

Archbishop of Ohrid and  
Metropolitan of Skopje Jovan

*THEOLOGICAL-HISTORICAL ASPECT OF  
THE SCHISM OF THE CHURCH IN THE  
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA  
AND ITS OVERCOMING*

**1. The schism as a contradiction to the  
unity of the Church**

**T**he Eastern (Orthodox) Church identifies the unity with the Eucharist. The one who is in the Eucharist is in the Church and one cannot be in the Church unless one participates in the Eucharist. In other words, the Eucharist is the border of the Church, if the Church has any borders at all.<sup>1</sup> The borders of the Church are neither territorial nor timely. They are only ontological. This means that either one is in the Church, that is, in the Eucharist and therefore exists, or one is not in the Church and therefore one does not exist.

But, what do we make of the schism which has its Eucharist, and according to the logic of the above-said it should also be Church? The schism is more an opposition than a contradiction. The contradiction is in a way immanent to the Church, particularly in its iconic ontology. The Church “is”, but it also still “is not” the Kingdom of God.

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<sup>1</sup> “The Church is indicated in the mysteries”, says St. Nicolas Cabasilas, *Εἰς τὴν Θεῖαν λειτουργίαν* PG.150, 452D. There is no better definition of the Church. However, at the same time, this means that the Church cannot be defined. It has no borders. It is identified with the sacraments, with the Liturgy.

However, the opposition is absolutely alien to the Church. The schism, which is an opposition, eats the church identity from the inside. If the church identity is the unity<sup>2</sup>, then the schism is immediately directed against it. It separates instead of gathering, it divides instead of uniting.

Florovsky, in his essay “The Catholicity of the Church”, poses one inevitable question. Previously emphasising that the teaching of St. Cyprian of Carthage about the grace of the holy mysteries only in the borders of the Church has never been rejected, nor denied by the Church, he wonders, how is it possible not to accept and retain the practical conclusions of Cyprian in the knowledge of the Church?<sup>3</sup>

To answer this question, which certainly is an essential question for the schism, one needs to refer somewhat more to the historical-theological circumstances in regard to the schisms in the New-Testament and post-New-Testament times, until the time of St. Cyprian of Carthage. In the beginning, the Church was somewhat tolerant towards the schisms. To be honest, the schisms described in the New Testament are not even similar to the ones in the Christian history to come.<sup>4</sup> Although in the original Greek text the word “σχίσμα” is used, the Slavic translators, as well as ones for the other languages, translated it as: discord (razdor), argument. This is because in the beginning of the New Testament the schism was understood as a sort of difference of opinion of certain members of the Church, without the danger of those differences of opinion to separate the community. Later in

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<sup>2</sup> Having in mind the unity of the Holy Trinity in God the Father, the Church has unity in Christ, in His body. Christ says: “that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in me and I am in You. May they also be in us so...” (John 17:21).

<sup>3</sup> St. Cyprian of Carthage is the first who thoroughly theologially treated the schism. He was urged to theologize about the unity and the grace in the limits of the Church having as aim to find solution for the schisms of his age. But, just as it was always practiced in the Church, to relate deeply the theology with the pastoral needs, so was the theology of St. Cyprian regarding the unity and the schism, although it may seem to someone theoretical and academic, it is deeply pastoral and ecclesiastical, because it leaves no room for doubt about the gracelessness of the schisms, and with this the impossibility to find salvation outside of the Church.

<sup>4</sup> See: John 7:43, 9:16 and 10:19

the epistles of the Apostle Paul, we can see that the schism is not only difference of opinion of some individuals to a tolerable limit, but a certain separation to groups.<sup>5</sup>

Although there were schisms even before the time of St. Cyprian, still, in the history of the Church, there wasn't such a clear ecclesiology of the unity as the one he established. But, he also should be thanked for something else, for the historical legacy left on the understanding of the schism, which remained an unsurpassed lesion of ecclesiology. Precisely in this historical legacy we recognise the ecclesiological tradition of the Church, inherited from St. Ignatius of Antioch and Clement of Rome, according to which the Church has the following structure: bishop, priest, deacon, and laos, or people of God. The clergy, which includes the priests and deacons, as well as the laos, are subordinated to the bishops, but in accordance to the Gospel: "who wants to be the first, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:27), the bishop asks for advice (*consilium*) from the clergy, and asks only for agreement (*consensus*)<sup>6</sup> from the people, but he does not neglect or leave out anyone. The Church is gathered in the bishop who holds every initiative, but he does nothing on his own, without the others<sup>7</sup>. The clergy may participate in the choice of an bishop, even the people may, but the choice of the bishop becomes valid only when he is recognised by the other bishops who inevitably should participate in the choice of a bishop of a local Church<sup>8</sup>.

So, according to Cyprian, who, as we said, follows the entire tradition of the Church up to his time, the bishop, the catholic Church, Christ and God are inseparably joined. His conclusion: "the one that does not have the Church for a mother could not have God for a father" is well-known, as well as "the one who is not with the Church is not with Christ"<sup>9</sup>. On another place he added: "just as the one who is

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<sup>5</sup> See: 1 Corinthians 1:10, 11:18.

<sup>6</sup> Epist. 34 (28):3-4

<sup>7</sup> Ἰγνατίου Θεοφόρου, Πρὸς Μαγνησίους ἐπιστ., 7.

<sup>8</sup> Epist. 55 (52), 8.

<sup>9</sup> „Habere non potest Deum patrem qui ecclesiam non habet matrem” и „Qui alibi praeter ecclesiam colligit Christi ecclesiam spargit”. De Unitate 6.

not with the bishop is not with the Church"<sup>10</sup>, consequently he is neither with God nor with Christ. Where the bishop is, that is where the Church is<sup>11</sup>. In other words, the Church is the only area in which the mysteries of salvation take place, but exclusively by the canonically established hierarchy. According to St. Cyprian, it is not enough, only to confess the faith correctly to be named a catholic Church. The correct confession of the faith is not the only criterion for the catholicity of the Church. Quite the opposite, the catholicity of the Church is a criterion for the correct confession of the faith<sup>12</sup>. Usually the schismatics defend the state of schism with the statement that they do not differ in the confession of the faith from those who teach orthodoxly, that is, keep the same dogma. However, according to St. Cyprian, the correct confession of the faith is not salvational without the unity with the Church<sup>13</sup>. The catholicity includes the confession of the faith and the teaching of the same, and the orthodox confession is not more encompassing or wider than the catholicity. Otherwise said, the real faith is revealed and confirmed only in the catholicity. So, it is not possible, as some schismatics think, to be orthodox without being in unity with the catholic Church.

Not only that outside of the catholicity of the Church is there no orthodox faith, but also the mysteries performed are not valid, because the Holy Spirit is absent from the heresy and in the schism. This is especially elaborated by St. Cyprian when he writes about the baptism performed by the schismatics. Even if we presume, he says, that it is possible for the schismatics to perform baptism, it is not possible for them to

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<sup>10</sup> „Si qui cum episcopo non sit, in ecclesia non esse...». Epist. 66 (69), 8.

<sup>11</sup> Ιγνατίου Θεοφόρου, Πρὸς Συμωναίους, 8.

<sup>12</sup> See: Ζηζιούλα, Ιω., Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ Θεῖα Εὐχαριστία καὶ τῷ ἐπίσκοπῳ, κατὰ τοὺς τρεῖς πρώτους αἰῶνας, Ἀθήναις 1990, pg. 128.

<sup>13</sup> About the year 255 St. Cyprian looks into the issue if the true faith is sufficient enough for the salvation of man, this is when the issue of the validity of the baptism of the schismatics is questioned. He is categorical that the heretics and the schismatics have neither the right nor the power to baptize. See: Epist. 69 (76):1. This issue was treated about thirty years before by the African Synod (the Synod in Carthage in 220, as is testified by St. Cyprian in Epist. 73:3 and Epist. 74:1), and by the Synod of Asia Minor (Epist. 75:9).

receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is only in the Church. To be baptised, and not to receive the Holy Spirit is the same as if one hadn't been baptised<sup>14</sup>. The baptism is absolution of the sins, and the sins are absolved only by those who have received the Holy Spirit, according to John 20:22. Those external to the catholic Church are deprived of this<sup>15</sup>.

During the time of St. Cyprian, other local Churches got involved on the issue of the validity of the baptism performed by the schismatics and heretics, but almost all of them accepted his ecclesiology. First this was done by the bishops of Africa at the synods held in 255 and 256 year. The conclusions of these synods have been amounted to the following: the Catholic Church is the only area of operation of the Holy Spirit and for this reason why it has the only power to teaching and holy mysteries<sup>16</sup>. Similarly all the Eastern local Churches decided to follow St. Cyprian in his ecclesiology<sup>17</sup>. And this ecclesiology, as the Metropolitan John Zizioulas says, has mainly two focal points:

1. "As opposed to the schism, the Catholic Church holds possession of the fullness of the body of Christ (the oldest understanding of the catholicity), however, this is not declared only as unity in the Eucharist, or in the true faith and in the bishop, but as fullness and self-sufficiency of every salvational act of the Holy Spirit, expressed through the unity of every Church with the bishop, on whom the Church is supported.

2. "The schismatics are out of the Church and consequently it is not possible to speak of their participation in the area of the body of Christ. Hence, there is no essential difference, from the ecclesiological point of view, between the schism and the heresy. What is of interest to Cyprian is that both these are posed out of the Church. Beginning from the fact that the Church is the only body of Christ, then the one who is out of the Church is out of Christ and out of the salvation"<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Epist. 69 (66), 10.

