

ARTICLE I

http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/expert_thought/open_theme/52639/ June 14, 2013

1. Attempts to Promote Moscow Origin behind Baptism of Kyivan Rus`

By Mykola ZORIANI, journalist and analyst

Ukraine is soon going to mark the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Kyivan Rus`. The ceremonial events are planned for July 26-28, 2013 at the highest governmental level, a fact confirmed by the high level members of the celebration organizing committee, headed by the Prime Minister of Ukraine and the Head of the Presidential Administration.

“This outstanding event will be marked in every village, city, and region,” President Yanukovich said at a meeting with the organizing committee members. As a result, oblast governors and heads of regional state administrations have already started planning ceremonial events. The Ukrainian churches are also preparing events of their own as Christianity has a firm footing in the independent state, within an ever-expanding network of houses of prayer and religious communities.

The capital of Ukraine, Kyiv, where Prince Volodymyr baptized his people in the summer of 988 A.D., will be welcoming delegations of representatives from 15 local eastern orthodox churches from all over the world, as well as representatives of other Christian confessions. The Head of State called upon all members of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations to take part in the preparation and holding of ceremonial events to mark the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Kyivan Rus`, emphasizing this point at his April 23 meeting with the heads of the Ukrainian confessions.

This idyllic setting and the enthusiasm of Ukrainians could not pass unnoticed by the Moscow Patriarchate, which has been increasingly undertaking global religious and political initiatives. Because of his claim to primacy over global eastern orthodoxy, Patriarch Kiril (Gundayev), the Head of the Russian Orthodox Church, refused to take part in the organizing committee created in Kyiv. Moreover, he would, in that case, find himself sitting next to Patriarch Filaret (Denysenko), the Head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Kyiv Patriarchate an objectionable person [to Kirill] anathematized by the Moscow hierarch, an idea as ugly as can be.

Therefore, without even looking for easy ways, the Head of the Russian Orthodox Church decided to organize the beginning of the celebrations of the 1025th anniversary of Kyivan Rus` Baptism right in Moscow at his own initiative. The fact that at the time that Prince Volodymyr baptized Rus` the present Russian capital did not even exist did not seem to be a problem for him.

Taking into account the close relations and common geopolitical interests of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and the Kremlin, it comes as no surprise that the idea of large-scale celebrations to mark the Rus` Baptism jubilee (Rus` no longer seems to be Kyivan in this context) has found support at the highest levels of the Russian establishment. On June 11, 2013, the Russian White House [Parliament] hosted a meeting chaired by D.V. Molchanov, Deputy Head of the Administration of the Government of the Russian Federation, devoted to “issues of the celebration events to be held in Moscow and Russia’s regions, as well as in Ukraine and Belarus,” the ROC website reports. Incidentally, can the organizing committee in Kyiv permit itself to plan any events in neighboring countries?

But Moscow’s Patriarch Kirill has gone even further.

The Head of the Russian Orthodox Church has been trying in recent months to persuade the leaders of certain influential autocephalous orthodox churches to visit Moscow in late July to add more legality to

the beginning of the celebration process in the capital of the Russian Federation. However, this initiative is held back by the fact that in view of the differences between the Moscow and Ecumenical Patriarchates over their roles in global Christian Orthodoxy, this personal initiative of Patriarch Kirill was opposed by the heads of the Antioch, Alexandria, and Cyprus Orthodox Churches, who were in agreement with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, confirming their intention to refrain from visiting Moscow this June.

Considering this fact, it was not accidental that Patriarch Kirill devoted the first week of June 2013 to a visit to Greece, where he held negotiations with Archbishop Jerome, head of the Greek Orthodox Church. According to rumors, a EUR 500,000 contribution was made to persuade the latter of the importance of the July ceremonial events in Moscow.

In addition, sources in church circles reported that the Head of the Russian Orthodox Church had similar convincing arguments for the leaders of the Antioch, Alexandria, and Cyprus Orthodox Churches. They were offered that their participation in the ceremonial events in Moscow on July 24-25 would be combined with a meeting with the President of the Russian Federation to initiate before him a petition to the governments of Middle East countries, calling on them to stop the war and restore peace and understanding between Muslims and Christians. This is a weighty argument, taking into account the concern of these church leaders over the military conflict in Syria where their hierarchs are effective prisoners.

Such actions by the Moscow Patriarch may create a rift in the relations among the clergy of the Antioch, Alexandria, and Cyprus Orthodox Churches, thus weakening the position of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in global Christian Orthodoxy. At the same time, the high status of the representatives attending the ceremonial events in Moscow will add weight to the ROC's image, bolstering its attempts to create not only a "Russian world", covering the territory of Ukraine as well, but also to take leadership among other eastern orthodox churches.

"The Baptism of Rus' and Christianity have always been and remain a symbol of unity. For this particular reason we see the Christian faith primarily as a consolidating and integrating force," the Head of the Ukrainian State noted at the first meeting of the organizing committee held in January 2013. But the aforementioned political distortions of facts and secret deals made behind closed doors risk depriving this year's holiday of its integrating essence and may damage inter-church unity, causing new wounds in the relations among different eastern orthodox confessions and aggravating the so-called "Ukrainian question."

Hopefully, the leaders of all eastern orthodox and other Christian churches will have enough wisdom not to turn the anniversary of the Baptism of Kyivan Rus' into a political show. There are already too many disputes and rifts, but now it seems to be time to find mutual understanding and unity.

ARTICLE II

2. The Kremlin has tired of building an "Orthodox Civilisation"

Lykeria Zhabyno, gazeta.comments.ua

Volodymyr Putin makes no secret of his alienation to Orthodoxy and the Russian World has transformed into a Patriarch Kyryl's project

The less sincere sense there is in speeches or an event, the more pompous they are, the more movement and imitation of life they demonstrate. A holiday invented five years ago by President Victor Yushchenko as a holiday of the Ukrainian Church, as a genuinely Kyivan event, at present is not only of concern to Kyiv. This is because in the interpretation of its current organisers it is a celebration of all of Rus', which long ago outgrew its Kyivan cradle. The script of the celebration was written in Moscow and even its "government" Ukrainian part was agreed upon and approved there. The celebrations will start in Moscow, from there the sacred procession will begin to the cities and villages of the mythic "Russian World". With a visit to Kyiv for a solemn prayer. The capital of Ukraine, thus, has ceased to be the location of the celebration and the Baptism has become the rationale for the Head of the ROC to proceed around "his holdings". The procession foresees widespread mass-media coverage. The population of these territories, which has become used to living in a mass-media environment, will be shown a picture pretending that brotherhood and unity exist and are guaranteed by Patriarch Kyryl personally. However, seeing on TV the Head of the ROC declaring the unity of a one time "great country", one should not jump to conclusions. It may happen that Patriarch Kyryl is more likely fighting for the unity of the ROC using an out-dated, but still serviceable, notion of the "brotherhood of nations".

Five years ago the "Russian World" was a young, interesting and widely discussed ideology. Russia needed it in both an external sense (as a mission justifying its political intervention in the affairs of its neighbours) and an internal sense (as an idea uniting Russia in its historic mission to grow into an orthodox civilisation, an alternative to the Western one, allegedly decaying and dying of moral ulcers). The clerical mission and government policy complemented each other. Who could think that several years later this pretty picture will fade away? That such a promising idea as the "Russian World", that both supporters and opponents were arguing over eagerly, that geopoliticians, political technologists and others were building civilisation projects around, would prove to be ridiculous and unnecessary? Unnecessary, primarily, not just for the world, the "brother nations", but for Russia itself? And inside Russia, primarily for its leadership, which is more concerned with the notion of a besieged fortress surrounded by enemies everywhere. Russia's government proved not to be the ally of the Patriarch, but rather a saboteur of the cause of building the "Russian World". This is because it does not need such a "civilisation project", it needs the church to say the right words, to change direction in line with government policy and to help keep the tax payer obedient.

The Patriarch understands the current situation perfectly. And prudently does not raise any objections. He fully fits into the existing Russian political mainstream. He is busy with his own affairs while at the helm. Similar to secular colleagues trying to lay their hands on what they manage in the state structures, Kyryl locks the structure of ROC around himself – strengthens the church vertical, reforms the leadership, inspires, adopts and implements the necessary decisions, generally puts things in order. And finds an absolutely rational use for the "Russian World", the favourite child, to keep the constituent parts of the ROC together, which continue to attempt to fall apart.

