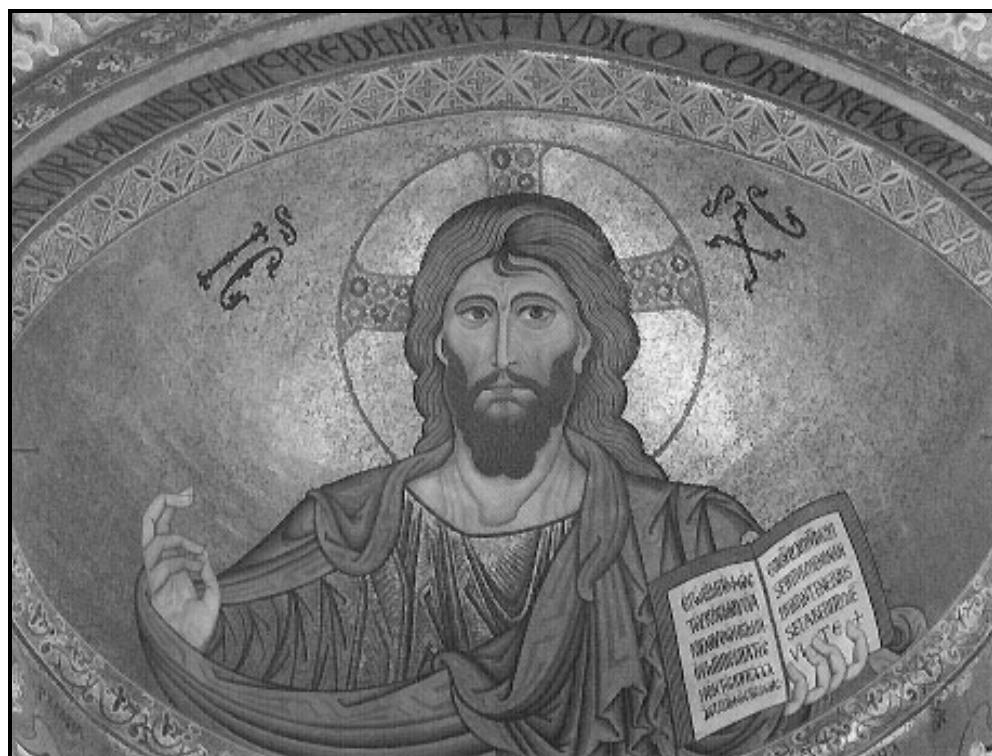


# **Guiding Principles of Vision 2000: A Bible Study**



## **STUDY 4**

### **The Local and Ecumenical Church**

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Winnipeg, 2006

## **FORWARD**

In July of 2000, at the 20th Sobor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, a series of resolutions were passed under the title “Vision 2002”. These resolutions covered the areas of spiritual renewal, educational development, effective communication and responsible stewardship; they gave the UOOC a mandate touching upon our internal life, our relations with other Orthodox Churches, and our outreach to the wider community.

These resolutions were founded upon a set of “Guiding Principles”; these principles outline fundamental Orthodox teachings on the nature of the human journey, and on the Church in which we are called to carry out this journey. This Bible study series is designed to offer a closer look at the Guiding Principles that formed “Vision 2000”. It is hoped that this endeavour will be of benefit to all who continue the spiritual journey that is life in the Holy Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada.

Rev. Fr. Andrew Jarmus, Winnipeg, 2006

## **Guiding Principles Bible Study Part 4:**

### **The Local Churches [National] And The Ecumenical Church [Global / Universal]**

- 1. The orthodox church can be thought of as a "commonwealth" of self-governing Churches. Although each local Church has its own unique customs and language, all Churches of the Orthodox Communion share the same fundamental doctrine, worship, morality and spirituality.**
- 2. The family of Orthodox Churches guides its common life through counciliar government (*sobornopravnist'*) - the Ecumenical ("Universal") Council being the highest form of such government. It is understood that God Himself directs the counciliar process. This is reflected in the words of the decree drafted at the First Apostolic Council: "... *for it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...*" (Acts 15:28)**
- 3. Each local Church is responsible for administering its own internal and external life (e.g., the Statutes and By-Laws of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada). However, no local Church can make decisions regarding Orthodox belief or practice which contradict the decision which are binding for the Church as a whole.**
- 4. Harmony and unity among all Orthodox jurisdictions must be a concern of all local Churches. This unity includes: maintaining the unity of the canonical Orthodox Churches; reconciling any uncanonical bodies with canonical Orthodoxy; and seeking out Christian unity in a wider sense.**
- 5. The role of the Church within society is to bear witness to the Gospel by responding to pressing issues and challenges experienced by society. The Church must never compromise its beliefs and values, but it must have an active and relevant presence and voice in the community.**
- 6. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, as an Orthodox Church in the "*New World*", is canonically recognized and historically attached to the Ecumenical Church through the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, as one of three Ukrainian Orthodox Churches is the West, labors and prays for peace, harmony and healing in the emergence of an autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine, which is recognized by the entire Orthodox world.**