<sup>15</sup> „cuncti haeretici et schismatici non dant Spiritum sanctum”. Epist. 69 (66), 11.

<sup>16</sup> Epist. 70, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Јевсевије Памфил, Црквена историја, Београд 1871, VII, 5, pg.78-80.

<sup>18</sup> See: Ζηζιούλα, Ιω., Ἡ ἐνότης τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῇ Θεῖα Εὐχαριστία καὶ τῷ ἐπίσκοπῳ, κατὰ τοὺς τρεῖς πρώτους αἰῶνας, Ἀθήναις 1990, pg. 133.

In the ecclesiology of St. Cyprian, the canonical and the essential limits of the Church overlap. This overlapping is proven by the unity of every local Church in the one Eucharist performed by one bishop. Everyone who does not participate in this Eucharist, performed by a canonical bishop, acknowledged by the other bishops of the Church of God in the ecumene, and performs another eucharist, under another bishop, is a schismatic both in a canonical, but also in the essential, dogmatic sense. For the Church is one, one is the body of Christ, therefore, every communion in another eucharist under another bishop, has nothing to do with the body of Christ.

It is undeniable that there is not a unified practice of accepting the schismatics in the Orthodox Church. In some of our circles that stand for “ecclesiastical exactitude”, the schismatics are accepted through repeated baptism. Consequently, none of the holy mysteries performed in the schism are considered valid. Nevertheless, on the wider region of the Orthodox Church, only a certain “economy” is applied regarding the schismatics. Not only the baptism, but also the unction and the other holy mysteries, even the ordination of priests and bishops is accepted to be valid, obviously, after the schismatics accede the unity with the Church and after it is confirmed that they have the apostolic succession.

This economy is caused by the pastoral needs of the Church. In its essence, it is philanthropy necessary for the salvation of the world. But, by exercising an economy in the schisms, are we not committing a greater sin? “If the graceless desolation, says Florovsky, begins behind the canonical borders of the Church, and all the schismatics were not baptised and still dwell in the pre-baptism darkness, then the perfect clarity, strictness and duration in the actions and judgements of the Church are still more necessary”<sup>19</sup>. In other words, if the baptism and the other holy mysteries performed in the schism are really invalid, because they were performed outside of the canonical area of the Church, then, why are the same recognized somewhere in the Orthodox Church? Is it only to make it easier for them to take the de-

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<sup>19</sup> Florovsky, G. “The Limits of the Church”, *Sobornost*, no.1-2/2001, pg.29.

cisive step, to accede the Church unembarrassed? Is it possible, then, to recognize that motive as worthy, convincing and blessed? If they are accepted only because of the above-mentioned, then this would be a very dangerous and hasty indulgence<sup>20</sup>. What is there to receive, in fact, for those who would accede the Church?

While the East, almost fully accepted the ecclesiology of St. Cyprian, the West, after the time of the Roman Bishop Stephen, made a difference between the charismatic and canonical area of the Church and later, this was supported by Augustus. So, according to them, someone can be in schism from a canonical point of view, and participate in the charismatic domain of the Church. Today, just as in the Orthodox, so in the Roman-catholic Church, the schisms are perceived with much more indulgence than in the time of St. Cyprian of Carthage. Hence, Florovsky's dilemma given above: How is it possible for the holy mysteries performed in schism to be accepted as valid, when the same had been performed in the graceless domain, that is, outside of the borders of the Church?

The Roman theology, certainly under the influence of the blessed Augustus, allows and confesses that in the schisms, even in the heresies, the apostolic succession is observed, and the holy mysteries performed by their clergy are not completely graceless<sup>21</sup>. Just as on many other issues, on this issue as well, the orthodox ecclesiology during the reign of the Turks was under the influence of the Roman-catholics.

On many occasions, especially during the long history of Byzantium, the East proved that it did not renounce the ecclesiology of St. Cyprian of Carthage regarding the schism, however, in the centuries af-

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<sup>20</sup> "This would be flattering to the human weakness, says Florovsky, the self-sufficiency and the faintheartedness and dishonesty are more dangerous because they create the entire illusion of the ecclesiastical recognition of the relevance of the schismatic sacraments and services, and this is not only regarding the acceptance of the schismatics or the outsiders, but also in the consciousness of the majority of the faithful as well as the clerical hierarchy." Florovsky, G., "The Limits of the Church", *Sobornost*, no.1-2/2001, Veles 2001, pg.29.

<sup>21</sup> Augustin, S., In Ps. 32, Enarr. II, 29; PL. 36, 299.

ter the fall of Constantinople it showed certain incapability to sustain and develop its authentic theology and strictness towards the acceptance of the schismatics. During this time the Church was positioned in some very unenviable political conditions and this is what, most probably, made it engage more over the unity, but at the same time made it yielding towards the schismatics and heretics.

Saint Augustine develops a teaching that the Church also has an effect in the mysteries of the schismatics. To some she gives birth from within, and to the others she gives birth from the outside, but both the former and the latter are born from the same mother, the Church<sup>22</sup>. It connects the former and the latter with a double bond: through the unity of the Spirit and the union of peace<sup>23</sup>. And while the union of peace is broken in the schism, the union of the Spirit in the holy mysteries, according to St. Augustine, remains unbroken. But, despite the fact that the schism remains united with the Church in the grace of the holy sacraments, as is the opinion of St. Augustine, it translates into a conviction as soon as the love and the catholicity drain. In spite of the primary difference between St. Cyprian and St. Augustine regarding the teaching about the grace in the schism, both agree that there is no salvation in the schism. St. Cyprian derived this conclusion through a more radical method<sup>24</sup>, while St. Augustine did this in a milder manner, but according to both of them, the holy mysteries performed by the schismatics are ineffective. According to St. Cyprian this is because these are performed outside of the canonical domain of the Church which overlaps with the graceful domain, and according to St. Augustine, this is because love ceases in the schism and in the separation, and salvation is impossible outside of love. In other words, despite the fact that the schismatics may have a Holy Bible, holy mysteries and the right teaching about the faith, they have no salvation. At least this is what St. Cyprian of Carthage and St. Augustine of Hippo said.

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<sup>22</sup> Augustin, S., De bapt., 1,15,23.

<sup>23</sup> Ephes. 4:3.

<sup>24</sup> “The one who is outside of the Church could be saved as much as those outside of Noah’s arc could be saved”. Cyprian of Carthage, St., “About the Catholicity of the Church”, Sofia 2000, pg.9.



It does not seem as it would be true to say that there is absolutely no grace in the schism. But, we would rather call this potential grace, than an effective grace. The grace which exists in the schism is potential and it waits for the moment when the schism is surpassed to become effective. It is probable that the grace spreads beyond the limits of the Church, because the Spirit blows wherever He wants<sup>25</sup>, and it seems too harsh, but also very binding for the freedom of the Holy Spirit if one says that there is no grace whatsoever outside of the Church. But one can say something else with certainty, this grace is only sufficient for biological sustenance, a grace given not in plenitude and fullness as is in the Church, but through a pacifier, as babies are fed. This grace is not the gift of adoption, but food necessary for the slave to survive. Thus it is not very clever to say that nothing is performed in the schismatic sacraments, because in this case they would be not a mere theatrical performance, but a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. However, the mysteries performed have no power to renovate and transform, no power to deliver and unite, they only have the potential for that. The effect of the holy mysteries will happen only after the schism is healed.

The One Who offers and Who offers Himself is Christ<sup>26</sup>. He performs every holy sacrament in the Church, however, because there is a need for a visible form of the act, the clergy does this. This means that the success and the grace of some holy sacrament do not depend on the worthiness of the priest. Does this mean that in the holy sacraments of the schismatics, as well, Christ is the one who acts, and if this is so, how can we say that there is no salvation in the holy sacraments performed in the schism?

It is true that Christ is the Great Archpriest and minister in the Church. It is true that the hierarchy appointed with the apostolic succession performs only the visible form of the holy sacrament. The grace is from God and there is no doubt about it. Nevertheless, if we can say so, the amount of grace emanated from the sacraments of the

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<sup>25</sup> John. 3,8.

<sup>26</sup> See the prayer "No one who is bound..." which is read during the Cherubic Hymn at the Liturgy.

schismatics is insufficient for enhancing, for accomplishing the final goal, deification and salvation. We would rather say that the grace in the sacraments of the schismatics is rather a grace of urging than a grace of enhancement and deification. It is necessary not only for the mere biological sustenance, because without the necessary minimum of grace none of the created beings can exist, but it is also a pledge of God's love towards the schismatics, which despite everything, has not become colder and has not dried off completely<sup>27</sup>. The father waits for the prodigal son to return and "everything which is his to become his son's". God has not closed Himself for the schismatics, but He is cautious and He hasn't given them the keys to all the treasures. He patiently waits for them to repent and to receive them in the communion of His body and blood. This is why through the holy sacraments he gives them a grace that urges them towards repentance. Nevertheless, the number of the schismatics is irrelevant. The philanthropic God who leaves the ninety nine sheep and goes after the lost one, He does not show mercy only because there are many who are in schism. He is far more induced with mercy by the concord of the few in the Church, that is in the body of Christ, than of the many who pray in discord with one another because the sole state of schism has separated them to such an extent that they don't even have a communal prayer<sup>28</sup>.

