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## INSTITUTE OF AUTONOMOUS CHURCHES IN THE STRUCTURE OF MODERN UNIVERSAL ORTHODOXY

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*The article analyzes the process of the system formation of the structure of Ecumenical Orthodoxy, which has gone through a difficult path of its formation. It is shown that since the time of the Byzantine Empire, state power has imposed its own principle of administrative division and management methods, a clear hierarchical structure of church governance has been formed, which has led to the formation of ancient patriarchies. However, the founding of the first apostolic communities took place on the basis of an autocephalous principle only. It was established that the long dominance of the ancient patriarchates in the Ecumenical Church ended with the proclamation of national churches. The proclaimed national Local Churches strove for equality and absolute independence, both religious and political. The vector of the modern transformation of autocephalous issues indicates the absence of a generally accepted mechanism for the church to acquire an autonomous status with its subsequent reorganization to complete independence.*

*It has been proven that the Orthodox Church has become an important factor for the consolidation of the Ukrainian diaspora, the preservation of their cultural and national identity. For the Ukrainian Orthodox, one of the important issues was the need to form a church structure. The expansion of the diaspora led to the emergence of a new ecclesiological model in the church structure, which was justified by the needs of the time and special historical conditions. It provides for the activities of several bishops of various local churches, contradicts a number of canons and the very tradition of the Orthodox Church.*

*The article establishes that the institutional disputes of the Local Churches related to the boundaries of influence and the "canonical territory", and, consequently, the acquisition of an autonomous status can be resolved in a conciliar way and with the participation of all Orthodox hierarchs. The existing approaches to solving the autocephalous problem of autonomy and "parallel jurisdictions" led to the incorporation of non-canonical and self-proclaimed entities into recognized churches.*

*It is concluded that the administrative structure of the church and the possibilities of its transformation depend on the consensus between the Local Churches. This stimulates further research on topics related to the church structure and the possibilities of obtaining the status of*

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*autonomy and autocephaly. Future scientific research on the church structure and canonical creativity of the holy fathers will complement the research carried out.*

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**Key words:** Church, Autocephaly, Metropolitan, Hierarchy, Orthodoxy, Autonomy, Synod.

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## ІНСТИТУТ АВТОНОМНИХ ЦЕРКОВ У СТРУКТУРІ СУЧАСНОГО ВСЕЛЕНСЬКОГО ПРАВОСЛАВ'Я

**А. Р. Кобетяк**

У статті проаналізовано процес системотворення структури Вселенського православ'я, який пройшов складний шлях свого становлення. Доведено, що з часів Візантійської імперії державна влада нав'язувала власний принцип адміністративного поділу та методи управління, формується чітка ієрархічна структура управління церквою, яка призвела до формування древніх патріархатів. Проте заснування перших апостольських спільнот відбувалося винятково на основі автокефального принципу. Встановлено, що тривале домінування древніх патріархатів у Вселенській церкві скінчилось з проголошенням національних церков. Проголошені національні Помісні церкви прагнули рівності і абсолютної незалежності, як релігійної, так й політичної. Вектор сучасної трансформації автокефальної проблематики, засвідчує відсутність загальноприйнятого механізму набуття церквою автономного статусу з його подальшою реорганізацією до повної незалежності.

Досліджено, що православна церква стала важливим фактором для консалідації української діаспори, збереження їх культурної й національної ідентичності. Для православних українців одним з важливих питань була необхідність формування церковної структури. Розширення діаспори зумовило виникнення нової еkleзіологічної моделі в церковному устрої, яка була обґрунтована потребами часу та особливими історичними умовами. Вона передбачає діяльність декількох єпископів різних помісних церков, що суперечить низці канонів та самій традиції православної церкви.

У статті встановлено, що інституційні суперечки Помісних церков, пов'язані із межами впливу та "канонічною територією", а отже і набуттям автономного статусу, можуть бути вирішені соборним шляхом та за участі всіх православних ієрархів. Наявні підходи до вирішення автокефальної проблеми автономії та "паралельних юрисдикцій" призвели до інкорпорації неканонічних та самопроголошених утворень до визнаних церков. Зроблено висновок, що адміністративне облаштування церкви та можливості його трансформації залежать від консенсусу між Помісними церквами. Це стимулює подальші дослідження тематики пов'язаної із церковним устроєм та можливостями набуття статусу автономії та автокефалії. Майбутні наукові розвідки щодо церковного устрою та канонічної творчості святих отців доповнять виконане дослідження.