**1. The orthodox church can be thought of as a "commonwealth" of self-governing Churches...**

When we read the New Testament, we find that the Church is spoken of both in the singular and the plural. The Bible describes the Church both as

one Body, united throughout the world, and as a various communities of believers in specific localities.

**References to the Church in Plural:**

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**Acts 14:23**

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**Romans 16:16**

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**1 Corinthians 7:17**

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**2 Thessalonians 1:4**

### **References to the Church in Singular:**

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**Acts 20:28**

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**1 Corinthians 14:12**

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**Galatians 1:13**

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**1 Timothy 3:15**

<b>NOTE:</b>	<p><i>The above quote from 1 Timothy, chapter 3 is very important for us to reflect upon. It connects the idea of the Church with the community of worshippers. St. Paul says "God's household" is "the church of the living God" and "the pillar and ground of the truth". In other words, the Church is not simply an earthly social service agency, or other organization. The Church is a community of people gathered together in a common expression of worship to the Living God.</i></p> <p><i>It is the worship of the Church, therefore, which guides and nurtures all other parts of our life: outreach, teaching, administration, etc. It is also for this reason that we refer to a house of worship as a "church" and attending worship as "going to church".</i></p>
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The Biblical quotes on pages two and three show that in apostolic times, there was a dual understanding of Church. First of all, the faithful understood that Christians were unified as members of one Church. Jesus did not come to establish a multitude of Churches, but one

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Church. Into this Church, Jesus gathers together all those who believe in Him, both throughout the world and throughout the ages. This is Christ's own teaching in his discourse where identifies Himself as the "Good Shepherd" in John 10:1-16.

### **John10:16**

Notice that Jesus does not say that it is acceptable to have other sheep outside the fold. He says that these sheep, too, must be brought together into the one Flock (the Church) and under the one Shepherd (Christ).

At the same time, however, there was also an understanding that each local Christian community – comprised of clergy and laity together – was the Church. Thus, St. Ignatius of Antioch, in the first century wrote that where the faithful were gathered with their bishop, there is the Church in all Her fullness.

There is one Christ, one Saviour, who

has founded His one Church to carry forward His Mission of Salvation through history. His Church is established in various regions throughout the world for this work. It is for this reason that the Orthodox Church can be likened to a commonwealth.

The "common wealth" that all local Churches share is the Good News of salvation, as it is articulated and experienced through our doctrine, moral code, spiritual tradition, and worship. While each local Church will give the work of spreading of the Good News its own unique tone, the Message that is proclaimed is always the same.

## **2. The family of Orthodox Churches guides its common life through counciliar government (sobornopravnist') - the Ecumenical ("Universal") Council being the highest form of such government.**

All that we do as Jesus' disciples must have a communal element to it. Christ defined His followers as a community, a group. The original biblical word for

"church" is "ecclesia", which literally means "those gathered together". This is why it is not enough to pray to God alone; we must also gather as a

community to join together in common prayer because Jesus Christ Himself defines His followers as those who gather together.

Church governance also must be carried out as a community. Jesus gives an example of this when He describes how to handle differences among the faithful in the Gospel of St. Matthew 18:15-20.

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#### **Matthew 18:19 & 20**

Our form of communal Church governance is called counciliar government -- in Ukrainian the term is "sobornopravnist'", from the Ukrainian word for council, "sobor". At every level of organization, the life of the Orthodox Church is administered through a series of "councils". Although in the terminology of our Church we might know them by different names – consistory, *rada*, board, committee, etc. – in essence they are all councils.

National Churches have the regular sobors (in the case of the UOCC, every five years). Between sobors, they are administered by their council of bishops and a wider council of clergy and laity. In the UOCC, this is our "Full Consistory", made up of our bishops, along with 9 priests and 9 laypeople.

A diocese is governed similarly by it's diocesan councils and sobors. Again, we might know them by other names in the UOCC, but this in essence is what they are.

Likewise, every parish will gather, at least annually for it's Annual General Meeting (which is in effect a "mini-sobor" for that community), and is administered on a day-to-day basis through the work of it's parish council.