However, this cannot be admitted. Therefore, Kyiv did not suit Moscow's clerical leadership as the location for the celebration. The diversity here [regarding the celebration] is very evident (one could not hide this from TV cameras), the ROC being only a part of it, the Patriarch only one of the characters and the attitude towards him is quite mixed. Here, on the banks of the Dnipro, he will have to put up with not only the fact that he will be no more than in the retinue of the main character, President Victor Yanukovich, but also with the fact that he will be one of several church leaders in that retinue, many of

whom enjoy significant, may be even greater, popularity than he does. Thus, transforming Moscow, not Kyiv, into the centre of celebrations is a symptom of the impaired influence of the Moscow Patriarchate (i.e., the ROC) on the situation in Ukraine.

In Moldova it will still be worse for Patriarch Kyryl, where he is heading with celebrations contrary to the will of the Head of the State. In Moldova, the situation for the ROC's leadership is the most complicated. It easily overshadows the situation in Ukraine, which, though shaken by scandals with clerical-political overtones, however, even the most unpleasant game cannot remove the artificial smiles off of the faces of the players. In Moldova, no one is even trying to keep up appearances. The Romanian Orthodox Church is gradually winning back canonical territory in the region from the ROC. The president of the country expressly warns Patriarch Kyryl to not visit Moldova and Transdnistria (and truly, what has this region to do with Volodymyr's Baptism?). In response, the Head of the Moldovan exarchate [of the MP] warns that the Orthodox believers, if the church calls them out, "will wipe everything here off the face of the earth", i.e. actually threatens public disorder. At the same time, the TV viewers watch the "Russian World" staged against such decorations!

The task is not an easy one. However, refusing to deal with it means to put under threat the integrity and authority of an absolutely real ROC and not a mythical brotherhood unity. Therefore, one should have no doubts that the "Kyivan cuppol", as a historic justification of the claims of the ROC over the territories of brother nations, will be on everybody's lips. And the central figure, Prince Volodymyr, will outshine all other Christian characters of our legendary history. This is because in him, politics and Orthodoxy united into something indivisible.

ARTICLE III

A very insightful analysis from a respected US observer, Prof Jose Casanova, who recently lectured at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

<http://korrespondent.net/ukraine/events/1574813-vzglyad-so-storony-religioznaya-sistema-ukrainy-napominaet-amerikanskuyu>

3. Outside Point of View: Ukraine's Religious System Resembles America's One

Ukraine is Europe's only country whose structure of churches is similar to that in the USA, an expert says.

Ukraine is Europe's leader in terms of the number of people who have started to consider themselves followers of religion in the past two decades, says Jose Casanova, a sociologist of the Georgetown University.

In an interview for BBC, Professor Casanova explained what had caused the upsurge in religion, how the relations between the Eastern Orthodox followers and Greek Catholics may develop, and why it would not be easy for the Russian Orthodox Church to become the number one church in Ukraine.

He also shared his views on a spiritual life free of religion and told why science and religion should hear each other.

BBC Ukraine: at your lecture given at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, you said that in the past two decades the number of religious people in Ukraine increased at a rate that was Europe's highest. How could you explain this phenomenon?

Professor Casanova: Ukraine, a country bordering with the Catholic world, being at the same time connected with the Russian Orthodox Church, has in its history gone through the process of confessionalization (confession-building - Editor) and de-confessionalization when people migrated from confession to confession.

Western Ukraine is an especially dynamic territory in this respect because it used to be almost wholly Greek Catholic and after it was annexed to the Soviet Union after World War II, the people living in these lands were forced into Eastern Orthodoxy. Then, after Ukraine gained independence, these people received the opportunity to return to the Greek Catholic Church (more than 50 percent of the population did so) but many remained in Eastern Orthodoxy.

The people now have a choice of confession. This is a rare opportunity (in Europe - Editor). Usually, people have a choice between being religious believers or leading a secular life. Usually people have no alternative within the framework of religion.

However, no church in Ukraine has managed to become the nation's church as the new state decided to maintain neutrality and did not take the side of either the Moscow Patriarchy or the Kyiv Patriarchy or the Greek Catholic Church. Here in Ukraine, we have an open field of religious competition. This has given roots to pluralism. Since the four major churches became denominations, all other religious minorities and sects have become equal denominations.

For this reason, Ukraine is seeing growth in the number of Baptist, Judaic and Muslim communities, and even members of new sects. I believe this trend will strengthen for some time ahead.

You said at your lecture that the religious system of Ukraine is more similar to the US model than European. Where does this similarity lie?

It lies in the term "denomination" used by churches in the United States. There you are asked:

- What is your denomination?

- I am a Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, Jew, and so on.

Denomination means a name I call myself for others to distinguish me. No European language has a similar term. It is translated either as confession, which actually means a compulsory religion enforced by the authority, or sect, a religious minority, whereas a denomination is neither a church nor a sect. This term goes beyond the concept of church-sect polarity, making churches and sects equal denominations. This is called Denominationalism, a system where all religions enjoy equal rights and compete with one another.

This is a unique model developed in the USA for historical reasons. Ukraine is Europe's only country with a similar structure of churches and the same historical reasons.

You are a new national state and you did not have a national church in the past. Now the people have a choice.

Back in the times when the USA gained independence, the country had the Congregational Church in the New England colonies, Presbyterian Church in the Mid-Atlantic colonies, and Anglican Church in the southern colonies. None of them has managed to become the national church and so the state has decided to keep neutrality towards them.

By the time the country gained independence, the tiny minorities of Baptists and Methodists made up less than one percent of the believers and two decades later they became the largest denominations.

Here in Ukraine, we see a similar picture. You have the Greek Catholic Church in the West, which is very strong, there is also the strong Kyiv Patriarchy in the center and strong Moscow Patriarchy in the East. As a result, the Ukrainian state decided not to side with any of these churches, and now you have religious competition, especially in Halychyna [Western Ukraine].

Nonetheless, in the past years we have been noticing how top dignitaries of the state show loyalty to the Moscow Patriarchy, for example, by attending liturgies. Do you admit the possibility for Ukraine to follow in Russia's footsteps, with the Moscow Patriarchy becoming the unofficial state religion?

I doubt it. Although this chance does exist if the Ukrainian state gets closer to Russia and loses its autonomy or even joins the other former Soviet republics in a new association [the Customs Union is probably meant here - Editor].

Governments have always had their preferences. Kravchuk favored the Kyiv Patriarchy and Kuchma the Moscow Patriarchy. Yushchenko liked the Kyiv Patriarchy and Greek Catholic Church whereas Yanukovich has initially taken to the Moscow Patriarchy. But here we speak about governments while the state as a whole keeps acting within the Constitution and its structure has been adherent to religious freedom for everybody. One must differentiate actions of governments and the state structure.

But if the government continues the rapprochement with Russia, the structure of the state may change. Yet, it would be very difficult for the Moscow Patriarchy to gain root here and become the number one church because it faces opposition. For the fact is that even the Moscow Patriarchy has quite large groups of believers who may abandon this church and join the Kyiv Patriarchy, if the Moscow Patriarchy becomes a Russian Church rather than a Ukrainian Orthodox one. This is why I doubt such a development.

In my opinion, the Autocephalous Church [UAOC] will disappear soon because it is rather small and very fractured. After Filaret's death the situation will take a new turn. You will probably have three strong churches claiming Kyivan Rus' roots and connections with the three Romes. This is going to be true as soon as Constantinople recognizes the Kyiv Patriarchy.

What will be the relations between the Moscow Patriarchy and the Greek Catholic Church?

Archbishop Ilarion of Russia said during his meeting with the new Pope that he hoped the Pope would continue the ecumenical dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church. This means he hopes that no favor will be given to the Uniates. The problem of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine is a manifestation of the frictions between Rome and Moscow. For this reason I believe that Ukraine would benefit if it has a strong Kyiv Patriarchy Church recognized by Constantinople. I believe in the long-term this would prevent a standoff between the Moscow Patriarchy and Rome. This would probably be a better development for Ukraine.

Many people in different countries lead spiritual lives outside any formal religion...

Yes, in the United States people increasingly choose a spiritual life free of any religion. People there are becoming increasingly discontent with all social institutes, including church and political parties.

Europe in the past decade has seen a growing trend that can be called "keep away from church." But the fact that people are not in religion does not mean they have opted for spirituality. In Europe, however, the number of people saying "I am a religious person in my own way" is actually on the rise. This is a private religion or the "unseen religion" described by Thomas Luckmann, a German sociologist, who defined it as a personal religion without any connections with formal institutes or congregations.

This trend is very strong the world over, in all religions, even in Islam. It has always been a distinguishing feature of Buddhism and Hinduism. The Asian religions have always included such individual spiritual paths.

It is rather noteworthy that even in Poland people often have their own religion and keep going to the church at the same time. A person is free to choose some aspects of religion to take seriously and reject others. In this sense we are talking about so-called "cafeteria of Catholicism" where people choose specific components, synthesizing a single whole.

Do you personally believe that science and religion may find common ground?

They have already done this.