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**Ключові слова:** церква, автокефалія, митрополит, ієрархія, православ'я, автономія, синод.

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**Introduction of the issue.** The process of formation of the system of the Ecumenical Orthodox Church is incomplete. First of all, this is due to constant real changes in politics, as well as large-scale geopolitical transformations. From the birth of Christ, empires arose and fell, which influenced church transformations. After

all, the change of state borders leads to the narrowing or expansion of the "canonical territory" and the restructuring of the spheres of church influence. Due to the political circumstances of past centuries, and most importantly - due to the loss of statehood, these and some other churches have lost or have never gained

at all the autocephalous status. Thus, we state the impossibility of completing the formation of the church structure.

The Church is a living, dynamic organism, which, first of all, consists of people united in certain peoples and nationalities. Therefore, frequent changes in church boundaries are a common occurrence. The disintegration of the great imperial states has always raised the question of the formation of new ecclesiastical institutions within the newly formed countries. Significant geopolitical transformations of the twentieth century led to the emergence of a number of autocephalous and autonomous churches, which passed their own specific path to universal recognition. There are also those, for example, the churches of Macedonia and Montenegro, which still function without pan-Orthodox recognition, and are defined in the status of "schismatics". A similar situation was observed in Ukraine. When, from 1990 (restoration of the UAOC) to 2019, millions of Ukrainian believers were without communication with the Ecumenical Church.

On the other hand, in several modern countries (for example, in the USA and Canada) there is a situation when there are two or even more mutually recognized Orthodox churches. First of all, this concerns the churches of the diaspora, when immigrants from different countries want to remain faithful to their historical church in their homeland, however they are living in exile for already not the first generation. The Great Council of Crete in 2016 did not regulate the existing system in any way, despite the fact that such a situation directly violates a number of canons and resolutions of the Ecumenical Councils. Such a canonical collapse of the structure of the Ecumenical Church pushes modern researchers to deep scientific investigations of the canonical and

historical-traditional way of life and structure of the Universal Orthodoxy.

The canons of the Ecumenical Councils do not contain direct instructions on the mechanism of formation of a new autocephalous church. According to the internal structure of Orthodoxy, it is a conservative and traditionalist religion, that is, church tradition and precedents are considered the norm of the law. During the period of ecclesiastical prosperity, which coincided with the years of existence of the Byzantine Empire, the problem of autocephaly and autonomy of the new churches did not stand at all. The church was one of the institutions of the state, albeit a very important one, but subordinated to the state mechanism of government. Therefore, there is no mention of this in the canons and rules of the church.

The impetus for active scientific, ecclesiastical and secular interest in the problem of the church administrative system was the signing of the Tomos for the Ukrainian Church. The absence of a unified mechanism and the presence of several historical precedents contributed to the sole decision of Phanar. A year later, the Alexandrian, Hellenic and Cypriot churches supported the recognition of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine as legally proclaimed. A prayer commemoration of the Primate of the OCU began. On the other hand, the ROC and other Slavic churches at the Universal level block the recognition of the OCU as much as possible. The Russian Church has completely cut off prayer with churches that have already recognized the Ukrainian Church and some hierarchs who have supported the decision.

The problem of the church system is inextricably linked with the church-political confrontation and the struggle for supremacy in the Orthodox world between Phanar and Moscow. As a result, the ecclesiological and

administrative problems of modern Orthodoxy have receded into the background. This significantly complicated the problems and general condition of the modern church, as the dialogue between the churches has almost interrupted.

The issue of autonomous churches in itself has never been highly acute. However, it has always been relevant in terms of gaining autocephalous status. Autonomy is essentially a transitional stage to full independence. Therefore, most world and domestic researchers consider the institution of autonomous churches precisely through the prism of the desire of a number of Local Churches, including at the present stage, for church independence. Granting autocephalous status to the Ukrainian Church caused another wave of discussion of the problems of the structure of the Ecumenical Church. Church issues of autocephaly, autonomy and the diaspora are closely intertwined and form a global hub of ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Thus, the urgency of the topic is caused by the current crisis of Orthodoxy. Local churches cannot agree on the status of individual national churches because it affects the interests of the leaders of the Orthodox world. Obviously, this is due to geopolitical and financial factors. On the one hand, the ecclesiological conditionality of the autocephalous system is obvious. The apostles and their closest disciples did not foresee any other status of the church administration. Modern realities of life show that the church leaders of the most influential churches openly inhibit the autocephaly of the new Local Churches. This also applies to autonomous status. A number of national churches are outside "canonical communion", but no one is trying to change their status.