However, the sin brought by the schism, often, completely obscures the schismatics' conscience and they cannot make a difference between the urging and the enhancing grace. This is why the schismatics are minimalists, or, in the best case, mediocrities. Let us not be misunderstood, what we are talking about here is spiritual mediocrity, a distorted criterion for the ascetic love and perfection. Receiving a quantity of grace

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<sup>27</sup> Still, nothing can anger God more than the schism in the Church and the dividing of Christ's vestment, says St. John Chrysostom, Ὑπόμνημα εἰς τὴν πρὸς Ἐφεσίους ἐπιστολὴν εἰς ὁμιλίαις ΚΑ PG. 62, 85.

<sup>28</sup> St. Cyprian of Carthage said that with the words: "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Mt. 18:20), the Lord shows that He is more present when two or three one-heartedly pray than with a multitude of disagreeing ones, and that the unified prayer of the few can ask for more than the discordant prayer of the many. Cyprian of Carthage, St., "About the Catholicity of the Church", Sofia 2000, pg.16.

necessary for biological survival, the schismatics become self-content and without a will to enhance and deify. This is the reason why their criterion for the ecclesial identity is so labile. They confuse the ecclesiological with the biological being, the ecclesial with the worldly identity. The grace given to them in the holy sacraments, which is urging towards repentance, instead of being used for return into the catholic body of the Church, is being squandered on useless purposes, thrown “before the dogs and the pigs”<sup>29</sup>. Thus the grace given to them, instead of bringing salvation, is their conviction and doom. And, if someone asks, why are the schismatics given grace through the holy sacraments at all, when in most cases, this becomes their conviction and doom, the answer lies within the secret of God’s mercy and love. This is how they would not have the excuse that they have been cast out, but it would show that they have separated from the unity by themselves. This is how it would be declared that God waits for them, as His own sons, to return and to accept them in the community of the Church, but, also, that they are mindless and they steal from that which in fact belongs to them, they spend the part of the treasure of their Father, intended for them, in “a distant land...debaucherously”<sup>30</sup>, irreversibly, and without any benefit. This is why it is not possible to say that the schismatics are still in the Church. This is incorrect and ambiguous, although, it is probably possible to say that in the schisms the Church continues to act “anticipating for the mysterious hour when the hard heart will be melted by the warmth of the grace” and the will and thirst for conciliarity and unity will be lit and started up<sup>31</sup>.

In our contemporary world many want to position the schisms

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<sup>29</sup> Mt. 7:6.

<sup>30</sup> Luke 15:13.

<sup>31</sup> Wishing to prove that the blessed Augustine is not opposed to Saint Cyprian of Carthage, and to the entire Byzantine theology, regarding the schism, Georgy Florovsky wrote: “It is necessary to hold firmly in mind that in asserting the “validity” of the sacraments and of the hierarchy itself in the sects, St. Augustine in no way relaxed or removed the boundary dividing sect and communality. This is not so much a canonical as a spiritual boundary: communal love in the Church and the separatism and alienation in the schism. For Augustine this was the boundary of salvation...” See: Florovsky, G., “The Limits of the Church”, *Sobornost*, no.3/2001, Veles 2001, pg.12.

in the disciplinary, that is, canonical section of the church life. This is nothing but an attempt to reduce the weight of responsibility of the schismatics, for an eventual, easier solution and unity. Still, ever since the great schism with the Roman-Catholic church from 1054, which later gave birth to many other schisms, in the schismatic part of the Church started to exist a certain schismatic way of thinking which constantly tries to blunt the responsibility of the schismatics. In the first half of the 20th century even some theories started to occur, and these were intended to eradicate the border between the catholicity (conciliarity) and the schism. One of these theories is the famous: Church branch theory, according to which the schismatic churches are only branch of the one catholic Church. However, for the matter of truth, this theory should not be attached only to the incapability of the western theologians to theologize without apology for the state of schism in which they befell. Most of the evidences of the abovementioned theory were already used throughout the history of the schisms. This was also the case with the more recent schisms from the 19 century, which were, most often, inspired by ethnophiletistic urges.

It is a historical fact that many of the schisms which remained unresolved for a longer time grew into heresies. This is why, in the practice of the Church, the schismatics were very often identified with the heretics. At first glance it seems as if there is a certain contradiction between the 6th canon of the II Ecumenical Council and the First Rule of St. Basil the Great concerning the heretics and schismatics. Nevertheless, the Bishop Nicodime Milash, by interpreting this Rule, rightfully does not agree with Balsamon who wants to put in accord these two Rules through a gradation of the schisms. Those to which the 6th canon refers are schismatics who only pretend to believe and teach Orthodoxy, says Balsamon, and they are actually heretics, while those of which St. Basil speaks are orthodox by faith, but because of a certain misunderstanding they separated from the fraternity. Yet, the Bishop Nicodime wrote: "Not only is this Rule not a contradiction to the Rule of Basil the Great, but it also confirms it. The fathers here distinctly highlight that a distinction should be made between the heretics

and the schismatics and those who make illegal assemblies, this is why they separately mention the first, separately the second, and separately the third. Nevertheless, the fathers do not perceive the heretics in an ordinary, narrow sense of the word, but in its broad meaning, thus not only do the recognized heretics belong here, but also the schismatics and those who create illegal assemblies. According to this, the thought of the heretics could be explained in the following way: we forbid bringing of charges against the bishop to all heretics, including here under the name heretics not only those who are essentially such, and who have been condemned for their false teaching by us or our fathers, but also all of those dwelling in schism, as well as those who create illegal assemblies against the canonically ordained bishops, despite their pretending to confess the orthodox faith<sup>32</sup>.

As a matter of fact, the line between heresy and schism is very thin. Many schismatics stick to Orthodoxy, but in due time they become heretics. The isolation from the catholic life blunts their criterion for the real confession of the faith<sup>33</sup>. The most evident example of how the schism transforms into a heresy is the schism of the Roman-Catholic Church, and then all the other schisms that stemmed from that schism and grew into great scandalizing heresies. It is very difficult to preserve the real faith in a condition of isolation and non-communication. The isolated cannot apply the fruits of catholicity and of the Holy Spirit and they melt in their own self-sufficiency. They are aware that the fullness of the gifts of the catholic Church does not belong to them, so they secretly try to appropriate them. The schismatics, among all else, are impertinent usurpers of somebody else's property. They have done nothing to make the fruits of catholicity grow and they want to use them with no feeling of guilt that they do not deserve them. They want to use the entire heritage of the Church, and they have, self-willingly, renounced the same when they created the

<sup>32</sup> Milash N., Правила православне Цркве с тумачењима, book I, Novi Sad 1895, pg. 261.

<sup>33</sup> "Discord or schism, says the blessed Augustine, cannot happen if one does not act contrary to the tradition. This is why the schism is enrooted in the heresy", See: Augustin, *Cotra Crescon. grammatic. lib. II, cap.7.*

schism. They even wish not to be called schismatics, and yet they do not cast away the reasons that led to schism. But, the Church does not trust them for they are enemies of the Church, just as St. Athanasios the Great said referring to the schismatic followers of Meletios, who accused him<sup>34</sup>.

The creation of national Churches in the 19th century, was a great disturbance of the principle of catholicity (conciliarity). It started to be considered normal to bind the synods to the borders of the state of the appropriate national Church. The gradation of catholicity was lost. The local Churches, or in a somewhat better case, the Churches organized on the territory of one state, started to be treated as absolutely independent. Fortunately one of the principles of catholicity, the eucharistic unity in the bishop, was preserved even in the most difficult times for the Church. However, with the other principle, the eucharistic and canonical unity of the local Churches in the ecumene, there are many difficulties. This is why it is so difficult to organize an Ecumenical Council.

In the Orthodox Church the Council is not in the stead of the Pope, preserved for him in the Roman-Catholic Church, as many people think<sup>35</sup>. It is not some sort of an above-liturgical institution. It does not have an authority over certain local Church. This can be seen from the fact that no Synod, not even the Ecumenical ones, could interfere in the internal affairs of a local Church. When we say local Churches, we do not mean local from the aspect of patriarchates, or archbishoprics or Churches organized within the borders of a given state, but local from the aspect of the orthodox ecclesiology, according to which every Church with an bishop at its head, and which besides the bishop

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<sup>34</sup> Athanasius the Great (Афанасий Великий) *Защитительное слово противъ арианъ, Творения в четырех томах*, volume I, pg. 301.

<sup>35</sup> There are even theologians who consider that the Council of the Orthodox Church has the role of the Pope in the Roman-Catholic Church. However, this is only thus with the Old Roman-Catholics who separated from the Roman-Catholics at the First Vatican Council and did not support the impeccability of the Pope. Yet, they reached another extreme and they revered the Synod, or what we call conciliarism instead of the Pope.

also has a priest, a deacon and God's congregation in its structure, is treated as a local Church. Another thing is that there have been, and probably will still be, attempts for supervision over the internal affairs of a local Church. But these are erroneous examples and are owed to the misunderstanding of the synod. As early as in the third century, St. Cyprian of Carthage established a beginning, some might call it challenging, that every bishop is free to organize the affairs in his bishopric, answering only to God for that.

The exclusion of a local Church from participation in the Council is an ecclesiological offence. Every attempt to exclude some bishops from participating in the Council, and to consider the decisions that a few other, so called bishops from the synod, reach as obliging to everyone is a grave danger and an ecclesiological anomaly, and is a serious endangering of the ecclesiological foundation of the synod. However, it is an even graver ecclesiological undermining when certain local Churches, represented by their bishops, self-willingly refuse to participate in the council of the bishops on a wider territory, regardless of the reason for their refusal. Nowadays this is done out of ethnophiletistic reasons. Moreover, the issue of the autonomy or autocephaly of a given Church is, most often, opened because of ethnophiletistic reasons. Thus, the ethnophiletism has become the greatest instigator of schisms.