One cannot speak about science and religion abstractly. It is clear that major scholars such as Galilei were deeply religious persons. Kepler was a Lutheran and Newton wrote more pages calculating the time of the Second Coming of Christ than he did calculating the trajectories of stars. There are also the likes of Einstein who used to say clearly that he saw no problem here [in combining religion and science - Editor]. If we looked at reality strictly through scientific glasses, we would not have love, trust, and all kinds of esthetics in personal relations. The idea that the reality can be narrowed to a purely cognitive scientific process is an absurd.

Religion addresses questions for which science has no answers. And now, more and more researchers pose questions which are not for science to answer. They talk about the Big Bang, history of space, solar system, biology. There is no scientific concept that can actually establish connections in these matters. Science is only about facts, we must build connections by ourselves, and this is an interpretation.

The stories told by cosmophysics are not science. If not, then what? It seems science wants to go beyond its limits and enter the area of metaphysics, addressing questions beyond physics.

Source: BBC Ukraine

ARTICLE IV

Respected Ukrainian commentator's overview of the situation among the Ukrainian Churches.

http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/expert_thought/analytic/52824/

4. New Challenges in Orthodoxy in Ukraine – Will There Be New Responses?

Oleksandr Sahan,
Doctor of Philosophy

The summer-fall of 2013 will likely be the hottest in the life of Orthodoxy in Ukraine in the past ten years. At least at the beginning of July, a heavy atmosphere is expected – and not just because of the holiday of the “Russian world” (as it became by its very nature, at least in terms of its initiators and organizers), that is, the 1025th anniversary of the baptism of Rus-Ukraine.

Each of the three major Orthodox Churches (as well as the smaller Orthodox Churches) in Ukraine is up against new church and social challenges, and the care in which they are met may determine the churches' development for the next 10-15 years. Let us briefly consider only the last significant challenges as the format of the article does not allow us to look more deeply at the formal and strategic parameters of the institutional development of the churches (institutional rise, missionary and educational activities, Sunday school, etc.), although this does not prevent us from considering these factors in the conclusion.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP). For several years the church has been experiencing difficult times, and objectively it is because its internal problems are combined with strong external pressure from both the ruling patriarchy and the so-called home-grown “political Orthodox Muscophiles” (both clergy and laity). The UOC-MP's current, formal status as an independent and self-governing institution is not liked by the patriarchate and, therefore, its adherents in Ukraine because it allows for not only the nonliteral will of the center but also for it to conduct its own church policy. It suffices to recall the commotion in the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) that was caused by the episcopate of the UOC-MP having the possibility to come as its own team with its own coherent position to the last electoral council of the ROC (January 2009), and the humiliation that the Moscow Patriarch felt when he heard the words of the strongest candidate for patriarch (along with the mobilization of the entire Ukrainian episcopate as well as territories of Russia). Then the head of the UOC-MP said he wished to appear before God as the 121st Metropolitan of Kyiv and not the 16th Patriarch of Moscow, and therefore refused to participate in the election of the patriarch. The Russians' imperial mind and mentality simply exploded, forever leaving a scar from the insult.

Most of the “political Orthodox” believe that the independent status of the UOC-MP now rests only on the authority of Metropolitan Volodymyr (Slobodan). And this is partly true. A kind of proof of this is the UOC-MP hierarchs' acquiescence to the activation of the radical Russophile wing during the Primate's illness. The wing was able to go as far as removing the seal of the Metropolitanate and making attempts to amend the Statute of the Church in order to reverse the advantages of the current status of the UOC-MP. The unexpected recovery of Metropolitan Volodymyr (many link it to the organizational talent of Archbishop Oleksandr Drabynko) was an unpleasant surprise for those bishops who already saw themselves with new power.

And so today a real ideological and information war wages in the church against the Primate and his inner circle (the Russian media published the calls of the former leader of the Crimean Cossacks Khramova: “Citizen Sabodan should resign because the Church must serve God, Truth, and our Russian civilization”). The particularity of this campaign is the Primate's passive position and his inability (unwillingness?) to protect/defend his closest allies and eliminate enemies. Even in compromising situations with his “right-

hand man,” Archbishop Oleksandr, Metropolitan Volodymyr maintained his equanimity, which did not even violate the paradoxical thesis of “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit,” which, in fact, showed that close to him is a heretic. What else can be said about the latest scandal with the nuns – it's hard to imagine that in our thoroughly corrupt state the request (if there was one!) of the Primate of the largest Orthodox Church was neglected for two weeks. And it cannot but demoralize those clerics of the UOC-MP who do not approve of the attacks of the pro-Moscow radicals, but who are forced to wait for the winner of the fight.

The events related to “economic Orthodoxy” or the “theology of business” – which could not but leave an impact on Ukraine during the dominance of this subspecies of “Orthodoxy” in the Russian Federation – were new and unexpected challenges for many supporters of the UOC-MP. Expensive watches, cars, apartments, and scandals that always accompany the Patriarch of Moscow became a catalyst for similar events in Ukraine. “Misuse of funds” for the construction of the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Resurrection, the “Lexus” scandal (a multimillion dollar scam originating in the Pokrovsky Monastery in Kyiv to raise funds for non-existent cars), the privatization of the holdings of the Kyiv Cave Monastery, expensive houses, a collection of Mercedes – all this and more has become the reality of church life of the UOC-MP.

However, “economic Orthodoxy” (like “economic Protestantism,” etc.), as opposed to “political Orthodoxy,” often takes the relations between business structures not only to the moral but also to the criminal realm. At least with the impact of the “secular factors,” it is not difficult to do. Thus criminal cases where clergy and even bishops are the persons involved have become commonplace.

The peculiarity of the “Lexus” scandal is that it was another attempt (this time with the involvement of secular law enforcement authorities) to neutralize (detain/hide) the closest and most powerful ally of the Primate of the UOC-MP, Archbishop Oleksandr (Drabynko). Archbishop Oleksandr’s expected retirement (as an alternative to conviction), if it indeed happens, could trigger a fundamental change in the strategic situation in the church still during the life of the current church head.

Yanukovych’s position in this matter is surprising because he somehow sided with Metropolitan Volodymyr’s opponents. Under these conditions (reversing the Primate’s authority, introducing metropolitan districts, etc.), anticipated changes in the leadership and policies of the UOC-MP not only spoil the “picture” of the celebration of the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus-Ukraine, but also the beginning of the presidential campaign of 2015 (as some analysts believe). The point here is more complicated: the president’s PR people calculated that Metropolitan Volodymyr, because of his health and beliefs, will keep a seemingly neutral position (as in the last election) and hence will not work actively for Yanukovych’s second election. However, there are other equally obvious points; for example, the Kremlin-appointed hierarch (even from Donetsk) is strictly controlled from Moscow (after the amendments to the Statute UOC-MP), and due to geopolitical reasons and the current relations between Ukraine and Russia he will support the candidate chosen by Moscow. And there is no guarantee that it will be Yanukovych.

An equally difficult situation has developed in the **Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church**. The Kyivan Patriarchate’s change in tactics – rejecting formal talks and conducting separate negotiations with individual autocephalous bishops, clergy, and parishes – has benefited the UOC-KP. In addition to the conversion of priests and parishes (which occurred in other years as well), in 2012-2013 there was a strategic turning point. Four active bishops (along with their parishes) left the UAOC and transferred to the UOC-KP. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that such transfers will continue.

One can argue that the bishop-defectors ministered to the smallest eparchies and therefore did not cause significant harm to the church. However, such actions have a moral dimension because they are examples of behavior, an incentive to action in a growing trend in the UAOC of separatism and federalism in the church in circumstances where the Primate is losing his functions as the leader and moral authority. In addition to the AUCCRO and meetings with officials, Metropolitan Mefodiy rarely shows himself in the

church and secular media space. Even such important events in the life of the church as the exit of bishops with their eparchies or the celebration of the 1025th anniversary of the baptism of Rus-Ukraine have not broken Bishop Mefodiy's silence.

The UAOC leadership's passivity intensified the activities of its old opponents in the church electoral field. In particular, the Bishop Ihor (Isichenko), head of the isolated Kharkiv-Poltava Eparchy of the UAOC, could be a viable candidate for the head of the parishes (eparchies) that categorically, for whatever reasons, do not fall under the UOC-KP.

Against the background of the described events, the situation in the **Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyivan Patriarchate** is the most optimistic. Using the popular wisdom that one should learn from the mistakes of others, the hierarchy has taken measures to deal with a possible split in the church. Patriarch Filaret at the Local Church Council (27.06.2013, Kyiv) insisted on the appointment of an "auxiliary patriarch" (Vice Primate), which, according to the Primate of the UOC-KP, will ensure that the church will never be without a leader and will "prevent the possibility of external influence on the church when a new hierarch is being elected." That such an influence is unavoidable the patriarch knows not from stories, but from the time when representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church put pressure on Metropolitan Andriy (Horak) and the events in 2010 when the leaders "highly recommended" to the clergy of the UOC-KP "to switch to the correct jurisdiction."

