from the canonical Diocesan any other Orthodox Clergy or parishes in America. Parishes or clergy having no Diocesan whom the Holy Synod deems canonical will be received upon application without transfer from their formerly acknowledged superior.

So long as there are any parishes or clergy remaining in the Archdiocese of Brooklyn under the Russian Jurisdiction, Archbishop Aftimios will retain his present office as Archbishop of Brooklyn and Head of the Russian Jurisdiction's Syrian Greek Orthodox Catholic Mission in North

America. When there are no parishes left in this Jurisdiction, Archbishop Aftimios will ask the Synod of Russian Bishops, under the Russian Metropolitan, to transfer the Syrian Mission and Archdiocese of Brooklyn, with himself as Archbishop of Brooklyn, to the independent American Orthodox Catholic Church. In the event that such transfer is not expedient or obtainable Archbishop Aftimios will then resign from such office and meantime will have accepted diocesan administration under the Holy Synod as Ranking Prelate of the Syrian Group in the American Orthodox Catholic Church.

In this manner the canonical transfer of parishes and clergy from their present authority to the independent Church can be accomplished without difficulty or either canonical or civil legal objection.

APPENDIX I.

This appendix consists of the Constitution which your Committee has examined and approved.

APPENDIX II.

This appendix consists of two resolutions endorsing the Constitution and calling on others to accept it and its authority and jurisdiction. Your Committee proposes that these Resolutions be adopted by this Convention.

This Report with its Appendices respectfully and prayerfully submitted by your Committee, the undersigned,

† AFTIMIOS, Archbishop of Brooklyn
Chairman

BASIL M. KERBAWY, Archbishop
BORIS R. BURDEN, Priest-Monk
WILLIAM CATZEFELIS
M. J. NAIMY

Report received and accepted by the Convention of the Syrian Mission and Archdiocese of Brooklyn in sessions of November 29, 1927.

Resolution

of

Holy Synod
Document No. 8.

The Convention of The Archdiocese of Brooklyn and The Syrian Greek Orthodox Catholic Mission in North America addressed to the Constituent Parishes Thereof.

Whereas: All Orthodox people recognize the manifest truth that the present divided state of the various Orthodox Churches and Missions conducting parishes in America is disastrous to the future of the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Faith and Church among Her American-born children and renders impotent all efforts toward the advancement of our Holy Faith among the separated Christians seeking the Grace and Salvation to be found abundantly in union with our Holy Mother Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church; and

Whereas: All Orthodox people recognize the manifest truth that the under the presidency of His Eminence, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Platon, have recognized the necessity of founding an independent Ameri-

can Orthodox Catholic Church to unite all the racial, national, and linguistic groups of Orthodox believers in this country under one Synodical Head and to draw their children and all seekers after the Saving Grace of the Orthodox Catholic Church into one Body suited to their needs; and

Resolutions: In order to attain this imperatively necessary and to fulfill the duty and responsibility laid by our Lord upon His Church and Faithful, the Synod of Russian Bishops in America has commissioned His Eminence, the Most Reverend Atimios, Archbishop of Brooklyn to found, organize, constitute, head, conduct, and control a new and independent establishment of the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church to be known as The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America, and for that establishment has granted to the same Archbishop Atimios all the rights, powers, authority, and responsibility inherent in the Russian Patriarchal Jurisdiction of the Church of Moscow in America; and

Resolutions: In pursuance of this commission and in accordance with this authority and responsibility, His Eminence, Archbishop Atimios, has begun the effective organization of the independent and united American Orthodox Catholic Church by setting forth a preliminary form of Constitution, securing civil legal incorporation and charter, and, with the assistance of Bishops of the Russian American Synod, consecrating an Assistant Bishop for The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America; and