The highest type of Church council is the Ecumenical, or "Universal" Council. These councils dealt with issues of belief or practice and administration that affected the Church as a whole. Decisions dealing with belief are calls "dogmas". Statements governing the practical life of believers are called "canons" There were seven Ecumenical Councils in total (see pages 6 & 7):

First Ecumenical Council	Nicea, 325 AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Denounced <i>Arianism</i>, a false teaching asserting that the Son of God was created by the Father.</li> <li>Adopted the articles of the Nicene Creed dealing with Christ – stressed the doctrine that Son of God is "of one essence" with the Father.</li> </ul>
Second Ecumenical Council	Constantinople, 381 AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported First Council's articulation of the Divinity of Christ and asserted the divinity of the Holy Spirit.</li> <li>Added articles on the Holy Spirit and the Church into the Nicene Creed</li> </ul>
Third Ecumenical Council	Ephesus, 431 AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repudiated <i>Nestorianism</i>, a heresy which taught that Jesus was only a man, in whom the Son of God came to dwell. This heresy also refused to use Mary's traditional title "Mother of God".</li> <li>Affirmed that the Son of God is both Divine and human – the One born of Mary was indeed God incarnate.</li> <li>Defended Mary's title as "Mother of God" ("Theotokos", literally "God-bearer"), which is understood as a confession of the divinity of her Son.</li> </ul>
Fourth Ecumenical Council	Chalcedon, 451 AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refuted the teachings of the <i>monophysites</i>, who claimed that Jesus' human nature was swallowed up by His Divine nature, thus leaving Him with only one nature.</li> <li>Articulated the belief that in the one person of Jesus Christ there exist two natures, Divine and human -- He is both perfect God and perfect man.</li> <li>Reaffirmed Mary's traditional title of "Theotokos".</li> </ul>
Fifth Ecumenical Council	Constantinople, 553 AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reaffirmed the doctrine of the two natures of Christ.</li> <li>Condemned the "spiritualist"</li> </ul>

		teachings of <i>Origen</i> , who taught that spirit was superior to matter; that human souls existed before their bodies, and that the soul was saved apart from the body.
Sixth Ecumenical Council	Constantinople, 680-681 AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Denounced <i>monothelitism</i>, which taught that Jesus had one will, which was an infused divine and human will. The implication of this belief was that Christ is not fully human, since having complete free will is one of the characteristics of human nature.</li> <li>Upheld the Orthodox doctrine that in the person of Jesus, who is both God and man, both Divine and human wills exist and function harmoniously with each other.</li> </ul>
Seventh Ecumenical Council	Nicea, 787 AD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refuted the teachings of the <i>iconoclasts</i>, who said that the use of images ("icons") in worship was idolatry.</li> <li>Distinguished between worship, which is reserved for God alone, and veneration (honour), of which the saints and their images, along with sacred space and sacred objects, are worthy.</li> <li>Taught venerating an icon is an act of love for the one depicted in the image, not for the image itself.</li> <li>The Fathers of this council also pointed out that the iconoclasts' argument that it was not proper to paint images of God because no one has ever seen God implied that Jesus Christ was not God, because we <i>have</i> seen Him. We can paint an image of Him whom we have seen.</li> </ul>

Many do not realize that the Church does not actually call "ecumenical" councils. The Church calls "Great and Holy Councils", with bishops from all the mainline, canonical, Orthodox jurisdictions. The term "ecumenical" is given to a council only after its decisions have been affirmed as being correct. This affirmation happens through a process called "reception", by which the general population of the faithful give their approval to the results of the council's deliberations.

Only when a council's decisions are "received" by the whole Body of the faithful is the title "ecumenical" ("universal") given. Once a council bears the title "ecumenical" that council's dogmatic statements and canons are universally binding for all believers, both at the time of that council and beyond.

Another important thing to know about Church councilian government is that historically it is not based on majority-rule, but on consensus. All participants in the council must come to a unanimous agreement on the issue being discussed. This is why, when we read Church history, we find that the great councils of the first millennium took months to conclude – each bishop present (and sometimes a hundred or more) had to be in complete agreement with regard to the

statements being formulated.

We read in Matthew 18:20 Jesus' teaching that "where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them". We understand that when a Church gathers in council, the resulting statements and decisions, when they have been "received" by the body of the faithful, are handed down from Christ Himself, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This understanding is evident in the biblical account of the very first Church Council, the Apostolic Council, which is written of in Acts 15.

