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INSTITUTE OF AUTONOMOUS CHURCHES WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF MODERN UNIVERSAL ORTHODOXY

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The article analyzes the process of systematization of the structure of the Universal Orthodoxy at the present stage. It is established that church life is a dynamic process. The church is constantly moving forward and it must respond to societal demands and problems. It is determined that the institution of autonomy has passed a difficult path of formation, but today there is no generally accepted mechanism for the church to acquire autonomous status with its subsequent reorganization to full independence. It has been proven that the modern system of the Universal Church has a number of shortcomings. The study notes that despite the document adopted in Crete, the autonomous church is not in fact a clearly regulated church institution. It has been established that traditionally the status of autonomy meant a transitional link. Some autonomous churches had been becoming mature and gained autocephaly, while others had been losing their independence. In the overwhelming majority of cases, this was associated with the loss or acquisition of state independence.

The study has found that a clear violation of canonical rules is the presence of two jurisdictions (two canonical bishops) at the same territory. It has been proven that such a situation exists in a number of countries, such as the USA and Canada, where a number of churches in the diaspora of different jurisdictions operate in parallel. It is determined that today there are 6 autonomous churches in the diptych. It is noted that in Estonia, which historically is not a country with a dominant Orthodox population, two autonomous churches of different jurisdictions operate simultaneously, which is contrary to the nature of the church. The article states that a similar situation has already formed in Ukraine. Two significant church organizations that are recognized as Local Churches operate at the same time. It has been proven that as a result of pressure and reluctance of mothers' churches to release Local Churches from the field of influence and their own canonical territory, a similar situation can potentially develop in Montenegro, Macedonia and Belarus. As in Ukraine, some parishes will move to the newly created autonomous or autocephalous church, and some will remain faithful to the chiarchal organization.

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The article states that the institutional disputes of the Local Churches, related to the limits of influence and the "canonical territory" and, consequently, the acquisition of autonomous status, can be resolved only by conciliar and with the participation of all Orthodox hierarchs. Existing approaches to solving the "temporary" problem of autonomy and "parallel jurisdictions" have led to the incorporation of existing non-canonical and self-proclaimed entities into recognized churches.It is concluded that the modern hierarchy is afraid of fair competition between churches of different jurisdictions. Therefore, the administrative arrangement of the church and the possibilities of its transformations depend on the consensus between the Local Churches. This stimulates further research on issues related to the church system and the possibility of gaining the status of autonomy and autocephaly. Future scientific research on the church system and the canonical work of the holy fathers will complement the research carried out.

Keywords: *church, autocephaly, metropolitan, hierarchy, orthodoxy, autonomy, synod.*

ІНСТИТУТ АВТОНОМНИХ ЦЕРКОВ У СТРУКТУРІ СУЧАСНОГО ВСЕЛЕНСЬКОГО ПРАВОСЛАВ'Я

А. Р. Кобетяк

У статті проаналізовано процес системотворення структури Вселенського православ'я на сучасному етапі. Встановлено, що церковне життя – процес динамічний. Церква постійно рухається вперед та повинна реагувати на суспільні запити і проблеми. Визначено, що інститут автономії пройшов складний шлях становлення, проте сьогодні відсутній загальноприйнятий механізм набуття церквою автономного статусу з його подальшою реорганізацією до повної незалежності. Зазначено, що сучасний устрій Вселенської церкви має низку недоліків. Незважаючи на прийнятий документ на Криті, автономна церква не є чітко регламентованим церковним інститутом. Встановлено, що традиційно статус автономії означав перехідну ланку. Одні автономні церкви ставали зрілими та отримували автокефалію, інші – втрачали незалежність. У переважній більшості випадків це було пов'язано із втратою або набуттям державної незалежності. Встановлено, що очевидним порушенням канонічних правил є наявність двох юрисдикцій (двох канонічних єпископів) на одній території. Така ситуація наявна у деяких країнах, наприклад США та Канаді, де паралельно функціонує низка церков у діаспорі різних юрисдикцій. Визначено, що на сьогодні у диптиху нараховується 6 автономних церков. Зазначено, що в Естонії, яка історично не є країною з домінуючим православним насенням, одночасно діють дві автономних церкви різних юрисдикцій, що суперечить природі церкви. Зазначено, що аналогічна ситуація вже сформувалась в Україні. Одночасно діють дві впливові церковні організації, що мають визнання Помісними церквами.