Resolutions: The Convention of Clergy and Parish Delegates of the Archdiocese of Brooklyn and Syrian Greek Orthodox Catholic Mission in North America, through its appointed committee and in its general open sessions has considered the situation of Orthodoxy in America and has examined in detail the Constitution set forth for its unification and organization into one independent American Church; and

Resolutions: After the report of its Committee and its discussion this Convention is convinced that the Constitution and plan of unification as laid before it preserves and safeguards the rights and dignity of each Orthodox group in America and at the same time presents an adequate, practical, canonical, and effective form of organization and united government for all the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Parishes and people of whatever language, nationality, or race in America; and

Resolutions: This Convention is convinced that it is the solemn and sacred duty of all Orthodox Catholic Clergy and people in this country to lay aside and leave behind them every weight of partisan or factional enmity and division and every political, national, racial, or linguistic pride or prejudice which hinders their full cooperation in the common work of Christ's Holy Orthodox Catholic Church, and to press forward as one united body of Orthodox Catholic faithful in the service of their Holy Faith and Church in America; Therefore

Resolutions: That this Convention approves and endorses fully and unreservedly the Constitution and plan for unification of the Orthodox Catholic parishes in America in The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America; and

Resolutions: That this Convention calls on all its constituent parishes and clergy, and on all other parishes and clergy of the

Eastern Orthodox Catholic Faith in America, to apply to their proper Canonical Diocesan Authority for permission to transfer to the Authority and Jurisdiction of the Holy Synod of The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America and at the same time to petition the said Holy Synod, through its Archbishop President, to receive them under its authority and administration upon their acceptance of the Constitution provided for such administration; and

Resolutions: That this Convention, in issuing this endorsement of and appeal for cooperation under the Constitution for The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America, pledges its own most sincere and faithful cooperation and assistance to this new Church for all Orthodoxy in America and offers to God its earnest and constant prayers for His Blessing and the Guidance of His Holy Spirit upon His One Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America.

Adopted November Thirtieth (new style), 1927.

Signed for the Convention.

SOLOMON FAIRMONT, Archbishop of Brooklyn
Secretary + ATIMIOS, Archbishop of Brooklyn
President

Message Holy Synod
Document No. 9.

of

The Convention of the Clergy and Parish Delegates of the Archdiocese of Brooklyn and Syrian Greek Orthodox Catholic Mission in North America.

To All Prelates, Heads, and Authorities Exercising Administration of Parishes or Groups of Eastern Orthodox Catholic Believers in America:

Greeting in Christ and His Holy Church.

This Convention, representing the Syrian Orthodox Catholic parishes and clergy under the Russian Patriarchal Jurisdiction in America, has witnessed with great thankfulness and gratitude to God the fact that the Russian Patriarchal Diocesan Bishops in America have granted their authority and Blessing for the formation of a united independent and autonomous (autocephalous) Orthodox Catholic Church of all the Orthodox residents in America.

We are pleased to see that the Russian Bishops have recognized that continued division and dispute over supreme, exclusive jurisdiction, Headship, or Authority in Orthodoxy in America is treachery to the Church of Christ and that the time has come when the duty of all nationalities and factions in America is to unite in an independent American Orthodox Catholic Church for the American children of Orthodoxy.

We joyfully accept, as an evidence of the complete abandonment of nationalistic claims and pride so disastrous to the Church, the fact that the Russian Bishops have granted to the Archbishop of one of the smaller Orthodox groups in America all the rights, authority, and power inherent in the Russian Patriarchal Jurisdiction in America for the founding and leadership of a Synodical American Church of all the Orthodox groups in this country.

The fact that the Archbishop so chosen and commissioned to lead

**An Act to amend the religious corporations law, in relation to the
Federated Orthodox Greek Catholic Primary Jurisdictions in America,
and renumbering certain articles thereof (major excerpts from—¹⁰)**

“3. The trustees, who shall constitute the governing body of the Federated Orthodox Greek Catholic Primary Jurisdictions in America, shall consist of the ecclesiastical administrative heads, also known as the hierarchs, of the four constituent primary jurisdictions together with the dean of the preceptorial council, the chancellor and the secretary of said federation and not more than eight additional trustees, communicants of the Orthodox Greek Catholic Church, who are to be elected or appointed by said four constituent primary jurisdictions.