The Apostolic Council was called to discuss a debate concerning Gentile converts to Christianity. One faction in the Church said that because Jesus was the Messiah of the Jews, Gentiles had to first become Jews before they could be baptised Christians. The other side asserted that the Good News was for all mankind and therefore Gentiles could become Christians without first embracing Judaism. In their deliberations, the Apostles concluded that Gentiles wishing to become Christians did not have to first become Jews. At the end of the council they drafted a letter, outlining their decision. Acts 15:28, reveals to us the Apostles' understanding that God guided them to their decision:

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As the Church meets together in council, it meets in the presence of our

Lord Jesus Christ, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

### Acts 15:28

**3. Each local Church is responsible for administering its own internal and external life. However, no local Church can make decisions regarding Orthodox belief or practice that contradict the decisions which are binding for the Church as a whole.**

A local Church, under the guidance of its presiding bishop, administers its own life. This includes both internal matters (worship, the proclamation of the Gospel, maintaining order among the parishes, the ordination of clergy), and external matters (relations with sister Orthodox Churches, with other Christians and non-Christians, and with the secular society).

However, in this administration, the local Church cannot make decisions that disagree with universally accepted Orthodox precepts. While there are always unique expressions of the universally embraced Faith, there cannot be dissenting or diverging expressions. In this way the unity of the Church is maintained.

The New Testament teaches us the importance of all Churches standing together in unity on matters of faith:

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**1 Corinthians 1:10**

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**Romans 16:17**

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In his instructions to the Church elders at Ephesus, found in Acts 20:28-30, St. Paul offers this warning about

those who would teach their own personal gospel, rather than the Gospel of Christ:

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**Acts 20:29**

Knowing that there will always be those who rise up in the Church trying to sow the seeds of dissent and division, the Church has always strongly emphasized the importance of maintaining unity in correct belief and practice. Thus, while any local Church is responsible for its own affairs, it is bound in this ministry within the limits of universally binding precepts of faith and life. These boundaries guard the integrity of the Church Body.

In our secular society, those who are critical of the Church would say that this adherence to universally binding

principles is simply an attempt to make sure that those in power maintain their positions of influence. This, though, is both cynical and historically inaccurate. Countless men, women and children throughout the history of the Church have chosen degradation, persecution and death rather than compromising on the truth of the Gospel – hardly a "winning" scenario, or a successful power play.

On the contrary, the Church's insistence on true belief and life comes from the promise of Jesus in the Gospel of St. John.

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**John 8:31-32**

Embracing Christ's teaching yields a personal experience of His Truth. The Truth of Christ makes us free – free from shame, remorse, guilt, sin, and finally death itself. For the Orthodox, the issue of holding fast to the true teachings of Christ, even in the face of

overwhelming divergent opinions, is a matter of choosing freedom over continued captivity. Maintaining a unity of true belief ("orthodoxy") and true practice ("orthopraxis") is the way that each Church is safeguarded as *the Vessel* that leads us to salvation.

#### **4. Harmony and unity among all Orthodox jurisdictions must be a concern of all local Churches.**

Though it has been mentioned already, it cannot be overstated: one of the greatest values in the life of the Church is unity. The Scriptures speak of the Church as an organic entity –

the Body of Christ. A body functions optimally only when all parts are working together in harmony. This is what St. Paul is telling the Ephesian Christians:

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### Ephesians 4:2-6

Similarly St. Paul instructs the Corinthians:

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### 1 Corinthians 12:24-26

However, this unity is not to be maintained at any cost. If a Christian chooses to embrace a divergent belief, and would not return to the true

Gospel, they were to be let go, rather than making compromises to the Faith.

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### Galatians 1:9

<b>NOTE:</b>	<i>In most English translations of the Bible the phrase is "let him be accursed" or "let him be condemned", or something similar. In the original Greek, the word used here is "anathema", which means "let him be cast out".</i>
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The ministry of maintaining unity within the Church involves both guarding the integrity of the Church Body, and reaching out to those who have

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wandered away, encouraging them to return to the Faith. Thus, St. Paul offers this description of the person and work of a bishop:

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#### **Titus 1:7-9**

Titus 1:9 states that one responsibility of the bishop is to "encourage and convince those who contradict" In order to do this, Church leaders must themselves be immersed in a knowledge of, and love for, the Good

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News. Thus, the bishop's diligence to learn and practice the Faith is a blessing both for himself and for those under his care. This is what St. Paul told the young bishop Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:13-16.

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#### **1 Timothy 4:16**

While Paul speaks specifically of the episcopacy here, the principle applies to all Church members. As we embrace the Good News and struggle to faithfully live it out, we are blessed by God and others receive a blessing as well. Thus, the saints teach us:

"Acquire the Spirit of Peace, and thousands around you will be saved." Jesus Himself teaches about the value and power of unity within the Church in his last great prayer to His Father for His disciples, during the Mystical Supper.

