

February 27, 2013

**Press Release of the
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada**

**Summary of Discussions of the
UOCC Delegation with the Ecumenical Patriarchate
Istanbul, Turkey,
February 7 to 10, 2013**

At the invitation of His All-Holiness, Bartholomew I to our Primate, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada sent a delegation to the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey) led by His Eminence, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Yurij, to discuss matters of mutual importance regarding our Church's mission in Canada and in the world. The delegation (see attached list) comprised our active Hierarchs, along with members of the Consistory and its standing Inter-Church Relations Committee.

Issues related to the program of the visit were covered in three separate press releases issued over the course of the visit and these releases have been posted on the UOCC website.

Prior to the visit, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada submitted proposed items for discussion (posted), which were organized into three themes:

- 1) Our relationship with the Ecumenical Patriarchate;
- 2) The growth and development of our mission in Canada; and,
- 3) Current ecclesiastical issues in Ukraine.

These issues were incorporated into a full two-day agenda of meetings (posted) planned by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The meetings included an audience with His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I, two extensive sessions with the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Synodal Committee for Inter-Orthodox Affairs and several working meetings over lunch and supper with members of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Patriarchate.

The discussions were frank and productive and took place in a spirit of brotherhood and cooperation; they ranged from addressing aspects of the Articles of Agreement (regarding the formalization of the relationship between the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada and the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1990), to the complex and challenging issues facing the Church in Canada and the ecclesiastical situation in Ukraine. About half the time spent in official meetings was dedicated to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada and Canadian issues and the other half was on the ecclesiastical situation in Ukraine.

A. Issues discussed:

1. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada's relationship with the Ecumenical Patriarchate

His All-Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew I, warmly received the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada delegation and declared that the Ecumenical Patriarchate was very proud to have received the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada under its canonical protection. His All-Holiness stated his fervent wish that this visit would strengthen and deepen relations between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada and that the delegation would return to Canada more assured and more convinced of the Patriarch's love for our Canadian Church. His Eminence, Metropolitan Yuriy, responded that despite challenges facing our Church in Canada, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada hoped to move forward with the support and cooperation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. His Eminence expressed the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada's continued devotion and dedication to the Holy Mother Church. His All-Holiness concluded the preliminary meeting by emphasizing that the importance of Ukrainian Orthodoxy to the Ecumenical Patriarchate is evidenced by the fact that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada delegation will be meeting with the high-ranking Synodal Committee for Inter-Orthodox Affairs, and not, as is usual with these types of meetings, with the Synodal Committee responsible for Eparchial issues.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada strongly endorses the Ecumenical Patriarch's 21st century vision of Orthodoxy, which advocates a spiritual understanding and action regarding the key issues and challenges facing humanity, including protection of the environment, sustainability, human rights, human trafficking, and economic disparities. Discussions also focused on our Church's model of conciliar governance, known as 'Sobornopravnist', which members of the Synodal Committee understood, respected and reaffirmed, as evidenced by the full participation of all clergy and lay members of the delegation in all meetings and discussions of the official visit.

A common understanding was achieved regarding the frequency, content and types of informational and reporting mechanisms with the Patriarchate. The Ecumenical Patriarchate requested that all communications from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada be sent via the Chancellor under the signature of the Metropolitan, which reinforces the Ecumenical Patriarchate's position that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada is one united ecclesiastical entity and self-governing Metropolia and not 3 separate Eparchies in a relationship with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Many administrative matters were clarified, including the updating of all references to our Church on the Ecumenical Patriarchate websites.

The discussion concerning the Articles of Agreement also clarified many issues. The issue regarding the title of "Bishop of Toronto" remains outstanding, although a commitment was

made for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada to work together to resolve this matter as quickly as possible. The Ecumenical Patriarchate requested that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada follow the procedure outlined in its 2008 Bylaws which requires that any decision regarding titles or the internal organization of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada be addressed by a meeting of the General Council or Sobor. Therefore, the expectation is that a mutually satisfactory proposal will be put before and addressed during the 2015 Sobor. It was also recognized that there is a need to update the Articles of Agreement to reflect the changes in circumstances that have transpired since their adoption, such as Article 3 concerning the transformation of the position of the Exarch in North America and Article 9 regarding Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops of America (SCOBA), which no longer exists.

2. The Growth and Development of our Mission in Canada

Following a broad-ranging discussion of the challenges and opportunities impacting our Church's mission in Canada, several items were addressed upon which general agreement was reached. In 2018, our Church will celebrate the Centennial of its founding and the Ecumenical Patriarchate agreed to support and participate in this milestone event. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada would like to highlight this occasion with a tour of the relics of the Apostle St. Andrew in that year. This matter will be officially pursued with the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the coming months.

Further, the Ukrainian Self-Reliance Association (T.Y.C.) is organizing an international symposium on the theme "The Significance of Ukrainian Orthodoxy - Kyivan Tradition for the Orthodox World, Past, Present and Future." The Synodal Committee positively reacted to this initiative, which will invite a wide range of Ukrainian Orthodox leaders and thinkers from all jurisdictions of Ukrainian Orthodoxy, and undertook to consider ways to support this important dialogue by encouraging Ecumenical Patriarchate academics and leaders to attend and participate.

The Synodal Committee also positively received information regarding our Church's role in the successful functioning of the Permanent Conference of Ukrainian Orthodox Bishops Beyond the Borders of Ukraine and our continued participation as part of the Orthodox Churches that serve on the Canadian Council of Churches.