The term Federated Orthodox Greek Catholic Primary Jurisdictions in America, as used herein, is restricted to apply only

(a) to the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Oecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople exercised in America and all the territorial possessions and/or dependencies or protectorates of the United States of America, by its duly authorized exarch, metropolitan, archbishop, or bishop,

(b) to the jurisdiction of the apostolic Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, exercised in the Americas and all the territorial possessions and/or dependencies or protectorates of the United States of America, by its duly authorized exarch, metropolitan, archbishop or bishop.

(c) to the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Moscow exercised in the Americas and all the territorial possessions and/or dependencies or protectorates of the United States of America by its duly authorized exarch, metropolitan, archbishop or bishop.

(d) to the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Serbia (Jugoslavia) exercised in the Americas and all the territorial possessions and/or protectorates of the United States of America, by its duly authorized exarch, metropolitan, archbishop or bishop.

All other Orthodox Greek Catholic jurisdictions, bishoprics, dioceses and missions, officially and canonically in communion with and acknowledged by all four of said primary jurisdictions, if certified by the secretariat thereof as affiliated with the Federated Orthodox Greek Catholic Primary Jurisdictions in America, may incorporate or reincorporate under this section as affiliates thereof.

ARTICLE XV

Application of article. 1. This article applies to all churches, congregations, societies, parish committees and other local organizations governed by jurisdictions, bishoprics, dioceses, missions, of any Orthodox Patriarchate, Synod or national church of the Orthodox Greek Catholic (Eastern Orthodox) Church, recognized by the apostolic historic Orthodox Patriarchates of Constantinople, Antioch, Moscow and Serbia (Jugoslavia), respectively, through their four primary Orthodox Greek Catholic jurisdictions in America as specified in subdivisions three and four of section fifteen of this chapter; also to any churches, parishes, congregations, committees, or religious organizations founded or established with the intent and for the purpose of adhering to and maintaining the apostolic and historic communion, doctrine, discipline, canon law, tradition, worship and unity of the Eastern Confession known as the Orthodox Greek Catholic (Eastern Orthodox Church).

2. This article does not apply to the following churches, which are auto-genic, to wit: American Catholic Church, Old Catholic Church, Western Orthodox Church, Orthodox Old Catholic Church, American Catholic Orthodox Church, Apostolic Episcopal Church, Holy Orthodox Church in America, American Patriarchal Orthodox Church, African Orthodox Church or any other organization, church, society or establishment by whatever name, title, or description designated, whose names, titles or descriptions allude, relate or refer to the said Orthodox Greek Catholic (Eastern Orthodox) Church but which are not recognized or accepted by said apostolic and historic Orthodox Greek Catholic Patriarchates."

NOTE: The rest of the Act refers to "Application for incorporation, notice of meeting for incorporation, provisions governing meetings for incorporation and resolutions to be adopted thereat, Certificates of incorporation, government and powers and duties of trustees, and reincorporation of existing corporations."

¹⁰ State of New York, in Senate, January 22, 1943, An Act, AAMG.

**The Constitution of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox
Bishops of the Americas adopted on the 8th of August 1961¹⁵**

PREAMBLE

"Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 132,1). For the last one hundred and fifty years the Orthodox Church in America has been blessed with marks of divine favour.