The auxiliary patriarch of the UOC-KP expectedly become Epiphany (Dumenko), now Metropolitan of Pereyaslav-Khmelnyskyi. Many clerics as well as laymen were not pleased with the election of a relatively young priest (34 years old) for such a high position (the auxiliary patriarch automatically becomes the locum tenens of the patriarchal throne and convenes the electoral church councils). This is because, as believed by his opponents, the lack of his episcopal experience (his episcopal ordination was only three years ago), the "closeness" of his character, and his lack of communication skills. However, no one spoke openly against Epiphany's appointment – the authority of the Patriarch is undisputable.

Under certain conditions, even if the current patriarch will be unable to cross the centennial milestone, Bishop Epiphany still has a chance to become the head of the UOC-KP. After all, in the new edition of the Church Statute there is no time limit within which the patriarch must be elected. It is hard to believe that Moscow will allow the UOC-KP to build a dialogue with the UOC-MP, but it can be simulated for a long time. And the situation which is now in the UAOC can be repeated: under the pretext of not electing the patriarch to remove obstacles to unite the Orthodox Churches in a "single national Ukrainian Orthodox Church with the patriarchal throne in Kyiv," Metropolitan Mefodiy has already led the church for 13 years, without the Local Councils and having, in fact, only a temporary status.

By the way, a ticking time bomb may be another new provision of the Statute of the UOC-KP, whereby a hierarch may be transferred to another parish without his or the community's consent. This provision has already caused a wave of discontent among many clergy, and its massive and arbitrary implementation may even strengthen the AUOC.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Orthodoxy in Ukraine is experiencing qualitative changes, which is especially noticeable in the area of theological education and in the changes in the paradigm of self-awareness and planning of its institutional development in the country. Therefore, the Orthodox churches with the best chances of being successful are those that realize that not everything can be gained from administrative and psychological resources. Rather, those that "expect to see the believers in the churches" should also engage in new communicational forms of work with believers ("we educate your children in Sunday schools," "we implement social projects," etc.).

2. The 1025th anniversary of the baptism of Rus-Ukraine is a multifunctional holiday. As such, church (and not just Orthodox ones) and secular institutions (public, social, and political) that fund certain events (even one tangential to the date of baptism) pursue pragmatic, often conflicting objectives. This creates conditions where provocations and illogical actions and events (in terms of Ukrainian national interests) become possible.
3. The events held by the UOC-MP during and after the celebration of the 1025th anniversary (as a pretext for the visit of the Patriarch of Moscow and propagating the ideas of the “Russian world” and the Customs Union) may be crucial for the future of this church. The victory of the radical wing and replacing the current Primate with someone more loyal to Moscow or to the current Ukrainian regime can play a cruel joke on these “zealots of Orthodoxy.” It can also become a catalyst for the next schism in the UOC – at the level of ordinary believers and hierarchs, or to establish a permanent transition process of parishes to the UOC-KP or some other church structure. To prevent this, some hierarchs and politicians are actively trying to secure legal status for the UOC-MP (when going to another jurisdiction believers will have to leave their church, even if they built it themselves).
4. In the next year to two years we should expect a reformation in the UAOC and the transfer of many parishes and clergy to the UOC-KP. This period will provide the Kharkiv-Poltava Eparchy of the UAOC (Renewed) with the opportunity to strengthen its position and emerge from the margins. If on this wave of change one of the parts of the UAOC can “draw” to Ukraine one of the Ukrainian diaspora churches (which Bishop Ihor Isichenko has long dreamt about), it can be a new significant factor in the changes in the institutional picture of Orthodoxy in Ukraine.
5. We believe introducing a new church position in the UOC-KP, the auxiliary patriarch, is a good managerial step. With the increasing influence in Ukraine of the Patriarch of Moscow and pro-Moscow forces, the “spare patriarch” with no aggravating factors (anathemas, insults from the time when Ukraine was becoming independent, etc.) can be an effective counteraction to divisive tendencies and promote the growth of the institutional church and the growth of its international authority.

ARTICLE V

An excellent summary (by a UOC-MP connected journalist) of the events and implications of the UOC KP Sobor held at the end of June.

<http://www.religion.in.ua/main/22420-kievskij-patriarxat-radi-obedineniya-s-upc-gotov-otkazatsya-ot-svoego-patriarxa-reportazh-s-pomestnogo-sobora.html>

5. The Kyiv Patriarchate is Ready to Abandon Its Patriarch for the Sake of Unification with the UOC? Report from the Church Council

The present day may become a historical date for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kyiv Patriarchy and maybe even for the entire Ukrainian Orthodoxy as the most significant event after the 1992 schism. What had long been rumoured in the backrooms of various church jurisdictions has finally come true. The Patriarch of Kyiv and All Rus'-Ukraine, Filaret (Denysenko) with his usual resoluteness and persistence implemented governance reform in the UOC KP, which may further eliminate obstacles in the way of unification of the Ukrainian Orthodox community.

But let's take a closer look at the developments... Yesterday, on June 26, the Synodal Hall of the Kyiv Patriarchy at 36 Pushkinska Street hosted the Bishops' Council of the UOC KP which approved the amendments and supplements to the Church Regulations proposed by Patriarch Filaret. These amendments became the subject matter of heated disputes at the Church Council of the UOC KP, which was held the next day, June 27, and which ultimately approved and legitimized them.

In essence, these amendments have the following effect: after the death of Patriarch Filaret, the UOC KP will not hold an extraordinary Church Council to elect a new Patriarch, thus paving the way for a joint Congregative Council of Bishops of the UOC (MP- Moscow Patriarchate) and the UOC Kyiv Patriarchate, which is intended to elect a sole primate of a unified Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Patriarch Filaret began discussions on this issue by saying that he was already 85 and it was time for him to start thinking about his passage to eternity. Some delegates began whispering to one another, guessing the Patriarch was going to resign... But he had something different in mind.

He proposed to amend the Regulations of the UOC KP, introducing a new office of Vice Patriarch, the person who after the death of Filaret will automatically become the acting Patriarch and head the UOC KP with the rank of metropolitan. The Vice Patriarch is proposed to be elected at the Episcopal Synod chaired by the present Patriarch Filaret. According to the latter, this innovation is intended to prevent a struggle for power in the UOC KP that may erupt after his death, threatening to destroy the Church. Patriarch Filaret stressed that "external forces" were now trying to influence the personnel changes in the UOC (MP) and that the UOC KP was also not immune to such attempts of external influence and bribing...

Despite the fact that before the Church Council, information leaked to media that the post of Vice Patriarch of the UOC KP would be awarded to the present Archbishop of Pereyaslav-Khmelnysky and Boryspil Epifanii (Dumenko), the subject matter of the Council was actually a little different. In his speech, Patriarch Filaret proposed that the Vice Patriarch, under the amended Regulations, be the Pereyaslav Metropolitan but he should be elected to this chair by the Episcopal Synod of the UOC KP. Who will actually take this office after the amendments to the UOC KP Regulations are finally adopted and the Synod holds a meeting after the Council is far from being clear yet.

According to Filaret, the one who will head the UOC KP after him should be prepared not for glory and power but for sufferings, defamation, and soiling as damaging materials against him will be immediately

taken out of files and a campaign of discrediting, denunciation, and so on will be launched in the media with the ultimate purpose of completely weakening and annihilating the Ukrainian Church.

In his speech, Patriarch Filaret noted that the revised version of the Regulations purposely avoided setting the date of the Church Council to be convened to elect a new primate (after the death of the previous one), as hopes in this case are pinned on the Congregative Council of the two Ukrainian Churches to be held together with bishops of the UOC (MP). His words sounded as an appeal and will: "If the situation after my death will make it possible to convene the Congregative Council of the UOC KP and the UOC, there should be no hurry in electing our own Patriarch. You should wait for the Congregative Council and jointly elect the new leader of the Church."

Filaret surmised that if the Congregative Council would prove possible after his death, this Council would be attended by both the leader of UOC and the new Patriarch of the UOC KP... In this case there would be no guarantee that the elected single leader would become the head of the Kyiv Patriarchate. So, to avoid deposing the Patriarch of the UOC KP in this case, there is no need to elect the primate at all before the Congregative Council. Such was the idea of Filaret.