The problem of autocephaly has been studied at various times by great

canonists, theologians and scholars. It is worth mentioning the names of such world known scholars as M. Afanasyev, V. Bolotov, I. Vlasovsky, O. Lototsky, N. Milash, K. Skurat and many others who were actively involved in the church-administrative system, its divine origin and modern status.

Among modern scholars and hierarchs, including domestic ones, who continue to study the issues of church administration, including in connection with the Ukrainian "church issue", it is appropriate to point to the following authors: K. Vetoshnikov, D. Gorevoy, V. Yelensky, K. Govorun, Metropolitan Panteleimon (Rodopoulos), O. Sagan, L. Filipovich and others who support the position of the Constantinople chair. Without doubt, the statements and normative documents adopted by the long-time head of the Ecumenical Throne, Patriarch Bartholomew, are valuable today. He actively defends and explains his actions regarding the sole signing of the Tomos for Ukraine. He points to the need to unite Orthodox Christians in Ukraine as one of the key problems. The Ukrainian church is ancient, so it has all the historical urges for autocephalous status. In particular, in one of his interviews the Phanar leader said: "when our brother is considered a schismatic or a heretic, and even more so when a whole nation, millions of people who are outside the canonical Church under the pretext of schism, then we are called immediately, without delay, to the spiritual and apostolic vigilance, because if one member suffers, then all the members endure along with him" [1].

Professor of the Kyiv Theological Academy V. Burega, Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeev), the late Irenaeus, the Serbian Patriarch, Professor S. Bortnik of the KDA and others hold a radically opposite view, denying the possibility of changing the church administration, including at the level of autonomous

churches, unilaterally. The authors emphasize the need to coordinate such complex issues on a conciliar principle at the Ecumenical level. That is, such issues should be resolved by the Council, or at least Synaxis - a meeting of the Primates. Doctor of Church History Konstantin Skurat also criticizes the claims of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for a special role in the management of other Local Churches. In particular, the Russian church historian believed that the "primacy of honor" does not give the Patriarch of Constantinople the prerogative of power and authority as a universal arbiter [2: 48].

Thus, the review of the authors material on the research topic is wide enough, however - controversial. Representatives of different Local Churches rely on different traditions and precedents, and interpret rules and canons in various ways. Moreover, confessional-oriented works lack an academic approach that is designed to provide the objectivity that world hierarchs lack. Therefore, it is necessary to intensify scientific research on the issue of obtaining an autonomous status by the Local Church. For example, the Church of Macedonia has repeatedly acquired autocephalous status within the Tarnovo Patriarchate and the Ohrid Archdiocese, but has long lost its independence due to the loss of political independence. Today it is equated with "schismatics", although it legitimately claims an autonomous status at least.

**The aim of the article** is to carry out a philosophical and religious analysis of the problem of developing the necessary algorithm for the proclamation and change of the church-administrative status of the institution of autonomous churches as a transitional link to full church independence.

**Results and discussion.** According to the teachings of the church, today there are three types of administrative structure. The first type, autocephaly is

the complete independence of the Local Church. Autocephalous churches are arranged in the order of a diptych (a list). However, there is no single diptych, there are two versions: Constantinople one and Moscow one. The second type, autonomy is a partial administrative dependence on the mother autocephalous church. And the last type - dioceses and exarchates which are fully administratively dependent ones. This division is clearly determined by the canonical structure of the Ecumenical Church. No other status is provided. Therefore, Ukrainian church "independence and autonomy" (UOC-MP) is nothing but a nominal one. De jure it is a set of dioceses that has no legal status (meaning autonomy or autocephaly). Accordingly, the set of dioceses cannot be called a church in the administrative sense. The UOC-MP is a clear example of such a vague and special status. At the beginning of 2009, the Local Council of the ROC adopted the current Statute, in which the UOC stands out from among the self-governing churches and is endowed with the rights of broad autonomy [3].