Наголошено, що внаслідок тиску та небажання материнських церков випускати Помісні церкви з поля впливу та власної канонічної території, подібна ситуація потенційно може скластись і в Чорногорії, Македонії та Білорусії. Як і в Україні, частина парафій перейде до новоствореної автономної або автокефальної церкви, а частина залишиться вірними кіріархальної організації. Встановлено, що інституційні суперечки Помісних церков, пов'язані із межами впливу та "канонічною територією", а отже, і набуттям автономного статусу, можуть бути вирішені виключно соборним шляхом та за участі всіх православних ієрархів. Наявні підходи до вирішення «тимчасової» проблеми автономії та «паралельних юрисдикцій» призвели до інкорпорації наявних неканонічних та самопроголошених утворень до визнаних церков.

Зроблено висновок про те, що сучасна ієрархія боїться чесної конкуренції між церквами різних юрисдикцій. Тому адміністративне облаштування церкви та можливості його трансформацій 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.

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

Introduction of the issue. The process of formation of a coherent system of the Ecumenical Orthodox Church has been going on for about 2000 years. From the height of the XXI century we can state its incompleteness. According to doctrine and church tradition, church formation cannot be accomplished, because this phenomenon has a dynamic nature. First of all, this is due to constant real changes in politics, as well as large-scale geopolitical transformations. Whole empires arose and collapsed from the birth of Christ, which clearly influenced church transformations. After all, the change of state borders leads to the narrowing / expansion of the "canonical territory" and the restructuring of the spheres of church influence. Accordingly, separate independent churches were founded and disappeared, such as the Ohrid Archbishopric and the Tarnovo Patriarchate. 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. Twentieth century confirmed this statement. Significant geopolitical transformations of the last hundred years have led to the emergence of a number of autocephalous and autonomous churches, which have 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 topic of autocephaly and the church system in general became much more active and aggravated after the Great Council (Crete, 2016). For various reasons (primarily political ones), a number of churches, including Antioch, Russian, Bulgarian and Georgian, did not participate. Consequently, the Council did not acquire the status of the All-Orthodox, which prevented the solution of a number of important ecclesiastical issues. Among them is the issue of church autocephaly. The autonomous status of the church is recognized as a certain transitional stage. The key positions of the two most powerful churches - the Ecumenical and Moscow - failed to agree. This led to a general crisis of the Orthodox Church, which became apparent by now. Over the last few years, it has deepened considerably.

Another 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 aim of the article 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.

Results and discussion. 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. First of all, the issue of church-administrative subordination affects the financial side. After all, the number of adherents directly affects the income of the hierarchy.

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. The church of the first centuries was unselfish and one that was designed to serve people. 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, Valsamon, 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, Fr. Kirill 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"[3].

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 [SKURAT: 48]. A similar point of view is shared by the first hierarch of the Orthodox Church of Antioch in North America, Metropolitan Philip (Saliba). The bishop believes that after the fall of Constantinople and the whole empire, Phanar can have no claim to leadership in the church sphere. Metropolitan Philip claims that until the Ecumenical Throne appeals to the historical primacy, which is long gone and is irrelevant in modern geopolitical and religious conditions, the issue of church-administrative system and autonomous churches will not be fully resolved [17].

After all, the church-administrative structure of the Ecumenical Church was not finally fixed during the Ecumenical Councils. A number of canons dedicated to this topic only state the existence of five ancient chairs, which are granted patriarchal status. The autonomy of churches was allowed within the existence of autocephalous churches. New churches could theoretically appear outside the Byzantine-Roman Empire. They could have the prospect of

acquiring autocephalous status, but at the time of its establishment it should have been an autonomous entity. However, no one regulated how to actually acquire it in the absence of a real need.

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. Some churches have a thousand-year history of existence, and have almost apostolic origin. 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.

Taking this into account, as well as the long-term struggle of several modern national churches for a change in status at least within the autonomy, it is necessary to develop a modern model of the system formation of the Ecumenical Church. It should be based on a clear mechanism for the proclamation and universal recognition of a new Local or Autonomous Church. Therefore, the purpose of the study 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.

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 [14].

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. [5 : 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 [16: 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 chiarchal church directly influences the choice of the head of the autonomous entity. The chiarchal church (from the antient 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 cary out its own relations with the Local Churches directly, but through the Cyriarchal 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 [11: 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" [6 : 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 [15 : 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 [4, p. 290]. 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 [12 : 112].

History also knows the opposite examples, when the loss of statehood led to the leveling of church independence. For example, let us note that the Georgian, Serbian and Bulgarian churches have repeatedly lost their independent status. Another example is Bosnia and Herzegovina, which in 1880 received church autonomy, freeing itself from Turkish rule. However, after Yugoslavia conquered Bosnia, the church lost its autonomous status.

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 [5 : 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 [1: 11].

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 [18 : 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 [10 : 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 [5 : 52].