3. Current Ecclesiastical Issues in Ukraine

There was a wide-ranging discussion dealing with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada's on-going relations with the various Orthodox jurisdictions in Ukraine. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada delegation explained its policy regarding the present ecclesiastical divisions in Ukraine. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada has, since 1947, repeatedly declared its position that the Orthodox Christians of Ukraine must have their own autocephalous Church in

communion with all the Orthodox of the world. Our place at the Eucharistic Table places the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada faithful in the complex position of being in communion with those perpetuating the non-canonical relationship between the Church of Moscow and the Church of Kyiv (this relationship was deemed non-canonical a number of times in history, most clearly stated by Constantinople Patriarch Gregory VII's 1924 Tomos), and not being in communion with two Orthodox communities, who have taken steps to highlight this anomaly, but are themselves in disagreement with each other. The Ecumenical Patriarchate sought, in 2008, to correct this painful matter through the vehicle of an autonomous Church but this did not succeed. The Patriarch remains committed to finding a solution and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, through its canonical connection with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, has an important role to play in keeping this matter current, which requires various types of communication with all branches of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada is also determined to undertake a variety of cultural, academic and charitable projects in furtherance of this goal.

His All-Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew, stated to the delegation at the outset that the Mother Church is anxious to see unity among the churches in Ukraine as quickly as possible and that he never ceases to promote this unity; this was the underlying reason for his visit to Ukraine in 2008 at the invitation of the President of Ukraine. Although His All-Holiness sought to resolve this painful division, the churches in Ukraine were not able to overcome their differences to come together at that time. The Patriarch reaffirmed his love for Ukraine and confirmed that he continues to pray for and is open and ready to do whatever is possible, while respecting canon law, to facilitate unity among the Orthodox churches in Ukraine.

In this context, the Synodal Committee also emphasized the Ecumenical Patriarchate's concern for Ukraine and its unity and spiritual welfare. It was recognized that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada had both historic links and on-going relations with members of all Orthodox and Ukrainian Greek Catholic Churches in Ukraine and that these were both welcome and normal. It was agreed that the Ecumenical Patriarchate's goal of encouraging unity and facilitating positive ecclesiastical developments in Ukraine could be assisted through the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada's various humanitarian, educational and cultural initiatives, as well as networks and contacts in Ukraine. It was further reaffirmed that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, through the canonical protection of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, has an important role to play in facilitating this process by monitoring and informing the Patriarchate of events in Ukraine. It was clear that the Ecumenical Patriarchate not only supported efforts of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, but that the Ecumenical Patriarchate desired to continue to reach out to all Christians in Ukraine, including the non-recognized Orthodox churches, provided that the Ecumenical Patriarchate must maintain balance between the jurisdictions by respecting the canons of the Church and not favouring one formation over the other.

The Synodal Committee recognized that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada has a constructive role to play in promoting these objectives in its dealings with all the Christian Churches of Ukraine, while observing the canonical traditions concerning con-celebration in all Church relationships. It was understood that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada's activities in Ukraine would be planned and implemented in concert with the overall efforts of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Ukraine. The Ecumenical Patriarchate expressed its desire to receive regular communications and information from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada on developments affecting the recognized and non-recognized churches in Ukraine and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada undertook to enhance activity in this area.

Discussion also concerned potential collaboration between the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada and the National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy on several initiatives, such as the public launch in Kyiv of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada sponsored translation of Patriarch Bartholomew's book, *Encountering the Mystery*; supporting with Kyiv Mohyla Academy a proposed international symposium on the moral imperatives of environmental protection ("Greening Ukraine"); and partnering on faculty and student exchanges and educational programs with other theology faculties including St. Andrew's College in Winnipeg. Although the Ecumenical Patriarchate has not taken any final decisions on these initiatives, the delegation was informed that they are under consideration.

The Synodal Committee affirmed its support for the continuation of the Kyivan Church Study Group that has successfully fostered an ecumenical dialogue with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Additional discussions touched on the celebratory plans and opportunities for fostering unity during this year's 1025th Anniversary of the Baptism of Rus'-Ukraine.

As well, following the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada's presentation of the Holodomor Genocide commemorative statue "*Bitter Memories of Childhood*" (posted) His All-Holiness was requested to participate in the observance of the 80th anniversary of this tragedy, which is internationally observed on the 4th Saturday of November in 2013.

His All-Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew, also invited His Eminence, Metropolitan Yurij, to join the Patriarch's official delegation at the celebrations in May 2013 at Mikulcice for the Orthodox Church of Czech Lands and Slovakia's commemoration of the 1150th Anniversary of the Christianization of the Czech and Slovak people by Saints Cyril and Methodius.

B. Summary

The deliberations took place in an atmosphere of brotherly love, respect and humility on both sides. The sincere and active desire of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to work together with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada was evident in all of the different meetings and discussions. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada delegation was greatly encouraged and

strengthened by the extent of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's support and understanding of the issues and challenges facing our Church in Canada and its long-standing relationship with all Orthodox and Catholic Churches in Ukraine. The fact that the discussions regarding the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada was elevated to the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Synodal Committee for Inter-Orthodox Affairs, a senior level committee of the Holy and Sacred Synod, signifies the priority the Patriarch places on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada and its issues. It further confirms His All-Holiness's desire to strengthen the ties with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada and to actively pursue a resolution to the current ecclesiastical situation in Ukraine.

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The following documents have been posted on the UOCC website:

1. Materials prepared by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada for discussion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate prior to the visit
 - a. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada's relationship with the Ecumenical Patriarchate
 - b. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada mission in Canada
 - c. Current Ecclesiastical Issues in Ukraine
2. Schedule of meetings and events prepared by the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada delegation during its visit of February 7-10, 2013
3. Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada Delegation Press Releases:
 - a. Feb 7, 2013
 - b. Feb 8, 2013
 - c. Feb 9, 2013
 - d. Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada Press Release On the Special Presentation of the Holodomor Statue to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople from His Eminence Metropolitan Yuriy - Feb 13, 2013
4. Report on the Visit of the UOCC Delegation