One should not forget that the Church has a gradation in the catholicity and this is how it preserves the unity. The greater councils are the ones which gather the bishops of a wider territory, regardless of the state borders, and the decisions of such councils are more valid from the decisions of the smaller councils which gather the bishops of smaller territorial borders<sup>36</sup>. For example, the metropolitan councils were, and still are of a lower rank compared to the patriarchal or exarchial one. Certainly the greatest is the Ecumenical Council which includes the bishops of the entire ecumene (world, universe), and the decisions reached at these councils are the most influential.

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<sup>36</sup> In many Canons passed at the Ecumenical or Local Councils this gradation of the decisions is emphasized, certainly with a highlight on the Councils of wider territories. See Canons: II 6; IV 9, 17; Antioch. 14;

## **2. Chronology of the Schism of the Church in the Republic of Macedonia and its Overcoming**

### *a) Historical and Political Interferences*

One cannot talk of the schism of the Church in the Republic of Macedonia without having at least a minimal knowledge of the history of the people inhabiting that territory. Having no intention to turn this essay into a historical treatise, it will still be necessary to refer to several basic dilemmas, raised in the history of the people living on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, which have, largely, contributed to the occurrence and persistence of the schism of one part of the Church in the Republic of Macedonia. The dilemmas that we would wish to discuss were a taboo in the history of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, and then again, unfortunately, they remain as such until today, first of all because many see them as difficult to solve, then, because even those who have certain solutions for the dilemmas lack the courage to present them because they can be proclaimed to be dangerous for the future of the state, without anyone being concerned about their truthfulness. Ever since the communist rule, somehow, we got used to living in the lie and with the lie, thus, nowadays many find the atmosphere of the truth unbearable because it asks for a radical inner change, redistribution of the energy, or translated into a theological vocabulary, repentance and transformation.

Regardless of how many these people are, and I will call them my people just to prove that both in good and evil I share their destiny, they were oppressed, tormented, humiliated and maltreated, regardless whether they were aware that they should have their own state or their immaturity for the same, regardless of the bravery and will to live in freedom, or the fear and patience, still a great dilemma on the path to the future has not been solved for them. The dilemma is the following: what is the relation between the Macedonians and the Slavs? In other words, can you at the same time be both Macedonian – a native and Slav – a newcomer, or is there something incompatible in this combination?



Certainly, our goal will not be to enter deeper into the examination of this problem for our goal is completely different, but even a partial analysis of the subject will help us with the answers to the problems of the schism of the Church in the Republic of Macedonia.

The claim that the church schism in the Republic of Macedonia has been caused by the nationalistic schism of the being of the people who live on the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia is quite probable. The communist Government, after 1945, needed to create a history for the, then, People's Republic of Macedonia. Yet, instead of building it based on documents and facts, it was written based on the needs of the then-created state. Wanting to show that the inhabitants of the territory of the then People's Republic of Macedonia are brothers with the other people of Yugoslavia, they called them Slavs. To be honest, this was only a continuance of the pan-Slavic propaganda which started in Russia through the newly created Bulgarian state in the 19th century. This might have not been such a problem if on the other hand they did not insist on the contrary as well, which is that the inhabitants of the above-mentioned regions are the descendants of the ancient Macedonians.

The territory of today's Republic of Macedonia, both geographically and demographically is a suitable area for the occurrence of the given dilemma. One cannot claim that that territory was not inhabited by the ancient Macedonians, nor can one say that the Slavs did not penetrate that region. However, wanting to preempt just the name of the ancient Macedonians, without having participated into their culture, which since the time of Alexander the Great, and probably even before him, was exclusively Greek, seems irrational and unfounded. The disregarding of the fact that the Gospel that reached the region of today's Republic of Macedonia during the time of the Apostle Paul was in Greek; the lack of knowledge that during the time of the birth of the tsar Justinian, in Skopje, Greek was spoken, as well as in Bitola (Heraclion) and Stoby; the lack of information that the archaeological monuments found on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, dating from the beginning of Christianity until the arrival of the Slavs, testify for the usage of the Greek language by the inhabitants of the territory is called ignorance in the science, and it is called tendentiousness in the politics. Thus, it is a fact that the culture, which was created on the abovementioned regions

at the beginning of Christianity, and even before that, was Greek. Certainly, not Greek, out of today's narrow comprehension of the nation and its culture, but Hellenic from the perspective of the ecclesiastical perception of God and the world, which means from the perspective of theology, with which the Greek language was inseparably connected in the Eastern Roman Empire, from the beginning of the Christian era. The territory of today's Republic of Macedonia, in the course of long centuries was part of the Eastern Roman Empire. During these centuries an incomparably elevated culture was being built. Still, a minimal dosage of honesty is required in order to confess that all that culture, emerging in various forms until the arrival of the Slavic people on the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia, had a Greek origin. Once again we emphasise that quite another thing is comprehended by the Greek nation, which was created in the 19th century, which is different from the Hellenic culture as a product of the spirit of diverse people, who in spite of originating from various tribes, were still united by the same language, which was Greek, ever since the time of Alexander the Great.

The arrival of the Slavs induces certain mixing of the peoples on the abovementioned territory. The Slavs adopted the religion and the culture of the natives, but it seems that they encountered difficulty while learning the language. Yet, they accepted the mentality and the way of life of the natives and they adjusted the terminology of their thoughts and speech to the new values they adopted as their faith, cult and culture. We find tendentious the suppositions that there weren't any mixed marriages between the natives and the newly-arrived Slavs, that the Slavs only adopted the faith and the culture of the natives, just as it seems impossible that the Slavs completely suppressed the Hellenic character of the Macedonian inhabitants whom they met on these regions<sup>37</sup>.

We presume that the greatest perplexity was created when the communist historiography of the after-the-war constructed People's Re-

<sup>37</sup> The latest known researches on the meaning of the names Macedonia and Macedonians, in the Middle Ages, made by the professor Tarnanidis can be found in the book «ΟΙ „ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑΝ ΣΚΛΑΒΗΝΟΙ” ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΗ ΠΟΡΕΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΣΥΓΧΡΟΝΑ ΠΡΟΒΛΗΜΑΤΑ ΠΡΟΣΑΡΜΟΓΗΣ» έκδ. Αδελφ. Κυριακίδη, Θεσσαλονίκη 2000, pg. 25-47, with analysis of the places in the entire course of Migne's Patrology where both terms are mentioned. The analysis shows that not only in pre-Christian time, but also during the existence of the Eastern

public of Macedonia started calling Samuel the tsar of the Macedonians, despite the fact that he called himself the czar of the Bulgarians, and he was defeated by Basil II the Macedonian Bulgaroknotos (Bulgar-slayer). Does this mean that Samuel led a fratricidal war, Macedonians versus Macedonians, or, according to the context of the above-given researches, the Macedonians were separate from the Slavs during his age?<sup>38</sup>

The understanding of this historical-political issue will have a great effect on the position we will take regarding the solution of the problem with the schism in the Republic of Macedonia. All of this is related because none of the schisms is only an ecclesiological problem without its being a political problem at the same time. On the other hand, the independence of a given Church, depends on the independence of the territory on which the Church exists at the time. This is why we saw it as necessary, without using some sort of a scientific apparatus for the solution of the abovementioned problem, to mention the same as an existing one, because to many, this problem, being both historical and political, is still unresolved. It is very likely that no one has the right to forbid the inhabitants of today's Republic of Macedonia to feel as Macedonians, but it is up to them to decide whether they are Macedonians or Slavs, because to think that you are Slav and to use the name Macedonian is completely unfounded and immature.

### *b) The Schism of the Macedonian Orthodox Church as a Result of the Historical-Political Perplexities*

The first church-laity's council was summoned after the order and immediate support of the communist regime. On 4 March 1945 in

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Roman Empire, the Slaves did not call themselves, nor were they called, Macedonians. The name Macedonian was attached only to those inhabitants of Byzantium who spoke Greek.

<sup>38</sup> Perhaps someone might note that czar Samuel was Armenian by origin, and this is probably why he did not feel as Macedonian? Nevertheless, there is no data that some of those who used the Slavic language as means of intercommunication, at least until the fall of Constantinople, called themselves, or were called, Macedonian. Samuel was not called Macedonian by anyone, and contrary to him, another Armenian and czar of Byzantium, Basil I (867-886), was called Macedonian, not only because he was born and lived in Macedonia, but also because he spoke Greek.

Skopje, about 300 delegates from the entire territory of the People's Republic of Macedonia were gathered, as well as representatives of the Government headed by the president of ASNOM, Metody Andonov Chento, a representative of the army, colonel Pance Nedeljkovic, in the name of the Roman-Catholic Church, Alojz Turk, later to become bishop of Belgrade, and in the name of the Muslim community, the mufti of Skopje Said Idriz<sup>39</sup>. As one can see, the attendants at the church-laity's council were representatives of the Government and of many religions, not only orthodox bishops. Everyone that is even the least acquainted with the ecclesiology and the canonical law of the Orthodox Church, will understand that this council was rather a political than a church one. As expected, SOC, at the Episcopal conference summoned for this occasion, on 12 March 1945, declared this council to be uncanonical since no bishop was participating, and this is a necessary requirement for the council to be canonical. Then again, neither during the council, nor later, was there a consensus on what was to be demanded, an autonomy or an autocephaly. Many of the priests in Macedonia were aware that the absolute independence contravenes the canonical order of the Orthodox Church, as well as that it does not suit the federative organization of the state Yugoslavia.