The problem of the church-administrative structure is directly related to the spheres of influence and the division of property and parishioners. The structure of the Ecumenical Church is built in such a way that each of the participants in the church process has its own territory, the boundaries of which are clearly defined. This situation has developed since 2 – 3 centuries. The apostles and their closest disciples freely preached the word of God and established the first communities in different countries. With the growth of the parish network, it was necessary to structure the church of that time into some administrative units. However, as a result of a clear hierarchy and division of the early church, a new impetus for power and enrichment emerged. Today the situation has only sharpened. The church is morally unprepared for healthy competition. Each of the Local Churches is fighting for spheres of influence called "canonical territory". A Local Church is separated by a clear boundary from another church, a diocese from a diocese, a parish from another parish. Church hierarchs are not ready to coexist peacefully at the present time. IIt should be stated that the church could have lost its main mission and purpose

of its stay in this world. The existence of two mutually recognized churches is perceived as contrary to the divine will. The Church denies man's freedom of spiritual self-identification, leaving him no alternative. Using its own authority and tradition, the church failed to attract believers voluntarily. The process of churching takes place in a strict canonical form, and the main one - in invariant. This is the parish you should visit, everything else is heresy and schism. This is a stable position of the current hierarchical link. There is no healthy competition [7].

Considering the above, we can conclude that the modern administrative-territorial divisionof 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 [8: 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.

Today there are 6 autonomous churches in the diptych. The first is the ancient Church of Sinai, under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Next is the Church of Finland, which is subordinate to the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Chinese and Japanese churches, which are under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. And there are two Estonian autonomous churches, one subordinate to the Ecumenical Patriarch, the other to the Moscow one.

Information about autonomous churches is publicly available, so descriptive statistics are not intended for this article. Here are a few basic examples concerning the structure itself and the purpose of the formation of the institution of autonomy.

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 [2 : 78].

As for the example of the Estonian Autonomous Church, historically it was perceived as Russian one. Like the Lutheran Church, which was considered the church of the German nobility, but was dominant, it was alien and threatened national identity [1 : 16].

On March 30, 1917, the Provisional Government of Russia passed a law on the autonomy of the Estonian province, according to which all territories with the Estonian population were united for the first time in history as part of one administrative unit. Estonia's independence was formally declared on February 24, 1918. The principle of separation of state and church formed the basis of state-church relations. The constitution stated that there was no state religion in Estonia.

In 1920, Patriarch Tikhon granted Estonian Orthodox Church the status of autonomy, but this event did not reduce tensions between Russia and Estonia due to years of hatred of the imperial church. Political repressions against the Orthodox, associated exclusively with Russian citizens, were gaining momentum. Bishop Alexander of Tallinn appealed to the Ecumenical Throne to change his jurisdiction. In 1923, Patriarch Meletius IV of Constantinople issued a Tomos on the transition of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church in an autonomous status to the jurisdiction of Constantinople [10 : 761]. The Estonian First Hierarch received the classic title of First Hierarch "Metropolitan of Tallinn and All Estonia".

In 1941, the USSR annexed Estonian territory. Church persecution and repression were taking place. The Estonian Autonomous Orthodox Church cut off communication with Constantinople. However, Metropolitan Alexander did not move under the jurisdiction of Moscow, but emigrated to Stockholm and formed the Synod of the Estonian Autonomous Orthodox Church in exile, but did not interrupt communication with the Ecumenical Throne. Due to international pressure in 1978, Constantinople suspended Tomos, but the issue of autonomy became relevant again after Estonia gained its independence in 1991. In contrast, the ROC restores the Tikhonov Tomos from 1920. However, Estonians do not want to be dependent on Moscow. It was the Constantinople Autonomy that was registered with the state registration authorities under the name of the EAOC. Thus, in Estonia there are two autonomous churches operating in parallel, which belong to different patriarchates.

Well-known 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 [7]. Their competition should be similar to the city temples.

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.

Conclusions. 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.

The Autonomous Church, despite the adopted document in Crete, is not a clearly regulated church institution. Traditionally, the status of autonomy meant a transitional link. Some autonomous churches became mature and gained autocephaly, while others lost their independence.

Church life is a dynamic process. The church is constantly moving forward and must respond to societal demands and problems. An obvious violation of canonical rules is the existence of two jurisdictions (two canonical bishops) in one territory, such as for instance in Estonia. However, this is justified by time and public demand of the population of different countries. The current hierarchy is afraid of healthy, fair competition between churches, therefore the administrative structure of the church and the possibility of its transformation does not find a consensus between the Local Churches. This stimulates further research on topics related to the church structure

and the possibilities of obtaining the status of autonomy and autocephaly.

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