His proposal stirred up heated debates among the delegates of the Church Council. Some of them as usual highlighted the "profound wisdom and foresight of the hierarch and his care about the good and preservation of the Church." The others, most likely from the nationalistic camp, made no disguise of their concerns... In particular, Professor Dmytro Stepovyk, a member of the Secretariat of the Church Council and the Supreme Church Council of the UOC KP, called on the delegates not to hurry with such a critical and momentous decision, arguing that the pro-Moscow forces in the UOC (MP) may take advantage of the situation and, supported by the government, disrupt the future Congregative Council, thus leaving the UOC KP without its Patriarch and without a Church Council. To avoid this, he put forth an amendment to the Regulations, establishing that the Church Council has to be convened to elect a new Patriarch within two months after the Patriarch's death. Other participants of the discussion proposed that the Church Council should be held within six months after the death of the Patriarch.

However, surprisingly enough, Filaret showed resolution and persistence in this issue. "I am totally against this! I leave it to God's will, the acting Patriarch, and Holy Synod!" he retorted clearly, adding that everything must be done for the Congregative Council to take place. Moreover, he noted that the UOC had more bishops, so the common first hierarch would likely be elected by the majority from the "Moscow side." "But we do not have to be afraid of this development. If they go for it, if they agree to the Congregative Council, we should only welcome this move, we should hug them and kiss them! Not all of them will dare to agree to this. The likes of Agafangel of Odessa would never agree to such a Congregative Council. Therefore, we should not be afraid of them. Such people would hardly be able to find the courage to break off with Moscow, will not take part in the Congregative Council, and will not participate in the election of the sole church leader. Only those in the UOC who want the rebirth and strengthening of the Church rather than its annihilation will participate," the UOC KP head argued in support of his position.

What especially struck the eye was the fact that Filaret consistently spoke about his soon and unavoidable death. He did this so calmly and confidently that many had the impression that he already knew the exact time of his death and was preparing himself to meet it... The most surprising was the speech of one delegate who in his appeal to the delegates during the disputes threw the following words into the auditorium: "Don't you see this!? The Patriarch hints to us: 'People, take advantage of my death as this is a chance to unite the Ukrainian Orthodox Church!' We should hear this advice of the Holiest! This will raise our Church over all other Churches!"

Yet still alive Patriarch Filaret listened to the debates over his death with striking calmness and composure.

As a result, the voting showed that of the 155 delegates (38 of whom were eparchal bishops), only six voted against Filaret's proposal, with seven abstentions. The other 142 delegates voted "pro" and the voting results were supported by lengthy applause.

At this Council, Patriarch Filaret also touched upon the situation in the UOC (MP). He stressed the illegitimacy of the attempts to remove Metropolitan Vladimir (Sabodan) from the office of Primate and to deprive the UOC of its autonomy. He drew the attention of the audience to the fact that in the UOC (MP), the eparchal bishops who dared to speak for autonomy became objects of defamation in media outlets, alleging them to be affiliated with a so-called “autocephalous-homosexual group,” and so on. In his words, if some UOC (MP) bishops “speak in favor of Moscow, they are allowed to be even sodomites and all their dirty deeds are not only covered from the public but also justified, as is the case with Metropolitan Agafangel of Odessa, whose name is well known to everybody... But once somebody starts speaking in favor of the Ukrainian Church, he immediately becomes ascribed to the “autocephalous-homosexual group.” This is nothing short of a double standard and double-standard morality, and such things should not exist in the Church,” Filaret said.

Having touched upon the future of the dialogue with the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC), Patriarch Filaret noted that this dialogue had been officially disrupted through the fault of the UAOC Synod. The UOC KP Primate said that the UAOC leadership had reached such a level of internal degradation that any serious negotiations with them seemed to be impossible. According to Filaret, realizing the situation, the UAOC clergy and laity started a dialogue “at the bottom,” flocking en masse to come under the omophorion of the Kyiv Patriarchate.

Following the persistent recommendation of Patriarch Filaret, whose negative attitude towards homosexuality is well known, the UOC KP Church Council approved the Declaration “On the Negative Position Towards the Sin of Sodomy (Homosexuality), Its Popularization, and So-Called Same-Sex Marriages.” According to this Declaration, drafted by Patriarch Filaret, “based on the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Tradition and Church Canons, we testify as follows: every Christian believer who supports and approves of the legalization of the sin of sodomy becomes subject to the curse of Sodom and anathema of Apostle Paul, expelling himself or herself from the Church... We are strictly against promoting the homosexual way of life and behavior as natural, normal, and useful for society and the individual. We are against promoting sodomy as a variant of normal sexual life and against the state’s encouraging its citizens to homosexual relations.”

Although media ascribe some UOC KP eparchs to the “gay party,” none of the Council dared to publicly speak or vote against the Declaration proposed by Patriarch Filaret.

Apart from Ukrainian parliamentarians, Yuri Bohutskyi, an advisor to the president of Ukraine, was present at the Council as a guest from the government. He read an official address of the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, to the Church Council. The address was written very well, proof that the government regards this event as very important. In response, Patriarch Filaret pointed out with satisfaction that recently the government had been showing a course of dialogue with and equal treatment of all confessions, including the UOC KP. Speaking about the relations between the State and the Church, Filaret once again stressed the inadmissibility of any law legitimizing homosexuality and same-sex marriages, saying that the Church would be strictly opposed such ungodly and immoral initiatives.

In conclusion, the Church Council passed a decision canonizing Oskold (Askold)-Nikolai, the first Christian Kyivan prince killed by pagans in 882. In the words of the speakers, Prince Oskold laid the first stone for the Christianization of Rus', which was completed by Saint Prince Vladimir, Equal to the Apostles. Since ancient times Oskold has been honored as a blessed and locally venerated martyr, proof of which is in chronicles and other sources.

The Council heard a proposal to establish the day of church commemoration of Martyr Prince Oskold-Nikolai on July 15, the holiday of the deposition of the robe in Blachernai, an event directly associated with the miracle of Oskold’s conversion into Christianity in 860. This sounded especially just in view of the fact that before the October Revolution, Kyiv had an entrenched church tradition of annual sacred processions to Oskold’s grave in commemoration of his martyr's death (the UOC (MP) has recently revived this tradition). But Patriarch Filaret did not support this proposal, insisting, however, that the day of commemoration of Martyr Prince Oskold should be celebrated in the UOC KP calendars on a date different from that recognized by the UOC, specifically on the second Sunday after the Pentecost, the Day of All Saints of the Lands of Ukraine.

The Council also canonized two local saints and champions of faith from Volyn - Prince Vladimir Vasylykovich (1248-1288) and Christian martyr Danylo Bratkovsky (1642-1702) ruthlessly tortured to death by Polish authorities in 1702.

In addition, the Council passed decisions concerning the celebration in 2013 of the 1025-anniversary of Volodymyr's Christianization of Rus' and adopted an address on this occasion to the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, representatives of other local churches, the President of Ukraine, Prime Minister of Ukraine, and Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament.

During its work, the UOC KP Church Council, following the suggestion of its bishops, approved the amendments to the Regulations, extending the rights of the clergy and parish councils. In particular, the eparchy is now authorized to appoint or transfer priests and other clergymen by himself, without consulting the clergy and parish. As regards transfers of funds to the eparchy board, the word "voluntary" was deleted from the Regulations. The clergy at the Council showed some discontent on this issue. However, the bishops showed unity and Episcopal corporate spirit as never before, unanimously defending their rights and powers.

ARTICLE VI

Summary of proceedings of the Bishops' Council of the UOC KP following the full Sobor the day before, where Epifaniy is made Vice Patriarch, the KP issued it's Declaration to the UOC MP to resist Moscow's interference and to re-start unity negotiations, and another hierarch from Mefodii's church is admitted to the KP.

<http://www.religion.in.ua/news/vazhlyvo/22437-kiyivskij-patriarxat-obrav-novij-sklad-kerivnictva-i-zaklikav-upc-mp-vidnoviti-pidgotovku-do-dialogu.html>

6. The Kyiv Patriarchate Elects New Management and Calls on UOC (MP) to Resume the Preparations to Dialogue

On June 28, the day following the Church Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate, Patriarch Filaret chaired the Bishop's Council of this Church, which included all bishops of the UOC KP. The Bishop's Council elected new permanent members of the Holy Synod and the Supreme Church Council, resolved questions concerning the introduction of the office of Vice Patriarch, and expressed concerns over the situation in the UOC (MP). In addition, the Holy Synod held on the same day admitted UAOC Archbishop Ioan (Modzalevsky) to the UOC KP, "Religion in Ukraine" reports.

Pursuant to the amendments made to the Governance Regulations of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate by the UOC KP Church Council on June 27, the Council awarded the title "Metropolitan of Pereyaslav-Khmelnysky and Bila Tserkva" to Archbishop of Pereyaslav-Khmelnysky and Boryspil Epifanii (Dumenko), raising him to the rank of metropolitan (consequently, Archbishop of Bila Tserkva Oleksandr, Vicar of the Kyiv Eparchy, accepted the title "Archbishop of Bohuslav").