Perhaps the anti-church and uncanonical order in the People's Republic of Macedonia does not begin with the first church-laity's council, but it begins from the moment of the prohibition to mention the names of the canonical bishops at the Liturgy. Actually, the schism is nothing more than a loss of communion with the bishop and with God<sup>40</sup>. Thus, they came to a situation where the rights of the bishop, given to him through the canons of the Church, were ceased by some sort of a "steering committee". This committee transferred priests and moved them to the worst parishes when they were opposed to the ab-

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<sup>39</sup> *Politka*, no. 11919, 8 March 1945.

<sup>40</sup> It is known that the priest Bogatin Atanasovski, who was officiating in the Church of the St. grat-martyr Dimitry in Bitola, should explain why he mentioned at the Liturgy the name of the Serbian Patriarch Gabriel when he was aware of the relations between the two Churches? Was he on the side of the Macedonian Church or was he willingly against it?

solite autocephaly of the Church in the People's Republic of Macedonia. In this case, it is not so important whether the Serbian bishops until 1941 were included in the propaganda of making Serbian the Macedonians, just as it is not so important that the patriarch Gabriel tells to the entourage of Macedonian priests that no one forces them, as Macedonians in the ethnical sense of the word, to change their ethnic affiliation<sup>41</sup>. The important fact is that, the Church in the People's Republic of Macedonia, beginning from 1945 is de facto without a bishop, and no bishop is mentioned at the Liturgy, which is utterly unecclesiastical<sup>42</sup>. There is no Church without a bishop as it is impossible to celebrate the Liturgy if it is not officiated by a bishop, or a priest, but in the name of the bishop. Still Mr. Done Ilievski later to become a Secretary of the Commission for Religious Affairs of Macedonia, the ideologist of the autocephaly, as he calls himself<sup>43</sup>, regarding the events concerning the initiation of the steering committee on presbyterian basis says: "This is the demand, this is the aspiration, this is the spirit of the Macedonian priests and faithful people, to survive by accepting, instead of an archbishop, instead of a bishop, to listen to a priest (presbyter), but a Macedonian one. This is one of the characteristics of the Macedonian Church, and it remains to be a historical fact<sup>44</sup>". It is true that this is a great historical fact, but just to prove the opposite, to prove the uncanonical procedure of the Steering committee and the pressure of the communist authorities to give autocephaly to the Church in Macedonia.

Under an immense pressure of the godless communist authorities, the Metropolitan of Skopje Joseph, was silently released from duty, although he did not lose the title. The patriarch Vicente becomes administrator of all the dioceses in Macedonia. But even greater pressure was exerted over the then vicar bishop Dositey, with the title bishop of

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<sup>41</sup> See: Puzovic P.(Пузовиќ П.), Раскол у Српској православној Цркви (македонско црквено питање), Belgrade1997, pg. 30-31.

<sup>42</sup> Same, pg. 36.

<sup>43</sup> See: Interview with Done Ilievski in *Makedonsko Sonce*, no. 415 from 14 June 2002.

<sup>44</sup> The Memoirs of Done Ilievski (Мемоарите на Доне Илиевски) *Makedonsko Sonce*, no. 417 from 28 June 2002.

Toplitza, who was Serbian from his mother's side, but born in Macedonia. The pressure from the communists does not justify his uncanonical act. Namely, he was invited at the Church-Laity's council scheduled for 4 October 1958 in Ohrid. Here, in an utterly uncanonical procedure, he was elected Archbishop of Ohrid and Skopje and Metropolitan of Macedonia<sup>45</sup>. The uncanonical moment is that an election was made without even one orthodox bishop present or participation in this, and as second, equally, or even more important than the first, that this election was in fact usurpation of someone else's cathedra<sup>46</sup>. At the enthroning, he received the insignia from a priest and the sceptre from a layman. The procedure of arrival of Dositey from Belgrade to Macedonia is conducted in utmost secrecy<sup>47</sup>. If this was not uncanonical, then, why all the secrecy?

The bishop Dositey was previously promised that the Government of SFRY would compel the members of the Assembly of SOC not to raise a church-court procedure against Dositey. Actually, the pressure of the godless communist authorities was consisted of this, to convince

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<sup>45</sup> Just as a note, the Second Church-Laity's Council was held in the hotel "Orce Nikolov" in Ohrid, not in a church, nor in some church building as is proper, and only at the time of the signing of the Decision they went to the Church St. Sophia in Ohrid.

<sup>46</sup> It should be underlined that during this time the dioceses in Macedonia were under administration of the Patriarch Vicentius. Thus, the election of the vicarious bishop of Toplica, kyr Dositey, for diocesan bishop in Macedonia was completely uncanonical. For this act the Canons predict the strictest sentence, defrocking, that is stripping of rank. See: 15<sup>th</sup> canon of the I Ecumenical Council, 17<sup>th</sup> canon of the V-VI Ecumenical Council, 16<sup>th</sup> of the Antioch Synod.

<sup>47</sup> Done Ilievski, then Secretary of the Religious Commission of the Steering Committee of Macedonia, in his memoirs admits that all was conducted in utter secrecy. One day before the Church-Laity's Council in Ohrid, the bishop of Toplica Dositey was held in house arrest in the villa of the Steering Committee of Macedonia in Ohrid. Done Ilievski says: "...he came with a train to Vranje (this refers to the bishop Dositey), where I waited for him with a car. We did not call anyone. His arrival was made known only to the proto-presbyter Nestor Popovski. We did not stop in Skopje. We stopped in Bitola to have a quick lunch in the restaurant "Macedonia" and we left straight for Ohrid. We stayed in a villa of the Steering Committee, in Gorica, and it was only Dositey, I and the cook who were there. Dositey had no communication with anyone. I, obviously, kept contact with the members of the Steering Committee". See: *Makedonsko Sonce*, no. 418 dated on 12 July 2002.

the members of the Assembly of the SOC not to undertake a court procedure against the uncanonical act of the bishop Dositey. The following were opposed to the decision of the Assembly of SOC held from 3rd to 19th June 1959, to elect the vicar bishop of Toplica kyr Dositey a Metropolitan of Skopje: the Bishop of Rashka and Prizren, and now Patriarch of Serbia kyr kyr Paul and the Bishop of Shabac and Valjevo kyr Simon<sup>48</sup>. It is obvious that the pressure of the Government was successful, and only two bishops remained firmly loyal to the canonical order of the Church. In all the failure, it is still a success that the Assembly managed to avoid to elect for diocesan bishops the suggested candidates: protopresbyter Nestor Popovski, protopresbyter Toma Dimovski, presbyter Spiro Popovski and the professor of the secondary school Mr. Vlatko Zaharovski, who were all married, but with a consent from their wives to get a divorce, as is written in the letter from the diocese of Skopje no.159 from 16 May 1958: “because of the great ecclesiastical and popular interest”. If this had happened, to elect married candidates for bishops, it would have been a disgrace in the history of the Orthodox Church after the VI Ecumenical Council.

Probably no one will be able to prove what the blackmail that the communists used to convince the bishop Dositey was. There is a minutes in the archive of the SOC in which there is a quote of what Dositey said at the session of the Holy Synod of the SOC held on 29 September 1958. On 27 September 1958, he was summoned by the Executive Council of SFRY where he met Strahil Gigov, President of the Religious Affairs Commission of the Government of Macedonia, who told him that he had been sent by the president of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, Lazar Kolishevski and that he passes to him the message that he is to participate at the Church-Laity’s council which is to be held in Ohrid on 4 October 1958. They talked about many other things at the session of the Holy Synod of the SOC, on which the bishop Dositey had no answer. And in the end he said: Whether I wished it or not, I have to go<sup>49</sup>.

From the ecclesiological-canonical aspect, the Church-Laity’s

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<sup>48</sup> Record from the Assembly of the SOC, SB no. 34/rec. 62.

<sup>49</sup> Record, Syn. no.2721/rec.656 from 29 September 1958.

council in Ohrid, held on 4 October 1958, is completely illegitimate. However, under the great pressure from the authorities, the Assembly of the SOC, held from 3 to 19 June 1959, succumbs and accepts part of the decisions, with which it practically gives autonomy to the Church in Macedonia. From this perspective, it is difficult to judge how wrong the Assembly was to have accepted decisions from an uncanonical council. Yet, the Bishop Dionisy from the American diocese of the SOC, whom the communists could not pressurize, did not accept the decisions of the Assembly with which the SOC gives legitimacy to the completely illegitimate church-laity's council.