Church concepts such as "autocephaly", "self-governing church", "autonomy", "patriarchy" or "metropolis" are not endowed with special ecclesiological meaning. Therefore, for example, the Georgian Orthodox Church is not an ecclesiological, but an administrative concept. [4: 47]. It would even be more accurate to say the Orthodox Church in Georgia. After all, the Universal Orthodoxy is a single community and is only conditionally divided into Local Churches.

From the Greek αὐτόνομος (autonomous) means governed by its own laws, independent. It is a Local Church, endowed with significant (broad) management powers, but not independent [5: 14]. As a church administrative institution, autonomy has been known since ancient times. The main difference between autocephaly

(complete independence) and autonomy lies in the independence of the choice of its first hierarch. The autocephalous church selects and nominates a candidate for the primate's throne completely independently due to the will of the episcopate (a possible option for priests and even lay people). In autonomous churches, the head of the mother church ordains and elects (a possible option together with the Council or Synod) its first hierarch. That is, the patriarchal church directly influences the choice of the head of the autonomous entity. The patriarchal church (from the ancient Greek κύριος - "lord", and ἀρχι- - "chief", "senior") is a term used to refer to the mother church in matters of canonical and ecclesiological nature.

Autonomy is in fact a dependent part of the common large autocephalous church. The autonomous church does not carry out its own relations with the Local Churches directly, but through the Patriarchal Church. In internal affairs, it is independent, but in general it is a self-governing part of one whole. Accordingly, the church policy and regulations of the autocephalous church are generally binding for its structural unit - the autonomous church [6: 213].

The modern understanding of the autonomous status, officially enshrined in the document "Autonomy and the ways of its proclamation" adopted at the Cretan Council in 2016 is expressed in the following: "The institution of autonomy expresses in a canonical way the status of the relative or partial independence of a particular ecclesiastical region from the canonical jurisdiction of the Autocephalous Church, to which it canonically belongs." [7: 57]. It is important that there is no single criterion for how the autocephalous and autonomous churches relate. The document refers to the different degrees of dependency. The issue of declaring an autonomous status is decided exclusively within the

autocephalous church. In fact, the mother "gives birth" to a daughter. The daughter is part of the mother. Assembly of dioceses seeking partial independence. The Autonomous Church is not an independent unit in the structure of the Universal Orthodoxy, so it is not included in the diptychs, and the name of the Primate is not mentioned in other Local Churches.

Traditionally, the autocephalous church has an apostolic heritage. Autonomy, usually, does not have such a chain of apostolic grace. Therefore, the bishops of the autonomous church, including the first hierarch, are dependent on the autocephalous head. Hence, there are other restrictions on the rights of autonomous churches. For example, the Statute of an autonomy must be approved by the Synod / Council of the mother church; during the divine services, the name of the autocephalous chief hierarch is first mentioned; chrism for autonomous churches is also provided from the mother church; for church shortcomings, the leadership of the autonomous church is accountable to the court of the autocephalous church; traditionally autonomous churches are few in number as they are part of the common church [8: 161].

It is difficult to unequivocally determine the reasons for the emergence of the institution of autonomy. In different eras, this was influenced by different factors. Most often, this was due to the territorial remoteness from the mother church, or the autonomous church was located on the another country's territory. In the history of the formation of the modern structure of the Ecumenical Church, it has repeatedly happened that a change in state borders led to the acquisition of an autonomous status. The state gained independence, and naturally the question arises about the independence of the church, at least with the rights of autonomy. One

example is worth mentioning. In 1815, a Serbian principality was formed, which depended on the Port. In 1830 the state of Serbia became autonomous. A year later, the Serbian Orthodox Church obtained autonomy, and received the title of Metropolitanate. The logical conclusion of the process of church independence was the acquisition of autocephalous status in 1879. It is important that this event was preceded by the acquisition of state independence a year earlier. Therefore, the Patriarch of Constantinople Joachim III, through international pressure, was forced to issue a Tomos of autocephaly to the Serbian Orthodox Church [9: 112].