The Council ascribed the Kyiv Oblast parishes to the jurisdiction of Archbishop Epifanii, Metropolitan of Pereyaslav-Khmelnysky and Bila Tserkva, as Vice Patriarch with the rights of an eparchal bishop. Patriarch Filaret remains the eparchal bishop of the Kyiv eparchy and the Metropolitan of Pereyaslav-Khmelnysky and Bila Tserkva remains the eparchal bishop of the Pereyaslav-Khmelnysky eparchy.

The Bishop's Council elected the following hierarchs as permanent members of the Holy Synod:

- Ioasaf, Metropolitan of Belhorod and Oboyan from foreign eparchies;
- Ioan, Metropolitan of Cherkasy and Chyhyryn from the central region of Ukraine; Serhii, Archbishop of Donetsk and Mariupol from the eastern region of Ukraine; and
- Ilarion, Archbishop of Rivne and Ostrih from the western region of Ukraine.

The other permanent members of the Holy Synod are:

- Epifanii, Metropolitan of Pereyaslav-Khmelnysky and Bila Tserkva, Vice Patriarch;
- Dmytro, Metropolitan of Lviv and Sokal; and
- Yevstratii, Archbishop of Chernihiv and Nizhyn, Holy Synod Secretary.

In response to the proposal by Patriarch Filaret, the Council elected the following representatives of clergy and laity as members of the Supreme Church Council:

- Archpriest Mykhailo Marusiak, a clergyman of the Ivano-Frankivsk eparchy;
- Archpriest Mykola Salabai, a clergyman of Kyiv;
- Volodymyr Dmytrovych Bondarenko;
- Oleksandr Vasyliovych Hudyma;
- Ivan Fedorovych Drach;
- Viacheslav Anatoliiovych Kyrylenko;
- Pavlo Mykhailovych Movchan;
- Mykola Ivanovych Porovskiy; and
- Dmytro Vlasovych Stepovyk.

The Bishop's Council of the UOC KP expressed "profound concern over the developments in the UOC (Moscow Patriarchate) that threaten its autonomy." On this occasion, the Bishop's Council made public its address to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate).

This document expresses deep concern over the current "struggle among UOC bishops" for the right to succeed the weakening Metropolitan Vladimir and over the fact that "internal and external forces are again trying by all means to eliminate the autonomy and independence of the UOC (MP) in an attempt to tie it closer to the Moscow Patriarchate and unrestrainedly use your Church to promote the integration of Ukraine into Russia and prevent the attempts to overcome the existing schism." In this context, the recent resonant "case of abduction of nuns" comes to mind, as well as the attempts "to bring the Regulations of the UOC (MP) into compliance with the Regulations of the Russian Orthodox Church..." to introduce "amendments that actually deprive the UOC of its autonomy," and so on.

The bishops of the UOC KP call on all members of the UOC (MP) to "see and realize this and do whatever possible to stop such destructive processes." At the same time, the Bishop's Council of the UOC KP calls on the UOC (MP) to "resume the preparations to the dialogue" to "overcome the existing schism and create in Ukraine a single unified Ukrainian Orthodox Church, with the Patriarch's seat in Kyiv and official recognition of the Kyiv Patriarchate by local orthodox churches as an autocephalous church." The document reminds everybody that these preparations were interrupted due to pressure from the Moscow Patriarchate "after their successful beginning in the autumn 2009."

At the same time, the document stresses that the UOC KP "considers absolutely unacceptable and rejects any schemes or proposals intended to reach church unity, if the conditions stipulated include the accession of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in any form to the Moscow Patriarchate."

On June 28, the Holy Synod of the UOC KP was held as well. It was chaired by Patriarch Filaret and considered an application of UAOC Archbishop Ioan (Modzalevsky) for his admittance to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate). This hierarch is known primarily as an intellectual among UAOC bishops and I is a former chairman of the Theological Canonical Commission of the UAOC. The Synod admitted Archbishop Ioan to the UOC KP and appointed him head of the stauropegial parish in Moscow (Russian Federation).

ARTICLE VII

Translation of an interview with Yuri Chornomorets, one of the UOC MP's leading intellectuals. His view is that the recent UOC KP Sobor was more directed to Constantinople than to the UOC MP. This is "spin" on his part (he's a paid advisor to Met. Antonii, the Secretary of the UOC MP Synod), as the whole point of the Sobor was to try to advance the negotiation process, but he makes some interesting observations regarding the KP's position, relations with the EP and trends in the UOC MP.

7. Summary of UOC KP Local Council: Translation of Documents from Diplomatic to Understandable Language

Interview by Serhii Shteinikov

Recently, Local and Episcopal Councils of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv Patriarchate drew a heated response and raised discordant opinions in the press. [Religion in Ukraine](#) Portal asked one of the leading experts in the sphere of “Orthodox conflict resolution studies”, Doctor of Philosophy Yurii Chornomorets, to comment on the situation. His opinion is furthermore interesting because he is a parishioner of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate).

- Yurii Pavlovych, the recent Local Council of the UOC Kyiv Patriarchate approved some rather unconventional decisions that open the way to a dialog with the UOC and even to a unifying council. How would you comment on these decisions?

- I think that when assessing the Local Council’s decisions, almost all analysts are looking not at the nature of these decisions, not at their actual context but at the “sweet words” said by the UOC KP leaders. However, the number of analysts is limited, and translation of documents from the diplomatic to ordinary language, the language of real life, is lacking. So, let us look at these decisions one by one.

First, a new management structure has been established in the UOC KP. Yet, how unique is it? Of course, the position of patriarchal vicar was not invented by the Kyiv Patriarchate. As Archbishop Evstratii (Zoria) correctly said at a press conference after the Local Council of the UOC KP, such position exists in the Russian Orthodox Church as well. Parishes of Moscow region are governed by the Patriarchal Vicar in the rank of Metropolitan of Krytitsy and Kolomna having the rights of diocesan bishop. Hence, the new scheme introduced by the UOC KP was developed using the Moscow’s experience. The only difference is that Metropolitan of Krutitsy does NOT automatically become the *locum tenens* when the Moscow patriarchal throne is vacated. In this regard, the scheme introduced by the UOC KP is quite unique. Of course, it should also be remembered that a similar arrangement has been used in the UOC (MP) for over a year now. And we can see a similar situation here – the aging Primate plus the young assistant (Metropolitan Antonii (Palanych) – *Ed.*). Generally speaking, there is nothing new. The young assistant takes care of the current affairs and is responsible for the diocese of Kyiv, and the Primate deals with the strategy. In fact, two positions are combined in the UOC: those of Chancellor and First Vicar of the Kyiv Metropolitanate, and in UOC KP there is only one position for these functions. Thus, this efficient management scheme was noticed and borrowed. This is good.

Second, decisions of the UOC KP Local Council do not open any ways to a dialog with the UOC. On the contrary, the scheme itself with Patriarch Philaret partially receding into the background and Metropolitan Epiphanius being pushed to the forefront of the current work is a strategic step toward the Constantinople Patriarchate.

- Why?

- Bishop Epiphanius is a young and talented eparch. He knows Greek and has contacts in the Greek Orthodox community. Of course, these contacts are unofficial. However, he has already been nominated

as a negotiator on behalf of the UOC KP. As a matter of fact, he has long been doing the largest part of work related to the foreign policy of this Church.

It is a known fact that one of Constantinople's requirements is to abolish patriarchate. The UOC KP can amend its statute making patriarchate not an axiom but a negotiable item.

A combination of two factors – nomination of Bishop Epiphanius and refusal from mandatory elections of Patriarch specifically within these terms – this all demonstrates openness to Constantinople. However, this is mere openness with no strings attached; it only means creation of favorable conditions to start official negotiations, and nothing more.

- However, Patriarch Philaret during the Local Council spoke about the need to prepare the grounds specifically for a unifying council with the UOC...

- Let us read the *final* documents of the Council more carefully. Yes, on the one hand, it is about the prospects for a unifying council with the UOC. On the other hand, there is a direct statement about unacceptability for the UOC KP of those unification schemes that allow for canonical dependence from Moscow in any form. This means that the unifying council is possible for the UOC KP only if the UOC receives autocephaly from Moscow. However, this is an *a priori* unrealistic scenario. It is clearly unacceptable for the Moscow Patriarchate. More importantly, it is unacceptable for a large number of bishops and laity in the UOC.