Quickly after the ordination of two more bishops in Macedonia, it could be seen why the Government put such a pressure that the Church in Macedonia gets autonomy. On 16 July 1960, the metropolitan Dositey informs the patriarch Herman that a first Macedonian church is being raised in Windsor, Canada and Columbus, Ohio, and on 17 November he informs him that a delegation of the MOC visited Australia and the bishop of Strumitza and Zletovo Nahum consecrated a church in Melbourne. This provokes a reaction from the Ecumenical Patriarchate, under the jurisdiction of which are the Greeks in Australia and the Ecumenical patriarch Athenagora, who, just as a reminder, was an archdeacon in the Church of St. great-martyr Dimitry in Bitola, and on 1 February 1961 in a letter he asks the patriarch Herman who is this Bishop who consecrated a church to the Christians who "are almost all from Greece and accordingly have one more reason for belonging to the canonical jurisdiction of the Greek Archbishopric for Australia and New Zealand<sup>50</sup>?" Actually, the Executive council in Macedonia of that time, insisted on an autonomous Church, not because it liked the Church so much, but in order to be able to organize church municipalities in the diaspora and to control the people through the same, for most of the people in the diaspora were anti-communists, so the state had no other mechanisms to control them but through the Church.

From an ecclesiological-canonical aspect, the participants at the church-laity's council in Macedonia did not make a difference between

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<sup>50</sup> Act, Syn. no.515 dated on 22 February 1960.



autonomy and autocephaly. From 1958, until today, not even one article was written on the ecclesiological or canonical aspect of the autonomy or the autocephaly. Two years ago, our humbleness published a column in the daily press under the name: “Autonomy and autocephaly”, in which for the first time we tried to explain to the public that every diocese is autocephalous in its own way, and in another way an entire local Church, made of many dioceses, is not even autonomous if it infringes the principle of conciliarity. For the true Church the issues of the autonomy and autocephaly are redundant. Nevertheless, the communist authorities in Macedonia, were disinterested in the theological-legal aspect and it persistently pressurised the, then autonomous, Church in Macedonia to ask for complete separation from the SOC. This initiative was met with resistance even by the Union of the Association of the Priests for which, it is known, was under the influence of the Government. For example, the protopresbyter Krstan Bijeljic asked for an explanation from the protopresbyter Nestor Popovski, then secretary of the metropolitan Dositey, was the autocephaly asked for by the Church or the sate, who received an answer that the both asked for it.

The Government in the then SFRY had two goals regarding the Church. One of them, which was directly conducted by the Executive council of Macedonia, was to use the Church for political purposes, to control the diaspora through the Church. The other was the one of Tito and the Executive council of the SFRY, to reduce the influence of the SOC and gradually degrade and destroy it. There is no other explanation for the fact that the communists, who destroyed the churches everywhere around the world, and here in Yugoslavia, more particularly in Macedonia, they created a Church. Through the separation of the Church, they actually wanted to destroy it, because everyone knows that this is the ideology of the communism. In Macedonia, they succeeded in this, as it can be concluded from the words of the secretary in the Religious Affairs Commission, “comrade” Done Ilijevski, who is the ideologist of the autocephaly, which means of the schism as well. In his recently published Memoirs, this is what he says about the protopresbyter Nestor Popovski, President of the Steering Committee from 1945, and about his cooperation with the

Steering Committee: “A month before his death (Nestor Popovski’s), we met, I paid him a visit and this is what he told me: So, comrade Done, ever since you came we haven’t sent a letter before you saw it, and we made no mistakes, either ecclesiastical or political. Our cooperation was good. I spent equal amount of time both in the Commission and in the Metropolitanate... As a matter of fact, although I was in the Commission I participated as part of that Steering Committee<sup>51</sup>”. Until a short while ago, many, probably, correctly presumed that the autocephaly of the MOC is a decision of the Executive Council of Macedonia from that time. However, after the publication of the Memoirs of Mr. Done Ilievski in 2002, we certainly know that his was the task to divide the Church and cause a schism. Unfortunately, being completely deluded, he considers the prompted schism to be the greatest work of his lifetime.

Before the regular session of the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the SOC, the President of the Executive Committee of Serbia, Dragi Stamenkovic, summoned the Patriarch Herman to a reception with the Executive Committee, on 5 May 1967, in order to compel him into giving autocephaly to the Church in Macedonia. However, the Patriarch Herman answered: “You say that they should be satisfied. But, do you ask us, the Serbian people if we exist and if somebody needs to satisfy our needs? Who is the initiator of all this, is it us or is it them? We wanted to satisfy them and it was done, but now you ask of us to commit suicide. No, we will not do that, and if they proclaim autocephaly by themselves, I openly tell you, we will put Dositey on a trial and we will see what God and that trial will give him<sup>52</sup>.” The renowned professors, Sergey Trojicky and Blagota Gardashevic presented a report before the holding of the Assembly of bishops, which was previously assigned to them, and in which they concluded that the bishops in Macedonia do not know the church canons, consciously infringe the same as well as the given bishop’s pledge, they cooperate with the state authorities in the limitation of the church organisation and that “if on the church-laity’s council they proclaim autocephaly of

<sup>51</sup> The Memoirs of Done Ilievski (Мемоарите на Доне Илиевски) Makedonsko Sonce, no. 417 dated on 28 June 2002.

<sup>52</sup> Act, Syn. no.1785 dated on 17 May 1967.

the Church, it will be considered, not only by the SOC, but also by all the other orthodox Churches, to be a schismatic organisation.<sup>53</sup> In the decision of the Assembly of the SOC, where the request by the MOC to be an autocephalous Church is rejected, among the other arguments the following also stand: insufficient number of bishops, insufficient number of priests in relation to the existing church parishes and religious buildings, churches and monasteries, lacking church-educational institutions and similar, and it is said that the MOC does not even have a hierarchy “capable enough to guide the Church”<sup>54</sup>. This is probably the most important condition for achieving autocephaly. The mother Church, the one that gives the autocephaly, should trust the bishops of the Church to whom it is to give the autocephaly. All other conditions are additional. If there is not enough conviction that the people who ask for autocephaly have sufficient responsibility, but also capability and knowledge to manage the autocephaly, then all the external conditions are not enough. And the level of needed responsibility of the bishops of the MOC was shown around the events of expelling of the Metropolitan of Veles and Vardar Valley and Exarch of Ohrid Jovan from his cathedra, in July 2002, after the accession of his Metropolitanate to the liturgical and canonical unity with the SOC. The Synod of the MOC reached an utterly uncanonical and unconstitutional decision, even according to their Constitution, to release the Metropolitan Jovan of the duty eparchial Bishop of the Metropolitanate of Vardar Valley without a Church trial and conviction, which was conducted with the usage of political methods, with police force and with a gun pointed at the head, with which it continued to do unforgivable sins towards the Church of God, just as the one with the schism that cannot be washed even by the martyr’s blood<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Act, Syn. no.1006/rec.149 dated on 10 March 1967.

<sup>54</sup> Record SB no. 44/rec. 10 dated on 24/11 May 1967.

<sup>55</sup> For those who are not in unity with the Church, St. Cyprian says: “Even if those suffer death confessing His name, their stain will not be washed even by their blood. The heaviness of the guilt for the schism cannot be washed even through suffering”. Cyprian of Carthage, St., “About the Catholicity of the Church” (За единството на Църквата), Sofia 2000, pg.17.

At a great misfortune, the Church-Laity's council held from 16 to 19 July 1967 in Ohrid, in a putschistic way, consistently with the previous church-laity's councils, which means completely uncanonically and without any relation with the teachings of the church, proclaimed autocephaly of the Church in Macedonia. To give such authority to a church-laity's council, to proclaim or abolish autocephaly, is indeed immense ignorance and lack of knowledge of the bishops present at that church-laity's council. It is the bishop's highest authority, and not the authority of some sort of people's council, to take care of the faith. Nowhere in the Orthodox Church is it possible for a laity's council to have a greater authority on the issues of the faith and the church order than the one of the Assembly of Bishops. Actually, it was a laity's council of people who lived in a society of communism, even if it was called Church-Laity's one, in which the bishops were a minority (only four out of thirty four), decided on such an important question as is the autocephaly of the Church. Thirty-four people out of entire Macedonia decided to push the Church in Macedonia into a schism. This is utter totalitarianism concordant to the time in which they lived. However, not even the members of the Church-Laity's council were convinced that their decision was valid and applicable. For if they were convinced in this, then why was it necessary for them to ask for recognition from the Assembly of Bishops of the SOC?

The Assembly of Bishops of the SOC immediately responded on this, holding an extraordinary session on 14 September 1967, with only one item on the agenda: the Proclamation of autocephaly of the MOC and it stopped every religious officiation and canonical communication with the hierarchy in Macedonia, calling the church in Macedonia a schismatic religious organisation and obligating the Synod of the SOC to institute a church court procedure against the culprits of the schism<sup>56</sup>. In the explanation of the decision of the Assembly of the SOC, it is said that the proclamation of autocephaly is not only uncanonical, but also, opposed to the Constitution of the MOC, because none of the articles of the constitution of the Macedonian Church provides self-proclamation of

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<sup>56</sup> Record SB no.50/rec.7 dated on 15 September 1967.

autocephaly, or a proclamation of autocephaly by a certain church-laity's council. It is noticeable that what is written in the article no. 141 from 1967, in which it is reported that the MOC has proclaimed autocephaly, is incorrect. Namely, the Ohrid Archbishopric was never autocephalous from the aspect of today's understanding of autocephaly and that it has never been a national Church of the Macedonian people. A proof for this is that the Archbishop of Ohrid Theophanous was tried and convicted by an Assembly of the Constantinople Patriarchate which was presided by the Patriarch Dionysius IV, and that he was replaced by the Metropolitan of Sophia, Melenty. The Archbishops of the Ohrid Archbishopric, even those who were Slaves by origin, signed with: Prohor, by the mercy of God, Archbishop of I Justiniana, the Serbs, the Bulgarians etc; or Gabriel, by the mercy of God Archbishop of I Justiniana, Ohrid and all Bulgarians, Serbs, Arbanahs, Moldowallachs etc., but, none of the Archbishops of Ohrid signed as Archbishop of Macedonia. They are not unfamiliar with the fact, it is said in the explanation of the decision of the bishops of the MOC, that SR Macedonia is not a state, but it is just a federative part of the state, with limited sovereignty. Stating the abovementioned conditions with a historical and political character relevant for the acquiring of autocephaly, the bishops of the MOC prove to be immature and unripe to guide an autocephalous Church. Another thing, also of great importance, is that according to the Holy Scripture, "no one gives to himself honour" (Jews 5:4), and that: "no one can give the others more rights from the ones he has", which has already become an axiom in all positive laws. Only an autocephalous Church has the right to give autocephaly to some of its parts. It is not possible for some part of an autocephalous Church to proclaim autocephaly by itself for any given reason, and the least from an ethnophiletistic one. According to St. Basil (Canon I), all who recede from the legal church hierarchy, violate the unity of the church, regardless of the fact that they teach as the Orthodox Church does on the issues of the faith. In the end, what would become of the Orthodox Church if every ethnic group proclaims autocephaly?<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> This is all given in the account of Act, Syn. no.50/rec.7 dated on 15/2 September 1967.

