

INTRODUCTION

A guiding principle, although not specifically stated in any document, which helped achieve agreement between the Patriarchate of Moscow and the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America was to forget the difficulties and misunderstandings of the past and rather to look to the promise of the future. This resulted in April 1970 in the establishment of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America as the nucleus and the eventual unifying force for all Orthodox faithful in America, so essential if the Orthodox Church is to survive and grow in a pluralistic and secularistic society.

This guiding principle, of course, is a luxury which the historian cannot afford to be guided by and there is a considerable amount of material in this Candidate of Theology thesis which does not make for pleasant reading.

It will be seen that this thesis is primarily concerned with the efforts of the Orthodox Hierarchy in North America to achieve a unity among themselves while attempting to maintain canonical ties with the Mother Church having in mind the ultimate goal of establishing a canonical Local Orthodox Church which would be recognized by the entire Ecumenical Orthodox Church. To put it another way, the primary emphasis of this thesis will be on the efforts towards an organizational unity of Orthodoxy in America, primarily on the hierarchical and jurisdictional levels.

Viewed from this perspective, while the process is by no means accomplished, nonetheless, the basic requirements have now been met despite a number of extremely complicated considerations. It would be well for all of those involved in this ongoing process to keep in mind the following excerpt from the well-known theologian Vladimir Lossky: "No differences of created nature—sex, race, social status, language, or culture—can affect the unity of the Church; no divisive reality can enter in the bosom of the *Catholica*. Therefore one should consider that the expression "national Church"—which is so often used in our day—is erroneous and even heretical, according to the definitions condemning phyletism that were pronounced by the Council of Constantinople in 1872. There is no Church of the Jews or of the Greeks, of the Barbarians or the Scythians, just as there is no Church of slaves or of free men, of male or of

female. There is only the unique and total Christ, the celestial Head of the new creation which is being realized here; the Head to which the members of the one Body are intimately linked. At this point any particular consciousness connecting us with any ethnic or political, social or cultural subgroup must disappear in order to give way to a consciousness "according to the Whole" (katholon), a consciousness greater than the consciousness which links us with the aggregate of humanity. In fact, our unity in Christ is not only the primordial unity of the human race, having only one origin, but the final realization of this unity of human nature which is recapitulated by the last Adam (Eschatos Adam). This eschatological reality is not some kind of ideal "beyond," but the very condition of the existence of the Church, without which it would be a sacramentalizing organism whose sacraments would have only a figurative sense, instead of being a real participation in the incorruptible life of the Body of Christ."¹

It is the profound hope of this writer that any and all versions of phyletism or national chauvinism will be absolutely rejected in the continuing process of Orthodox unification in America and that in the not too distant future it will be possible to record with joy and satisfaction the complete unification of all Orthodox within the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America through the grace and ineffable mercy of Almighty God.

A note concerning abbreviations: in the interests of saving space, certain ecclesiastical ranks have often been abbreviated: Metr. for Metropolitan, Abp for Archbishop, Bp for Bishop, Archim. for Archimandrite, Archpr. for Archpriest. Also abbreviations have frequently been used in referring to books and periodicals; hopefully, they are self-explanatory.

¹ "Catholic Consciousness The Anthropological Implications of the Dogma of the Church" by Vladimir Lossky; English translation (from the French original) in *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, Volume 14, No. 4, 1970, pp. 187-195. Translated by Thomas E. Bird.