As for the factor of geographical remoteness, it is worth giving examples of the Kyiv Metropolis, which until 1686 was part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. It enjoyed extensive rights of autonomy (in fact, autocephaly) and had its own distinctive forms. In 1786, the Kyiv Metropolis was reassigned to the Moscow Patriarch, however, on condition that all the rights of autonomy that were granted to it within the Ecumenical Patriarchate were preserved. History has shown a complete non-observance of these conditions. The privileges of the Metropolitan of Kyiv were leveled. De facto, the ancient Kyiv chair turned into an ordinary diocese.

Among the characteristic features inherent exclusively in autocephalous and some autonomous churches, one should name the myrrh cooking in Kyiv and the independent procedure for setting up a metropolitan by the choice of local bishops. The Ecumenical Patriarch only approved the decisions of the Council and gave a blessed letter to the newly elected First Hierarch of Kyiv [4: 107]. For contrast, let us note that in those same years in Moscow the metropolitan was arbitrarily elected and the myrrh cooking began. The Kyiv Metropolitanate received this right in a

legal way - with the blessing of the mother church.

Another example is the Moscow Metropolitanate, which was politically, ethnically and territorially separated from the Mother Church, and had only nominal dependence on Constantinople. This radically distinguished its status and administrative structure in comparison with other metropolises of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. De facto, until 1448 the Moscow Metropolitanate was an autonomous one.

The answer to the question of the reasons for the emergence of autonomous churches must be sought in the very structure of the church and in the ecclesiological character of the Orthodox Church in general. National identity is determined as one of its brightest exponents, especially after the 19th century. The church consists and is formed of people who in one way or another are tied to a certain territory and are distinguished by specific national characteristics. Therefore, it is only natural that every nation strives for church recognition and independent status. Church independence unambiguously expresses modern nationalism, even despite the ban on the heresy of ethnophyletism at the Council of Constantinople in 1872. In multi-confessional empires, the confrontation between the national and the imperial was always felt. In the process of forming separate national identities, within the borders of a common empire, there was a natural question about national independence. However, this was radically opposed to the general imperial notion of state-building nationalism.

On the other hand, in the canons and rules of church life there is no direct dependence on the national factor. For example, the collapse of the USSR did not automatically lead to the formation of a number of new national independent churches [10: 8]. Therefore, changes in the Orthodox Church and its

administration do not always directly depend on geopolitical circumstances. In some cases, the collapse of empires (Yugoslavia and the USSR) does not lead to the transformation of church-administrative status, in others (the collapse of the Ottoman Empire) - a number of Balkan independent church institutions were formed. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a single accepted model of acquiring church status, which would suit the modern Orthodox community. Moreover, this normative provision should satisfy the position of both diptychial and hitherto unrecognized Local Churches. Therefore, the philosophical understanding of the institution of autonomous churches is currently relevant and poorly studied.

This approach is typical even for countries in which, historically, Orthodoxy has not been the dominant or even characteristic religion. However, the church has always been a bulwark of state independence. Therefore, modern independent states seek appropriate status for their own churches. The autonomous Orthodox churches of Japan and China can serve as a striking example. According to statistical indicators, these are rather insignificant church entities that do not have apostolic origin and ancient history. Православ'я явно не було домінуючим на цих землях у жоден історичний період. However, both Japan and China unambiguously had been seeking ecclesiastical separation from the Russian Church. Thanks to international cooperation, these churches have acquired an autonomous status, and are quite independent. In general, all autonomous churches have different levels of independence, which is mainly determined by agreements between the daughter and mother churches [11: 755].

It is appropriate to draw a conclusion, from this material, about the transitional status of autonomous churches. This is some kind of a transitional link, which

has two main scenarios ahead. Some churches develop (including in parallel with the development of statehood) and gain full church independence - autocephaly. Others - lose their autonomous status and are transformed back into ordinary dioceses or metropolitan districts or exarchates [4: 52].

The modern administrative-territorial division of the church, although it has an ancient origin, only fixes certain spheres of the distribution of power and influence. Therefore, the Council of Crete did not take place in full. Therefore, individual Local Churches find themselves in a state of active confrontation. After all, the main issues that concern the current hierarchy are not how to help people, how to make faith and rites simpler and more accessible. The questions are posed in the key of who will grant the autocephaly, who exactly should make more or less signatures on the document, to whom the autonomous church will be accountable, how to preserve its own influence on the church situation in other countries, like the loss of the parish in the diaspora, and the like. This attitude of the hierarchs to the settlement of church problems gave rise to a number of significant violations of ancient canonical norms. After all, canonists and church historians know that in Orthodoxy there are no historical examples of a "canonical" legitimate path of separation from the Mother Church to achieve church independence. [12: 9].