For this division of the Church, comrade Tito gave the metropolitan Dositey a “medal with the flag of Yugoslavia with a ribbon<sup>58</sup>”, conversely, the sisterly Orthodox Churches condemned the putschist act of proclamation of autocephaly without the agreement of the mother Church and they ceased the liturgical communication with the hierarchy of the Macedonian Orthodox Church.

On 19 March 1968, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the SOC, implemented the decision from the Assembly of Bishops, from 15 September 1967, and reached the following decision:

“1. We put before the canonical church court and we direct rising of charges against the culprits for creation of the schismatic religious organisation in the Orthodox Church in Macedonia, which are the following:

His Eminence the metropolitan of Skopje kyr Dositey,  
His Grace the bishop of Bitola kyr Clement,  
His Grace the bishop of Zletovo and Strumitza kyr Nahum  
The Vicarious bishop Velichki kyr Methodius and  
The bishop of America, Canada and Australia kyr Cyril

2. We appoint His Eminence the Metropolitan of Zhicha kyr Basil, as responsible for the procedure and the rising of charges, who is to be given all the needed indictment materials ”<sup>59</sup>

One does not need to know much about the history of the events from that period in order to conclude that the autocephaly of the MOC was only a political decision. The communists who destroyed the living Church everywhere in the world, turning the churches and monasteries into stables and warehouses, initiated and aided the schism in Macedonia for two reasons. First of all because only they could control the diaspora, which was in an anti-communist mood, through the Church and second, by creating an supporting the schism in the Church, they wanted to weaken it to its utmost limits so that they can destroy it more easily. The Metropolitan of Skopje, kyr Dositey himself, during a discussion with the Synod of the SOC, on 18 November 1966, declared:

<sup>58</sup> Slijepercevic Dz. (Слијепчевић, Ђ.), Македонско црквено питање, Munich (Минхен) 1969, pg.75.

<sup>59</sup> Act, Syn. no.1150/rec.142, dated on 19 March 1968.

“We decided to ask for autocephaly from the SOC. We delivered this decision to the Steering Committee of Macedonia. It dedicated a session to this decision and notified us that we are not on the wrong path when we ask for church autocephaly.”<sup>60</sup>

By reaching a political decision, the Steering Committee of Macedonia, started to protect the Church from the Church, most unnaturally. As if all the other Churches wanted to destroy the Church in Macedonia, and only the greatest “church-lovers”, the communists were trying to protect it. It went even further. The decision of the Steering Committee of Macedonia was an unconstitutional act. In the SFRY of that time, the state was separated from the Church and every involvement of the state in the Church was an unconstitutional and unlawful act, according to the Basic Law on the Position of the Religious Communities (Official Gazzete of the SFRY from 10 March 1965, no. 10 pg. 295). However, this unconstitutional support of the Steering Committee of Macedonia to the Church in Macedonia was urged, as we said before, by the highest authorities of Yugoslavia, and with the sole purpose of creating a schism, so that they could destroy the church more easily.

Nevertheless, the 30th Apostolic Rule says: “If a bishop uses the worldly authorities in order to get a Church through them, he should be defrocked, even excommunicated, and the same should be done with those who communicate with him.” This Apostolic Rule is repeated to the word in the Third Canon of the VII Ecumenical Council. The information that Done Ilievski, a Secretary of the Commission for relations with the Religious Communities in Macedonia says in his book “The Meaning of the Resistance against the Autocephaly of the MOC”, that the SOC recognized the autocephaly of the MOC, and not its autonomy in 1958 is utterly unsupported and his book, besides lacking any scientific basis, it is nothing more than a political pamphlet. It is a fact that he had a task from the Steering Committee of the People’s Republic of Macedonia, to organise the autocephaly, create a schism and weaken the position of the Orthodox Church in the SFRY, and this

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<sup>60</sup> Record AB no. 44/rec.10, dated from 24/11.05.1967

does not only make him undignified before the future generations, but it also seems that this man was neither psychologically nor intellectually prepared for this crime. To try to even think that the SOC did not give the MOC an autonomy, but an autocephaly, is wrong in itself, and not to even mention the attempt to prove that the word independence, used in the Decision for recognizing the autonomy of the MOC by the SOC, meant autocephaly. Even though we wholly agree that the autonomy and autocephaly, ecclesiologically, and even lexically, juridically and politically, do not differ much, and that, above all, the Orthodox teaching on the Church, does not know of the problem of the autocephaly and autonomy, as we have already written before<sup>61</sup>, we cannot agree that the SOC in 1958 granted the MOC an autocephaly. If it is somewhat justified for Done Ilievski to reason and write so, firstly because he was not a theologian, and secondly, because he was a communist, it is not acceptable to use the arguments stated in his book to prove that the autonomy granted in 1958 was equal to autocephaly<sup>62</sup>. Although very cunningly, as a participant in the writing of the Constitution of the MOC, Mr. Done Iliveski intended to plant a text with which he and his like-minded persons will have arguments to prove that, in fact, the SOC recognized an autocephaly of the MOC, still, the Assembly of the SOC did not approve of the first version of the Constitution from 1958 and asks from the MOC to redo it. Nevertheless, even if the Serbian Church was involved by this cunning plot, would it automatically have meant that, what was contrary to the teaching of the Church, contrary to the canons of the Church, contrary even to the behaviour and morality of the Orthodox Christians, would have been accepted and endured? Perhaps for Done Ilievski, who appears to be a lawyer for the MOC<sup>63</sup>, who is completely unfamiliar with the ecclesiology of the Orthodox

<sup>61</sup> See the daily press, Dnevnik dated on 5 February 2000, column being: Autocephaly or Autonomy (Автокефалија и автономија).

<sup>62</sup> See: Ilievski D. (Илиевски, Д.), The Meaning of the Resistance against the Autocephaly of the MOC (Смислата на некои отпори против автокефалијата на МПЦ), Скопје 1970, pg. 91-113.

<sup>63</sup> It should be taken into account that at that period the MOC had no people who could theologially and canonically and legally defend the autocephaly, so it obviously whole-heartedly accepted the services of a communist such as Done Ilievski.



Church, it was sufficient to have a piece of paper which would later be subject to various types of interpretation, but then again, the real criterion for acceptance of a decision in the Church has always been the liturgical one, and not the legal one. This does not mean that we do not need the administrative and canonical order, but what makes the Church different from the institutions of this world is its eschatological nature, the identity it draws from the Kingdom of God, and not from some legal acts and clauses. Furthermore, Done Ilievski, in the above-mentioned book, tries to prove that the Church used the state to accomplish some of its goals many times in the history. This was also done by the SOC, he says, giving several examples. Why should we then bear a grudge against the Church in Macedonia for using the Government to proclaim an autocephaly of the Church?<sup>64</sup> There is nothing wrong in the Church being in symphony with the state, and for the state to become a Church, however, is it possible to have the support of an atheistic state, such as Yugoslavia, without being misused and manipulated for the purpose of destruction of the Church?

Between 1968 and 1977, one cannot say that there were talks about the overcoming of the schism as much as one can say that there were several meetings held under the great pressure of the communist Government of that time, and all just to give the impression that there were some talks so that the announced trial of the episcopate of the MOC wouldn't happen. It was not until 1978 that there was a meeting of Commissions of the SOC and MOC in the monastery St. Prohor Pcinjski, held at the request of the Macedonian Church, for the recognition of its autocephaly from 22 April 1977. The Commissions met for the second time on 17 and 19 September 1979 in the Monastery of the Most Holy Mother of God in Kalishta near Struga, but neither the first nor the second time did the Macedonian Church repent for the committed uncanonical and putschistic act, so the talks failed.

On 20 May 1981, the Archbishop Dositey passed away. The newly-elected archbishop Angelarios, asked the SOC to recognize the

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<sup>64</sup> See: Ilievski D. (Илиевски, Д.), *The Meaning of the Resistance against the Autocephaly of the MOC (Смислата на некои отпори против автокефалијата на МПЦ)*, Skopje 1970, pg.145-167.

autocephaly of the MOC with act no. 37, on 1 February 1982 but the Assembly of the SOC, in May the same year, decided negatively on the issue. Thus, the issue of recognizing the autocephaly of the MOC remained unresolved in the time of the Archbishop Angelarios, who also asked recognition from the prelates of the other orthodox Churches, but received the answer that it was an internal issue of the SOC.