Therefore, the Council documents in fact contain a strong rejection of all models of a union with the UOC. For instance, let's consider the most favorable model, which at the suggestion of the then Metropolitan of Smolensk and the incumbent Patriarch Kirill was discussed in the early 2000s. Let's assume that all UOC KP bishops are considered oikonomias and join UOC as Galicia-Volyn Autonomous Church, and as such they are obliged to refer only to their Metropolitan, and the latter – only to Kyiv Metropolitan of the UOC. Under such a scenario, the UOC has an official status of a self-governing church within the jurisdiction of Moscow Patriarchate, but with extended rights, which means that *de facto* it is independent. But what do we see in the UOC KP Local Council documents? They utterly reject all variants of uniting with the UOC. What they need is a complete and final divorce of the UOC with the Moscow Patriarchate – and only then they are ready to ally. Of course, no such divorce will take place.

- In your opinion, does this mean they offer negotiations on the one hand and on the other –destroy even the possibility of it?

- In fact, the UOC KP conducted kind of “virtual negotiations” with the UOC. It asked itself whether the UOC KP agrees to accept the best scenario of its union with the UOC. And the answer was – no, it doesn't. It is an important result, and it must be realized and documented.

But if they do not agree to ally with the UOC, and instead they create their own management instrument, including the conditions for negotiations with canonical Orthodoxy – it becomes clear that they see the Constantinople Patriarchy as their partner and will negotiate with it.

- Is there a chance that negotiations between the UOC KP and Constantinople will be successful?

- It is difficult to say “yes”, but it is also difficult to say “no”. Let's try to understand. In the past, Constantinople wanted the UOC KP to unite with the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. Now, they are not talking about it. The UAOC is seen as a “failed church”. Thus, the main precondition that was important in the early 2000s – a union between the UOC KP and the UAOC – does not exist any more. This means that the UOC KP is an independent player, and it is no longer possible to ruin the game with the help of the UAOC – as was repeatedly done in 2005-2008.

- Do you think that the UAOC today is in the most difficult situation?

- Yes, and I also believe that no one is able to restore it completely – there are no such talented people in the UAOC or in Ukraine in general. Of course, some historic incident may occur, but on the whole the UAOC has lost all its historical opportunities, all chances, and today it is at the stage of a deep decline. I would say this decline could lead to a collapse. The UOC KP skillfully uses it – and it is their great historical success. We can only congratulate the UOC KP on the dexterous use of UAOC's weakness, and wish the Kyiv Patriarchate further success in its effort to consolidate bishops and parishes of all non-canonical jurisdictions.

- And still, everyone has a right to exist...

- Yes, but we are talking about a historical process, and not about the citizens' right to freedom of religion. It is clear that some remnants of the UAOC will continue to exist, but generally this time the UOC KP has won. Within the country, it has gained victory over the UAOC and now it has gained complete victory on the foreign policy arena.

It is important for us that there are two players now left in the field – Constantinople and the UOC KP. The UAOC left the field. The UOC MP after Archimandrite Kirill's (Hovorun) resignation and even earlier – since the beginning of Kirill's patriarchy – also has not manifested itself in any way in this field, and it is unable to divert Constantinople and the UOC KP from an engrossing negotiation process.

- The question is whether the parties will be able to reach an agreement.

- Technical conditions for this are already in place; the UOC KP with its decisions made the next step toward Constantinople, and it is difficult to say what will follow. Anyway, neither the UOC nor the UAOC or Ukraine in general will be influenced very much by these processes. The UOC KP has strongly closed itself for any impacts, any negotiations. Of course, some words are said about the Unifying Council and other things, but in fact the actual direction is to ensure that Constantinople becomes the only possible partner in this dialog.

- In the negotiation with Constantinople fails, what do you think the UOC KP can expect?

- Nothing special. The UOC KP will preserve its *status quo*. Whereas UAOC during the second half of the previous century was supported by the illusion of approximation to Constantinople, the UOC KP is an independent organization whose identity will not change whatsoever, whether there is any progress in negotiations with Ecumenical Patriarchate or not. Patriarch Philaret was able to educate a generation of intelligent bishops, tried them in practice, and identified a small core group of assistants who today *de facto* have become the center of crystallization of the future post-Philaret UOC KP.

- Who do you mean?

- Metropolitan Dymytry, Metropolitan Epiphanius, Archbishop Evstratii. This is the small nucleus. Furthermore, there are several young bishops flanking this group. Moreover, this group is sincerely faithful to the Patriarch, and thus it is not in the least possible that it will become an alternative decision-making center. It is a tool of implementation of Patriarch Philaret's decisions. Yet, it is an efficient tool, and this nucleus together with the Synod and the Council of Bishops of UOC KP as the uniform "collective management" can successfully survive any possible scenarios both under Philaret and after him.

They can be destroyed only by the state. However, they do not take this factor into consideration. They are too inspired by the experience of 2010-2011: there was pressure on them but the UOC KP with support of their believers as some "civil society" managed to survive. Still, the UOC KP forgets that the government in the future may act differently from the way it did in 2010-2011. The government can demonstrate rigidity that the UOC KP will not withstand. Thus, I personally in the position of UOC KP would think about joining the UOC and common survival, common development. However, it seems that they have made their historic choice.

- By the way, how would you assess the restriction of parish rights and extension of episcopate rights regarding the appointment and dismissal of senior priests provided for in the new UOC KP Statute?

- Here we deal with an objective process. A liberal scheme where there are believers who unite and hire a priest is no longer working. There are different reasons for that. Episcopate and priesthood with their status are simply forced to take the responsibility for operative church management. The laity is able to protect the church during a crisis – but not always. Yet, the laity is unable to solve everyday problems of the church. Whether we want it or not, Orthodoxy is episcopate-centered. And everything depends on a bishop. Upon his will, a priest serves. Of course, there are good intentions to ensure higher involvement of laity in church service, and there are theological conversations that there is no church without the laity. However, all these are either conversations or the influence of Protestantism, Protestant theology. All changes are to be accepted as a historical inevitability. Of course, if the Orthodox Church was a network of communities living full life, this would be excellent. However, so far it seems that without concentration of power and responsibility with a bishop nothing works. Perhaps, when bishops, priests and laity become better, more educated and active, ideal life would become possible.

- Do you think these amendments to the UOC KP Statute are not related to the intention of uniting with the Moscow Patriarchate and the concerns that parishioners would not support such transition?

- No, it is more like a desire to safeguard themselves for the period of union with Constantinople Patriarchate in order to prevent crazy heads from dashing without seeing things clearly to the UAOC or elsewhere...

- How do you see UOC KP prospects?

- Only two years ago, I was a careful pessimist, since the UOC KP did not carry out any active work with the people, and it had no influence on the development of the “Ukrainian world”. Yet, today I am more of an optimist. The UOC KP found forms of cultural work, launched large-scale programs on a transition of saint Fathers. It turned out that under Patriarch Philaret a generation of faithful church ministers grew up. Paradoxical as it may seem, although the UOC KP did not communicate properly with the world’s Orthodoxy, it is trying to adopt the main achievements of Orthodox theology. So, when talking to the young generation that grew in the UOC KP one feels that they know about the modern Orthodox ecclesiology whereas the old generation was hopeless with regard to many things. This new generation has great opportunities for achieving the new quality of the UOC KP, and for achieving unity. I will say more – today, the UOC KP has achieved certain maturity that was absent only several years ago. Or maybe it was there, but it could not be seen... Generally speaking, the UOC KP can survive today under any scenario – accession to the UOC, accession to the Constantinople Patriarchate, or independent functioning.

- Some comments [criticize the quality of Council documents](#). What is your opinion about it?

- I have followed the style of reports and documents of the UOC KP for a long time. And I have my own opinion. Patriarch Philaret’s speeches are very lively, and he reminds me of Nikita Khrushchev’s style. I think he has a right to this style. However, UOC KP documents sometimes raise real concerns. For instance, a letter was written from the local council to Patriarch Bartholomew and heads of other local churches. A large part of this message is written in an overtly publicist style. I think it is a real scandal. One can imagine how these messages are read in Orthodox churches. I think that the addressees will either not read letters with such publicist insertions at all or they will be very surprised. There are standards and they must be respected. One should not fall to the level of journalism in such important documents. I believe it is even humiliating for the honor of the Orthodox Church Primates and personally of Patriarch Bartholomew. I simply cannot understand why they do this. Most likely, the explanation is that the main audience of these messages is not the Primates but the Ukrainian society. The writing and publication of such messages is perhaps seen as part of a PR campaign aimed at a domestic consumer. By the way, last year the UOC KP sent messages to the heads of local churches, the Pope, and the

Archbishop of Canterbury. Later, official representatives of the UOC KP admitted that they did not expect a response but merely strived to state their position again. So, it happens that an important, nearly statutory, text is written, but the reaction of an official addressee of this text in principle is not so important. For the UOC KP it is important how it will be perceived here, in Ukraine. Hence, one can see here a result of the absence of regular international contacts. Let's not forget that the UOC KP has no official communication with other local Churches, and so these messages often look like letters to "nowhere".