Her beginnings in this country were humble. Planted by a handful of Missionaries in Alaska and nourished by successive waves of immigration from Orthodox lands, she is now a great and flourishing member of world Orthodoxy. All of the faithful brought here the treasure of their national Orthodox traditions, so that the American Church is the inheritor and custodian of the glorious Paradosis of the Apostles, Fathers and the Oecumenical Councils. Fully integrated in American Society the Church is here to stay, to grow, and to bear witness to the true faith. At the moment when the United States assumes an always greater responsibility in the world community, the presence of Orthodoxy in America acquires a new significance and calls for better forms to express her common testimony. By the mercy of God our unity of faith has been preserved, but the time has come to actualize this unity in all those fields in which a common effort is required.

Therefore we, the hierarchs of the American Church, have decided to establish a Standing Episcopal Conference for the consideration and resolution of common problems, the coordination of effort in matters of common concern, and the strengthening of that unity which is the essence of Orthodoxy.

I. Name. Membership and Objective.

(a) Name. The name of this Conference shall be "The Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas," hereinafter called the Conference.

(b) Membership. The Conference shall consist of the presiding hierarchs of the Canonical Orthodox Churches in the Americas, whose names are subscribed to this Constitution, and their canonical successors in office.

(c) Objective. The purpose of the Conference is the consideration and resolution of common ecclesiastical problems, the co-ordination of effort in matters of common concern to Orthodoxy, and the strengthening of Orthodox unity.

II. Authority and Structure.

(a) Authority.

1. All authority in the Conference resides in the member hierarchs and is derived from them. All decisions of the Conference shall require two-thirds approval of the member hierarchs present at a regular or special meeting to become binding on the Conference.

2. No decision of the Conference shall interfere with the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of any of the Canonical Orthodox Churches, or any of the member Hierarchs.

3. Autocephalous Churches, represented in the Standing Conference, are recognizing each other as equal sister Orthodox Churches with equal canonical rights.

(b) Structure.

1. Presiding Hierarchy. The office of Presiding Hierarchy shall pass in turn, annually, to the presiding hierarchs of the member jurisdictions in the order of their precedents in the Church.

2. The presiding Hierarchy shall preside at all meetings.

3. The conference shall elect a Vice-Chairman, who in the absence of the Presiding Hierarchy, shall preside at meetings.

III. 1. A Study and Planning Commission of the theologians representing the member Hierarchs and appointed by them, shall be delegated to supervise the work of appointed Commissions and Committees, provide appropriate items for the agenda of the meetings relative to the interests of the Conference and its activities.

2. To interrelate the work of the various Commissions and Committees appointed and serve as a common clearing source of information, a General Secretary shall be appointed annually at a regular meeting to work in close co-ordination with an office and a budget to be established by the hierarchs.

3. The hierarchs shall elect from among themselves a Treasurer to serve for one year, who shall sign together with the General Secretary all checks or drafts on funds of the Conference. The hierarchs may elect additional officers, from time to time; the General Secretary shall present to the Conference a budget for the following year within which he may make disbursements for that year.

IV. 1. The continuing work of the Conference shall be assigned to Commissions and Committees of experts who shall work as directed by the Conference and submit biennial reports, in advance, to the meetings of the hierarchs.

2. Among the Commissions and Committees to be established or accredited by the hierarchs, priority shall be given to the following:

1. The Orthodox Christian Education Commission-

2. The Orthodox Catholic Committee on Scouting

3. The Orthodox Committee on College Work

4. The American Orthodox Committee on Relations with non-Orthodox bodies.

VI. Amendments and By-Laws.

By-Laws or amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by any member hierarchy at a regular meeting. Such by-laws or amendments shall be voted upon at the next regular meeting, and require a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present in order to be adopted.

Signed by:

IAKOVOS, Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America

ANTONY BASIIR, Metropolitan of the Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of New York and North America

LEONTY, Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America

DOSITHEUS, Bishop, Russian Orthodox Patriarchal Exarchate of North America

ANDREY, Metropolitan of the Bulgarian Orthodox Archdiocese of America

DIONISIJE, Bishop of the Serbian Eastern Orthodox Diocese for the United States and Canada

ANDREI, Bishop of the Canonical Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate in the United States, Canada, and South America

MARK, Bishop of the Albanian Orthodox Diocese of America

ORESTES, Bishop of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church

PALLADIOS, Bishop of the Holy Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Exile

BOHDAN, Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America

January 8, 1961

¹³ Minutes of V Meeting of SCOA.