For example, in Estonia, which historically is not an Orthodox country at all, today there are two autonomous churches. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church was granted the rights of autonomy, but world Orthodoxy recognizes it as a set of dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine, because its autonomous status has no clear regulation. The Ecumenical Patriarch provides the other part of the



Ukrainian believers with the Tomos, which will be blocked by some of the Local Churches for a long time now. Macedonia and Montenegro strive for church independence, which has historically been inherent in them, so they are called schismatics and they are tried to be kept in the bosom of the Serbian OC. The American OC received the Tomos from the ROC, but the Greek churches refused to recognize it because only the Ecumenical Throne provided such documents. However, the main reason is the unwillingness to lose many wealthy diaspora parishes in the United States and Canada. So, the status of autocephaly and autonomy today is no longer exclusively ecclesiastical, but depends on many political and financial aspects.

An important example is the Macedonian Orthodox Church, which today is most actively fighting for the right to church independence, and is quite likely to receive at least an autonomous status (as a transitional option) under the "Ukrainian scenario". Today this church is "in schism", because it is self-proclaimed. In 1966, the Macedonian Orthodox Church officially applied to the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church with a request to grant autocephalous status. The governing body of the Serbian Church rejected such a possibility. In 1967, the Macedonians proclaimed the autocephaly of the Macedonian Orthodox Church at the Church-People's Cathedral. The Primate received the historic title of *Archbishop of Ohrid and Macedonia*. In the same year, the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church declared the Macedonians schismatics and cut off prayer communication with the clergy. On the other hand, the Macedonian Orthodox Church could not renounce its historical autocephalous status, which would mean renouncing the Macedonian identity and originality, the historical

ideals of national and spiritual freedom [13: 78].

Famous modern theologian Deacon Andriy Kurayev, whose opinion is worth agreeing with, notes that the coexistence of two jurisdictions in one territory causes only a canonical collapse. This should not create any tension for ordinary citizens. It all depends on the conditions for the coexistence of these confessions. Ecclesiastical and material-political interests should not be mixed. The theologian rightly emphasizes that enmity is generally alien to the church. Two church organizations can create a healthy "market" competition, which will contribute to the quality development of church institutions. According to him, the division between churches is similar to the division between rural parishes, which impose their uniqueness and supremacy. There is a concept of "canonical territory" of the parish, which imposes a monopoly on the completion of the sacraments and prayers. This is done to reduce confusion between priests. Rural parishes are divided according to the territorial basis of public service. This is quite a clear analogue of the division into Local Churches.

But the city offers a different approach. It is the approach of having several temples, in our case jurisdictions. City temples compete freely for parishioners, and therefore for certain funds. This is manifested in the beauty of choral singing, confession, sermon, church decorations, the presence of heating and more. The presence of several independent churches in one country in no way hinders their soul's saving mission [14]. Their competition should be similar to the city temples.

**Conclusions.** As a result, we can say that today a number of national churches seek recognition, appealing to ancient history and the loss of independent status. Their mother churches now unequivocally deny the

possibility of such a development, which is quite obvious, as it will lead to a narrowing of their "canonical territory" and the loss of part of the flock. Therefore, it seems promising to solve the problem by the "Ukrainian model" through the Ecumenical Patriarch, who clearly seeks to go down in history and thereby weaken the position of the ROC. This is possible from a canonical point of view. After all, the right to appeal to the Ecumenical Patriarch is his legal prerogative, which is clearly enshrined in Rule 9 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council.

The above events of recent years show that the modern structure of the Ecumenical Church has a number of shortcomings. Each of the ecclesiastical regions founded by the apostles was inherently independent. Over time, following the model of the state-administrative system, the church has developed its own division of government. Today, the Ecumenical Church, being united in its essence, is divided into independent autocephalous and autonomous churches, each of which is self-governing and has clear boundaries of jurisdiction. Since there is currently no unity among the local Orthodox churches on the order of founding new autocephalous and autonomous churches, the diptychs adopted in different churches differ from each other. This situation stimulates further research on issues related to the church system and the possibility of gaining the status of autonomy and autocephaly.

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