- So, if we "properly" read the Local Council documents, we will see that the UOC KP refused to establish a dialog with the UOC MP and even more – it positively rejected all possible compromise scenarios?

- Exactly. And it should also be realized that if this is the initial position of the UOC KP which is negotiable, there is still a hope. Yet, if this is the last word, Ukrainian Orthodoxy will not be united for a long time ahead. And all attempts to push the guilt for the breakup to the UOC alone are unsustainable. How can one speak about the future dialog at all when the council documents positively denounce all possible variants of a compromise with the UOC? I think the UOC KP should re-think its own approach to the dialog, and to translate fairly its historical proposals from the diplomatic to the common popular language. So far, the translation shows only one thing – we do not want any union with the UOC. Only if the UOC crawls to us on its knees after the divorce, we will mercifully pardon it and share our power in the Kyiv Patriarchate. If it is so, it is simply ridiculous. So, it should be said: we really began negotiations not with MP which is not with the UOC, but with the Constantinople Patriarchate. Truth is always better than lies. And a well-written honest text is better than fairytales and propaganda. Generally, it is time we began to speak openly and not mix genres when writing documents. Otherwise, the time can come when not only the UAOC is not seen seriously, but other Ukrainian Orthodoxy actors are laughed at. This will become a historical failure for Ukraine in general.

ARTICLE VIII

8. An open letter issued by the UOC KP Sobor to HAH and other Primates.

LETTER
of the Local Council of
Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kyiv Patriarchate
(27 June 2013)

To His All-Holiness Bartholomew,
Archbishop of Constantinople - New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch
To Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches

Your All-Holiness!
Your Holinesses and Beatitudes!

The Local Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which by the grace of God met on 27 June 2013, the celebration of the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Kyivan Rus'-Ukraine providing a special opportunity for this event, appeals to you on behalf of the Church with sincere greetings and requests your prayers for Ukraine, the Ukrainian Church and our nation.

I. You are well aware that the Orthodox Church in Ukraine is divided. The Moscow Patriarchate seeks to treat us and our Church as "a schismatic group" and the declaration of its autocephaly as the initiative of a few people for the satisfaction of nationalist aspirations or personal ambitions.

Both of these statements are untrue.

1. We are not "a schismatic group", since our Church is lead by the same hierarch who legitimately and in a generally-recognized manner was elected as the Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) in July 1990, and in 1995 was elevated by our Local Council to Patriarchal dignity. To that time, as Metropolitan and as a leader within the hierarchy of the Russian Church, he was without interruption the holder of the Kyiv See since 1966.

In 1992, as a result of Russian political considerations, the Metropolitan of Kyiv and All-Ukraine was unlawfully, and in violation of the canons of the Church's Charter, removed from service as Primate of the UOC; when he refused to submit to this illegal move, the Moscow Patriarchate declared him to be "defrocked" and "subject to anathema."

From the history of the Church you are familiar with many examples of illegitimate trials to which the hierarchy were subjected, either for the sake of someone's love of power, or upon the orders of the powers-that-be in this world. The Holy Hierarchs Athanasius of Alexandria, John Chrysostom and the Metropolitan of Moscow Philip are only a handful of names that remind us both that Councils of bishops may be wrong and that anathemas, declared illegally, are ineffective and descend on those who proclaim them.

In the early 1990s, a tragic division took place in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church through the unlawful deeds of the Moscow Patriarchate. We sincerely continue to strive to overcome this division, but we will never agree to recognize deception as the truth.

The Kyiv Patriarchate is not "a schismatic group", but a part of a still-divided Ukrainian Church and an integral part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, since by its ministry and preaching it professes the same redeeming Orthodox faith as the Churches of which you are Primates.

2. Ukraine is a separate independent state, and Ukrainians are a separate nation, of which the majority of people adhere to the Christian Orthodox religion. Christian preaching in the Ukrainian lands sounded still from the lips of the Apostle Andrew, and, during the reign of Holy Prince Volodymyr, in 988 the Kyivan State became Christian. Therefore, having the proper historical basis and contemporary prerequisites (a large number of hierarchs, clergy and laity, numerous monasteries and theological schools), the Ukrainian Church implemented the 34th apostolic rule and declared its autocephaly in the consiliar manner.

This decision was upheld at the Council of the UOC held on November 1-3, 1991 by the votes of all the bishops and other delegates, who legally represented the entire Ukrainian Orthodox Church (within the Moscow Patriarchate). Later, the Moscow Patriarchate, employing pressure and blackmail with the assistance of secular forces, persuaded most bishops to reject this resolution – but such illegality cannot nullify its validity.

Therefore, we are firmly convinced that our Church is the true Local Orthodox Church, which lawfully proclaimed its autocephaly and humbly anticipates that other Local Orthodox Churches, having studied our petition, will accept it as a Sister-Church. The hitherto absence of responses to these, our petitions, can neither stop the grace of the Holy Spirit, whose redemptory acts bless our Church, nor annul the indisputable fact that we are the Local part of the single Body of the Church of Christ.

Our aspirations for recognition of our autocephaly are not dictated by nationalist motivations, since we are a Church for all Orthodox Christians in Ukraine, not only for Ukrainians. We are also not guided by personal ambitions, for the pursuit of autocephaly for the Ukrainian Church was expressed as early as 1918, when, after the fall of the Russian monarchy Ukraine briefly became an independent state, and it is clear that nobody from our current hierarchy was yet born at that time.

We are driven by one thing only: to strive for the good of the Church and the pious Ukrainian people, because, following the Baptism of Rus', when the newly founded Kyiv Metropolia was not dependent on the Moscow throne, it blossomed spiritually.

It published the first complete Bible in Slavonic, known as the Ostroh Bible; established the Mohyla Academy, the first Orthodox school of higher learning in the Slavic lands; created, under the supervision of St. Peter Mohyla, the Catechism recognized by all Orthodox Churches; and educated many of the saints who spiritually and culturally renewed not just our land, but who also successfully served in the Muscovy state, as far as the remotest territories of Siberia.

When in 1686 Moscow illegally (by bribery and force) gained control of the Kyiv Metropolia, our Church started into decline, and it was turned into a tool for the Russification of the Ukrainian people and their subjugation under the Russian Empire.

3. Therefore, the Local Council once again - according to the commandment of the Gospel to ask for it to be given and to knock for it to be opened - on behalf of all of the congregations of the Church appeals to you with the request to reject Moscow falsehoods and see the truth, to unite with our Church in prayerful communion and recognize its autocephaly.

To achieve this objective we are prepared through our authorized representatives to explain our position and to listen to your thoughts by both receiving your representatives in Ukraine, and visiting the countries of your Primates' ministry.

We urge you to judge our Church not according to the words of Moscow, but directly from us - because this is the admonishment of the Gospel: Do not judge anyone until you listen to him, to what he testifies about himself.

II. All of you are well-aware that many of the problems and misunderstandings between the Local Orthodox Churches arise from the desire of the Moscow Patriarchate to take the place of primacy in Orthodoxy, ousting the Ecumenical Patriarch.

These ambitions of the Moscow Patriarchate are essentially predicated on one reason: that the Russian Church, based on the number of its bishops and parishes, is allegedly the largest Local Church.

However, only a few figures show that the Moscow Patriarchate in Russia itself is not as big and powerful as it pretends.

According to the official data of the Russian police, this year during the Easter celebrations 4.6 million believers came to worship in 10,100 churches in Russia (out of a population of 142 million), including only 300,000 people in Moscow and the Moscow region (the population of Moscow City alone is 12-14 million).

At the same time, according to the police in Ukraine, more than 10 million believers came out to worship in 15,400 churches (in a country with a population of 45 million).

From this it is evident that without Ukraine, the Russian Church even formally has no right to claim that it is the largest. These official government figures also show that the real impact of the Moscow Patriarchate on its own people in Russia is exaggerated.

Therefore, in our view, the Moscow Patriarch continues to stubbornly cling to Ukraine in his own struggle for influence - for left with only Russia, where the influence of Islam grows every year, even to dream to be the first becomes impossible.

We believe that recognition of the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine will make it impossible for the Moscow Patriarchate to continue its struggle for paramountcy in Orthodoxy, which belongs to the Ecumenical Patriarch. This will bring greater peace to inter-Orthodox relations and would solve many issues that remain unresolved as a result of decades of unfortunate confrontation.

Bearing our prayers for you, Your Holinesses and Beatitudes, Primate of the Churches, and especially for our Mother-Church of Constantinople, led by the Ecumenical Patriarch, on behalf of the Local Council we wish you health, blessed assistance in your ministry, long life and all of God's other blessings.

We mutually ask for your holy prayers and blessings!

With love in Christ Jesus Our Lord -

on behalf of the Local Council of
Ukrainian Orthodox Church
Kyiv Patriarchate