T O M O S of ALEXIS, by the Mercy of God Patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia

For a number of years, the Russian Orthodox Church has observed with maternal love and concern the development of the Orthodox Church which she planted on the American continent. In the last few decades she has sorrowfully witnessed the unfortunate appearance there of a pluralism of ecclesiastical jurisdictions, a temporary phenomenon, and by no means a permanent norm of the canonical organization of the Orthodox Church in America, since it is contrary to the nature of Orthodox canonical ecclesiastical unity.

The Holy Russian Orthodox Church, striving for the good of the Church, has directed her efforts toward the normalization of relations among the various ecclesiastical jurisdictions in America, particularly by negotiating with the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America, concerning the possibility of granting autocephaly to this Church in the hope that this might serve the good of the Orthodox Church in America and the glory of God.

In her striving for the peace of Christ, which has universal significance for the life of man: desiring to build a peaceful and creative church life, and to suppress scandalous ecclesiastical divisions; hoping that this act would be beneficial to the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church of Christ and Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of such relations which would be founded on the firm ties of the one Orthodox Faith and the love that the Lord Jesus Christ willed; keeping in mind that this act would serve the welfare of universal, mutual cooperation; taking into consideration the petition of the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Metropolitane of North America, which expressed the opinion and desire of all her faithful children; acknowledging as good for Orthodoxy in America the independent and self-sustaining existence of said Metropolitane, which now represents a mature ecclesiastical organism possessing all that is necessary for successful further growth. Our Humility together with the Sacred Synod and all the venerable Hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, who have signified their agreement in writing, having examined the said petition, in sincere love grant autocephaly to the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America, that is, the right of a fully independent ordering of

church life in accordance with the divine and sacred Canons and the ecclesiastical practices and customs of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church inherited from the Fathers; for which purpose this Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos is directed to His Beatitude, IRENEY, Archbishop of New York, Primate of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America, Metropolitan of All-America and Canada, by which we announce:

1. The Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in North America is confirmed and proclaimed an Autocephalous Church and named, "The Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America",

2. By "autocephaly," which is confirmed in this decision, it is understood that the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America shall:

- a. be independent and self-governing with the right of electing her own Primate and all her bishops, without confirmation or the right of veto over such elections on the part of any other church organization or representative of the Eastern Orthodox or any other confession;
- b. firmly and inalterably preserve the divine dogmas, being guided in her life by the sacred Canons of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church of Christ and governed in accordance with her own Statute as accepted, augmented or amended from time to time by her own highest legislative and executive organ;
- c. maintain direct relations with all other Churches and confessions, Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike;
- d. enjoy all the authority, privileges and rights usually inherent in the term "autocephaly" in the canonical tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church, including the right of preparing and consecrating Holy Chrism.

3. The following are excluded from autocephaly on the territory of North America:

- a. St. Nicholas Cathedral and its possessions, located at 15 East 97th Street in New York City and the accompanying residence; and also the immovable possessions in Pine Bush, New York, together with buildings and edifices which might be constructed in the future on this land;
- b. Parishes and clergy in the U.S.A. which at present are in the Patriarchal Exarchate and which desire to remain in the canonical and jurisdictional care of the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia—these parishes, desiring to remain in the canonical jurisdiction of the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and excluded from the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America, are the following: [follows a list of parishes, and home chapels]
- c. All parishes and clergy in Canada, which presently constitute the Edmonton, Canada Diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate (they all desired to remain in the jurisdiction of the Most Holy Patriarch).
4. St. Nicholas Cathedral and its possessions and residence, and also the property in Pine Bush, N. Y., shall be governed by the Most Holy

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia through a person representing him in the rank of Presbyter.

