

EASTERN CHURCHES AND THEOLOGIES

The session was chaired by Petro B. T. Bilaniuk (University of St. Michael's College, Toronto). The presentations were slated to be given by Arthur L. Kennedy (who could not attend) and by Vladimir Vancik (emeritus, Illinois Benedictine College and Duquesne University). Hence, at the last minute, the chair prepared a paper: "The Concept of 'Particular' or 'Autonomous' Church." Petro Bilaniuk opened the session with his presentation, for its content logically preceded that of Prof. Vancik's paper.

The Church universal consists of an association, or confederation, of particular and autonomous churches—much as the future united Europe will consist of autonomous countries. Each of the Eastern churches tended towards developing and preserving its particularity, or local and cultural autonomy, consisting of both material and formal elements. The material elements are: (1) a group of faithful or the People of God; (2) an indigenous hierarchy with apostolic succession; (3) a particular discipline which can be canonical (general norms and canons concerning persons, things, processes, penalties, etc.) or liturgical (i.e. external cult or ceremonies, liturgical books with texts and rubrics, vestments, utensils, a calendar with different cycles of feast days, fasts, etc.); (4) a particular homogenous spiritual heritage, patrimony, or tradition, which entails origins and history, language(s), a particular culture and mentality rooted in a special *Weltanschauung*, a particular ethnic group or groups, a distinct theological school (system or orientation); distinct terminology, expression, style, etc.; a special type of spiritual or monastic life; a special and distinct mode of instruction or school system; finally, a special kind of religious art with distinct architecture, painting, iconography, decorations, embroideries, vestments, utensils, chant and music, woodcarving, even dance (as in the Ethiopian Church).

The formal elements of local autonomy in a certain rite consist of: (1) recognition (expressed or tacit) as *sui iuris*, that is, autonomous by a legitimate authority (the authority of ecumenical councils, popes, patriarchs, bishops, synods, and the faithful themselves); (2) exclusive membership in one's own rite; (3) formal exercise of autonomy or particularity. Here the *sobornost'*, or conciliarity, within the rite is evident.

The Eastern churches have preserved the structure in which the patriarchs (as in the fifth-century Christian world) led the particular churches in matters of the laws of personal life-styles: this included the option of monastic or married clergy, the forms of monasticism (anachoretic, cenobitic and ideorhythmic), etc. They have also preserved much ancient liturgical symbolism: the Ethiopian Church preserved the Saturday sabbath as well as Sunday, also circumcision. The calendars differed: the Ethiopians have a monthly (not yearly) cycle; and in

liturgy, they have clerical dance and much Old Testament symbolism. The Byzantines often preserve ancient church architecture: a square church with cruciform interior, a dome, and the iconography symbolizing the cosmos transfigured in the Holy Spirit.

No church exists in isolation; in institutional government, there are many parallels with the secular state—a state is an independent and sovereign political community with a distinct territory, population and positive constitutional and legal order. The autonomous churches originated in distinct territories with distinctive ancient languages and ideologies; each continues to have its own constitutional and legal order which governs the relationships among the members and their functionaries. Each particular church has existed in a population which also has state governments—hence church-state relations, oppositions, separations, concordats, etc. are part of the picture. The *Weltanschauung* of the church members is affected by the state's position, whether that position be persecution, national diarchy, international diarchy, theocracy, hierarchy, caesaropapism, erastianism, papocaesarism, ethnarchy or the millet system. The forms of state government which influence (even if subconsciously) the life of the church have been: monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, republic, democracy, anarchy and totalitarianism.

Professor Vancik concentrated his attention on the Byzantine Rite churches—both Catholic and Orthodox—in Eastern and Southern Europe. He mentioned that there are only a handful of Catholics of the Byzantine Rite in Greece who have an apostolic exarch as their head. Greece has its autonomous archbishopric of Athens, whereas Macedonia belongs to the archbishopric of New Rome and the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The Catholic Byzantine Rite churches in Ukraine, Byelorussia, Russia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary were persecuted during the Communist rule. The Ukrainian Catholic Church was liquidated in 1946 at the pseudo-synod of Lviv. A few months before that "synod" all the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops had been imprisoned; and all of them died in captivity except Metropolitan Josyf Slipyj. He was released in 1963, and arrived in Rome before the second session of Vatican II.

Rev. Vancik stressed the fact that the Cardinal and Major Archbishop Josyf Slipyj had created the modern particular Ukrainian Catholic Church by organizing synods of bishops, by creating a permanent synod, by erecting the Ukrainian Catholic University of St. Clement in Rome, and by establishing monasteries, especially the Studion in the vicinity of Rome. He also established a liturgical commission which began publishing liturgical books for the whole Church in the diaspora. Of great importance were his canonical visits to all the countries of the Ukrainian diaspora. His insistence on the return to the pure Eastern tradition in theology, church art, liturgy, spirituality, mysticism etc. contributed to a very fertile ecumenical atmosphere—especially vis-à-vis the Ukrainian Orthodox. Professor Vancik called this "de-Latinization."

He also dwelt on the Greek Catholic Church in Yugoslavia with its bishopric in Krizevci. This situation of the Greek Catholics (Ukrainians, Croatians, Romanians and Macedonians) there has been very precarious, situated between warring factions: the Croatians are Roman Catholics and the Serbs are Orthodox. Especially during the Second World War, many atrocities were perpetrated by the warring factions and their allies.

After the presentations there was a brief but very productive discussion of the questions raised in the papers.

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