In 1990, the SOC made several attempts to resume the talks with the MOC, but, because of many unresolved issues in the Synod of the MOC, the then current archbishop Gabriel avoided the meeting of the commissions. The first meeting of the Commissions happened on 3 March 1992 in Belgrade, and the conversations were resumed on 15 and 16 April 1992 in the Monastery of the Most Holy Mother of God in Kalishta. However, just as the previous attempts, it was all in vain. The SOC asked for repentance, and the MOC asked for autocephaly.

After this, there were no official meetings neither on the level of the commissions, or on some other level, until 1998, when our humbleness was ordained into a vicarious Bishop of the Metropolitanate of Prespa and Pelagonia. Only a month after our ordination, we managed to contact His Eminence, the Archbishop of Athens and all Greece kyr kyr Christodoulou, and arrange a meeting of our delegation with him. At the meeting with the Greek Archbishop, which was first after many decades, for the reason that none of the prelates of the local Churches would receive the delegation of the MOC, we requested that the Archbishop would be an intermediary with the SOC for the MOC. This was arranged and soon after that the talks between the commissions of the SOC and MOC resumed. Thus, through negotiations we reached a very acceptable resolution, which is known as the Nis Agreement, because it was signed by the members of the commissions of the SOC and MOC at the meeting in Nis, on 17 May 2002. The Agreement foresaw the resolution of two fundamental issues. The status of the Church in Macedonia would be autonomous and the name of the Church would be Ohrid Archbishopric. This was, basically, an optimal resolution because it is known that an autocephaly, produced in a putschistic manner, without having previously passed the status of autonomy is impossible, but also that the name Mace-

donian Orthodox Church cannot be accepted by all the Orthodox Churches when it is known that the greater part of Macedonia is in Greece and the Greek Churches do not agree only the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia to have the exclusive right to be called Macedonian.

Although the three Metropolitans of the MOC, the Australian metropolitan Peter, the metropolitan of Debar and Kicevo Timothy and the metropolitan of Strumitza Nahum, signed it, they withdrew the signatures and gave up the Agreement under the pressure of the journalists. Our humbleness did not take part in session of the Synod, at which it was decided upon the acceptance of the Nis Agreement, because we were on a pilgrimage through Greece with the students from the Faculty of Theology, and which was organized by the Synod of the OCG (Orthodox Church of Greece). After we returned, after consulting some of the members of the Synod of the MOC, we went to Belgrade at a meeting with the Synod of the SOC to try to find a solution for the newly-arisen situation. The best solution seemed to be that the SOC should send an individual summon to the bishops, clergy, monastics and the faithful people in the Republic of Macedonia to accede the liturgical and canonical unity with the SOC, and through it with all the Orthodox Churches. Even though we were personally promised by several other bishops of the MOC that they will respond positively at the summons, our response, as a Metropolitan of the Holy Metropolitanate of Veles and Vardar Valley, together with the entire clergy and congregation, remained alone. On 22 June 2002, with a Written Decree from the Serbian Patriarch kyr kyr Pavle (Paul), we were accepted into liturgical and canonical unity with the SOC and through it with the entire Orthodox Ecumene. Yet, on 6 July 2002, after the Decision of the HSB of the MOC from 5 July 2002, according to which Jovan (John) was released "of the duty eparchial bishop of the Diocese of Vardar Valley"<sup>65</sup>, the police of the Republic of Macedonia, contrary to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, according to which the Church is separated from the state, effected the decision of the Synod of the MOC and evicted us from the residence of the holy Metropolitanate of Veles and Vardar Valley. The uncanonical decision of the MOC and

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<sup>65</sup> Decision of the HSB of the MOC no.161 dated on 05 July 2002.

the maltreatments I and our associates endured by the state authorities will be referred to somewhere else.

The first liturgy of unity with the SOC and through it with the entire Orthodox Church was in the Monastery Koporin, at the 600th anniversary since the erection of the monastery, together with the Patriarch of Serbia kyr kyr Pavle (Paul), the hosting Bishop of Branichevo Ignatius and other visiting bishops. This was practically a seal on the liturgical and canonical unity, which, because of the unwanted events related to our persecution, happened on 1 August 2002, more than a month after the written announcement for our acceptance into unity.

After they realised that there is no likelihood for things to change soon and that the rest of the episcopate of the schismatic Church in Macedonia had no intention to respond to the summons of the Patriarch Pavle (Paul), the Synod of the SOC decided to call an extraordinary assembly of bishops to discuss the issue being question. The Assembly took place on 23 and 24 September 2002 in the Patriarchate Mansion in Belgrade and it was decided that our humbleness is granted the title Exarch of His Holiness the Patriarch of Serbia and of the throne of Ohrid, together with the existent title Metropolitan of Veles and Vardar Valley. This means that we were given a canonical possibility to administer the dioceses in the Republic of Macedonia, to officiate and organise the religious life in it. This would certainly be difficult, but nothing is impossible to God.

### 3. SUMMARY

The ecclesiology of the Orthodox Church does not recognize a problem named autonomy or autocephaly. This is an artificial problem imposed with the independence of the Balkan states in the 19th century. No local Church can be a Church unless it is autonomous or autocephalous (in the literal meaning of the word) from the other Churches, nor can it be a Church if it has completely isolated itself

from the other Churches and does not communicate with them. For the Church to be a Church it needs to be in liturgical and canonical communion with the other local Churches, regardless of its organisational position.

The schisms motivated by ethnophiletistic urges are typical for the life of the Church in the 19th and 20th century. These are probably the most unreasonable and most senseless schisms in the history of the Church. Their motive for existence is utterly unecclesiastical and is a fruit of the decadence of the faith after the burden of the Ottoman and communist oppression.

The schism is opposed to the Church and this is why there is no salvation in it. The schismatics may have accepted the integral text of the Holy Scriptures, they may think that they have the same faith and the same dogma as the orthodox, they may have holy mysteries that do not differ in almost anything from the ones of the Church, but despite all, they do not have salvation only for being outside of the body of the Church. The dogmas have basis and they are confirmed only in the conciliarity of the Church. Outside of the Church the teaching of the faith is equal to a philosophy. This is why, regardless of the fact that the schismatics consider themselves to believe orthodoxly, their faith is fruitless because it is not confirmed in the conciliarity of the Church, and without this criterion heterodoxy, that is heresy, is easily accepted. Most of the times, all schisms end in heresy, unless they are healed in time.

The schism that happened to the Church in the Republic of Macedonia in 1967 has a political character. We think that there were two reasons for the putschistic act of self-proclaiming autocephaly. First, to satisfy the need of the communist authorities to control the diaspora through the Church, which, at that time, was uncontrollable in any other way because it was anti-communistic, and the second was to reduce the power of the SOC by separating one of its parts and create a long-lasting discord in the body of the Church. We would not include as a reason here the giving of national identity to the people in the newly-created Republic through the Church, because despite the

fact that the Church, especially in the Balkan region, was keeper of the national identity of some people, it still is not its role and meaning.

The Church on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia in the period of its unilateral separation from the body of the Orthodox Church, indeed, had no capacity for autocephalous management. Above all, the episcopate did not have the necessary spiritual and intellectual level to manage an autocephalous Church. Sadly, this seems to be the case until today, which has its proof in the withdrawal of the signatures from the Nis Agreement<sup>66</sup>. Above all, the Synod of the schismatic organisation ever since 1967 has had bishops for whom there are canonical impediments to have any clerical rank, not to even mention their being bishops.

Fortunately for the entire Orthodox Church in the ecumene, the schism in the Church in the Republic of Macedonia was resolved on 22 June 2002, when His Holiness the Patriarch of Serbia kyr kyr Pavle (Paul), accepted the holy Metropolitanate of Veles and Vardar Valley, with its prelate the Metropolitan Jovan (John), in liturgical and canonical unity with the SOC, and through it, with all the other orthodox Churches in the world. Thus, there is a canonically recognized Orthodox Church on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia now, the Ohrid Archbishopric.

It is rightfully expected that the XXI century is going to be the century of Orthodoxy. The last few centuries, the Orthodox Church suffered through many pressures and fell under many influences. Most of the countries with orthodox denomination passed through multiple oppressions. There were no conditions for free development of the orthodox theology, nor for influence of the Orthodox Church in the social life. Now the Church is outwardly free. The outer enemies become less and less powerful, but, it remains to solve the inner prob-

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<sup>66</sup> “No one should think that the good ones can be separated from the Church. The wind does not spread the wheat. Only the neglected weeds are carried in the whirl... The ones separated are those who without God’s guidance, self-sufficiently accept presidency over irrational councils, without legal counsel appoint themselves to be prelates, they adopt the title Bishop, although no one has granted them episcopacy”. Cyprian of Carthage, St., “About the Catholicity of the Church” (За единството на Църквата), Sofia 2000, pg. 40-41.

lems so that it can progress into the XXI century as a religion of the future of the world. One of the greatest inner enemies is certainly the schism. Although we already said that every gradation of the schism would be imprecise and arbitrary, because there is no bigger or smaller schism (we already cited St. Cyprian who says that the number of the schismatics has no meaning), we could still say that the schism based on ethnophiletism is the most ungrounded, most unbearable and most contradictory one. Unfortunately, the greatest number of the schisms today are from ethnophiletistic urges, among which the one we are now referring to in this writing.