5. Parishes and clergy in the U.S.A. which remain in the canonical jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate shall be governed by the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia through one of his vicar bishops, not having a title of the local American Church, especially appointed for this, and until such time as these parishes express their official desire to join the Autocephalous Church in America in the manner described below.

6. Parishes and clergy which at this time constitute the Edmonton, Canada Diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate and remain in the canonical jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, shall be governed by the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All-Russia through one of his vicar bishops not having a title of the local American Church, especially appointed for this, and until such time as these parishes express their official desire to join the Autocephalous Church in America in the manner described below.

7. The Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America shall have exclusive spiritual and canonical jurisdiction over all bishops, clerics and laymen of the Eastern Orthodox confession in continental North America, excluding Mexico and including the State of Hawaii, who are presently part of the Metropolitianate, or who shall later enter the Metropolitianate; and over all parishes which now belong or later shall be accepted into the Metropolitianate, excepting the entire clergy, possessions and parishes enumerated in Paragraph 3, a, b, c.

8. The Moscow Patriarchate shall not lay claim to either spiritual or canonical jurisdiction over bishops, clergy and laymen of the Eastern Orthodox confession, or over parishes mentioned in Division I, Paragraph 7, and by the present yields to the Metropolitianate all jurisdiction, to which she has laid claim on the above mentioned territory (Paragraph 7), excepting the entire clergy, possessions and parishes enumerated in Paragraph 3, points a, b, c.

9. The changing of jurisdictions by parishes which are in the canonical care of the Moscow Patriarchate after the proclamation of the Metropolitianate's autocephaly shall occur on the initiative of the parishes themselves and after bilateral agreements in each concrete case between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Autocephalous Church in America.

10. The Moscow Patriarchate shall not receive into its care in North America any clerics without written release or any parishes except parishes from uncanonical ecclesiastical organizations in Canada; and shall not canonically permit clergy and parishes remaining in its care to enter any of the Orthodox jurisdictions but the jurisdiction of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.

11. The Patriarchate assures the parishes remaining in its care of its readiness to defend their status as parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate, and also defend the enumerated parishes from attempts to change their present status without a free expression of their decision and without the written agreement of the Moscow Patriarchate.

12. The Moscow Patriarchate and the Orthodox Autocephalous Church

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in America shall maintain sincere fraternal relations, in which they should be guided by the bilateral agreements, signed by His Eminence, Metropolitan IRENEY, and by His Eminence, Metropolitan NIKOLAI, Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod, on March 31st, 1970.

13. The Exarchate of North and South America, together with the dioceses in the U.S.A. and Canada which comprised it, is abolished.

Confirming the Autocephaly of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America, we bless her to call herself, The Holy Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America; we acknowledge and proclaim her our Sister Church, and we invite all local Orthodox Churches and their Primates and their faithful children to acknowledge her as such and to include her in the dyptichs in accordance with the Canons of the Church, the traditions of the Fathers and ecclesiastical practice.

The newly-established local Orthodox Autocephalous Church in America should abide in brotherly relations with all the Orthodox Churches and their Primates as well as with their bishops, clergy and pious flock, who are in America and who for the time being preserve their *de facto* existing canonical and jurisdictional dependence on their national Churches and their Primates.

With profound, sincere joy, We announce this to the Fullness of the Church and We do not cease thanking the All-Gracious Almighty God, who directs all in the world by His right hand for the good and the salvation of mankind, - for the successful and final formation of Autocephaly, and we entrust the all-powerful blessing of God upon the younger Sister in the family of local Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.

May the Consubstantial and Life-creating and Undivided Trinity, - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, - acting in its own wondrous providence, send down on the Archpastors, Pastors and Faithful Children of the Holy Autocephalous Orthodox American Church its heavenly, unfailing help, and may it bless with success all her future endeavors for the good of the Holy Church.

Signed in the city of Moscow, April 10th, 1970.

ALEXEI, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

Members of the Holy Synod:

1. Metropolitan of Krutitsa and Kolomna, Pimen
2. Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod, NIKODIMI
3. Metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia, Exarch of the Ukraine, PHTLARET
4. Metropolitan of Orel and Bryansk, PALLADY
5. Metropolitan of Alma-Ata and Kazakhstan, IOSIF
6. Metropolitan of Yaroslavl and Rostov, IOANN
7. Archbishop of Irkutsk and Toblila, VENIAMIN
8. Archbishop of Ufa and Sterlitamak, IOV
9. Archbishop of New York and the Aleutians, Exarch of North and South America, IOVAFAN
10. Bishop of Kishinev and Moldavia, VARSOLOMEY
11. Bishop of Tula and Belov, IOVANNALY
12. Bishop of Chernigov and Nezhin, VYASNAK
13. Bishop of Sankt Petersburg and Viazma, GREGORY
14. Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan of Tula and Kursk, ALEXANDER

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**Conference (Oct. 25-27, 1983) summarization
as extracted from the Minutes of the
5th meeting of the Bilateral Commission (Feb 29, 1984)**

a) Task Force on Canonical and Pastoral Affairs

In welcoming this report the Bilateral Commission noted the need for clarification and elaboration of the proposal to establish a joint Ordination Review Board. The Commission recommended that joint work on pastoral guidelines be regarded as a high priority in our common work. To this end, a joint commission or task force will need to be blessed by the Metropolitans.

b) Task Force on Liturgics

The recommendation on the development of common versions of frequently used liturgical texts is a matter of great urgency. The first order of business must be the common versions of the Creed, Trisagion Prayers, Prayers before Communion, O Heavenly King, It is Truly Meet; the second order of business must be the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. This work urgently requires the participation of professional liturgical scholars, theologians, linguists, and musicians. A joint committee for the Translation of Liturgical Texts must be created for the accomplishment of the above tasks.

c) Task Force on External Affairs

In the context of general approval of this report it was noted that urgent attention must be given to the training of new personnel, especially laity, for ecumenical responsibilities.

d) Task Force on Stewardship and Lay Ministries

This report was received by the Bilateral Commission with particular enthusiasm. The implementation of the proposals contained in the report was urged.

e) Task Force on Missions

In the six-point list of "Suggested Areas of Immediate Cooperation Between OCA and AOCA" the Bilateral Commission identified two key proposals on which the other four proposals depend:

- 1) appointment of observers to each other's departments for the purpose of exchange of ideas, information, discussion of concerns of mutual interest, and where possible, data on missionary possibilities in acute areas;

- 2) join guidelines for the establishment of missions and for their development, growth, and outreach.

The Bilateral Commission consequently recommended action on these two proposals so that the other important needs enumerated at the October 1983 Conference may be dealt with in an orderly fashion.

f) Task Force on Christian Education

This report was received by the Bilateral Commission with enthusiasm, and the implementation of the proposals it contains as well as the timetable it projects was recommended.

g) Task Force on Legal Affairs

The proposals contained in this report were welcomed by the Bilateral Commission and their approval and implementation were recommended.

h) Task Force on History and Archives

The sharing of resources and expertise proposed in this report was welcomed and should be implemented.

i) Task Force on Communications

The list of ten recommendations in this area was welcomed by the Bilateral Commission and it was urged that the Metropolitans authorize the responsible officers and committees to implement them as soon as possible. It was noted that joint publication of materials such as a Public Relations Manual will necessitate the inclusion in the text of examples, names, institutions reflecting both the OCA and the AOCA. In this area of communications the OCA and AOCA chanceries will need to work closely to make possible the implementation of joint projects. It was noted that the OCA Budget for 1984 includes the sum of \$20,000 for a joint Office of Information in New York City.

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