John 17:22-23

These words of our Lord point to the real importance of Church unity and personal holiness. Both of these qualities are the main factors in successful missionary outreach. Such outreach is at the centre of the

Church's life. The very last directive, the "Great Commission", that Jesus gives before ascending back to the Father specifically relates to proclaiming the Good News of Salvation.

Matthew 28:19 & 20

Our main work as Jesus' disciples is to encourage and convince those who are not in the Church (or who are merely on its periphery) to enter into the full life of the Church, and thus personally experience the "truth that makes us free".

The best tool available to us for convincing and encouraging others is the example of a life transformed by God's Good News. In the same manner, the greatest witness to the health and functionality of a Church is that its members are living in unity and loyalty to the tenets of the faith. In

other words, the best thing we can do for our parishes and our Church as a whole is to practice what we preach.

Disunity within the Church harms every individual believer, it harms the community as a whole, and it does a disservice to Christ. When all live together in a unity of faith, practice and principle, then not only are the members blessed, but also the Lord is glorified. He is glorified with a glory that reaches beyond the boundaries of that community and illuminates the world around it.

## **Philippians 2:14 & 15**

**5. The role of the Church within society is to bear witness to the Gospel by responding to pressing issues and challenges experienced by society.**

In the Creed, we state our belief in the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church". The word "catholic" literally means: "concerning/involving the whole". It reflects our belief that the Church proclaims the whole Gospel to the whole of humanity.

We define the word "apostolic" to mean that the Church is connected "organically" to the apostles. First, we are connected through correct belief and practice, and second, through a succession of ordained bishops that can be traced back to the twelve apostles.

There is another understanding of the term "apostolic", however. The word "apostle" means one who is "sent out".

The apostles were sent out by Christ to preach the Good News of salvation.

Having been gifted with the Good News of freedom from sin and death, Christians must take this gift into the world with them and share it with others. We are all "sent out" by Christ through the "Great Commission": "Go, make disciples of all nations..."

The Church should never be looked upon as existing in a vacuum. It exists within history, in specific localities, and there is the expectation that it will interact with the society in which it lives. Through this interaction we bring to bear the light of the Gospel on to the particular needs and issue of that place and time.

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**Luke 8:16**

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**Matthew 5:14**

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The one cautionary note here is that we make sure the Gospel is going out into the world, but that we are not letting the world come into the Gospel.

Our aim is to allow the Good News of Christ to illumine the fallen world, so that all people may offer due glory and praise to the One God and Father of us all.

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## **Matthew 5:16**

We are in no way to allow the values of the fallen to taint the message of the Good News. When the truth of the Gospel has been distorted by the errors of the world, the Church falls into darkness and our mission is compromised.

In part three of the "Guiding Principles Bible Study", we examined the seven churches addressed in the Book of Revelations, looking at how they had fallen into God's displeasure.

Reviewing this list, we will find that two of these Churches had offended God specifically by compromising their beliefs and allowing alien teachings to tarnish the Gospel: the Church in Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-17), and the Church in Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-28).

Speaking to the Christians in Thyatira, the Lord offers this call, which is both for them and for anyone who "has ears to hear... what the Spirit says to the churches"(Rev. 2:29):

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## **Revelation 2:25,26**

<b>NOTE:</b>	<i>The phrase "power over all the nations" means authority and glory in the heavenly Kingdom.</i>
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The apostle Paul gives similar instructions several times in his letters:

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## **Hebrews 10:23**

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## **2 Thessalonians 2:15**

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## **2 Timothy 1:13-14**

In the Gospel of John Jesus calls Himself the Light of World (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46). Likewise, we read above in Matthew 5 that Jesus identifies His faithful as the Light of the World, since

we are members of His Body, the Church. In St. John's Gospel, there is a statement about the Light of Christ which should give us hope and courage.

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## **John 1:4,5**

In the face of any challenge or issue, we need not be embarrassed or afraid of stating our beliefs, perspectives or values. When we walk, speak and act

in the light of Christ, bringing this light into our time and place, the powers of darkness will not (cannot) prevail against it.

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### **6. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada is canonically recognized and historically attached to the Ecumenical Church through the Patriarchate of Constantinople. (She) labors and prays for peace, harmony and healing in the emergence of an autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine, which is recognized by the entire Orthodox world.**

The ideas mentioned in the last paragraph of section five are not just wishful thinking. Throughout history, we have seen how God's Truth prevails, even against what seem to be overwhelming odds. For proof of this, we need not look far. In the early

1990's, with the collapse of the Soviet Union came a resurgence of Orthodoxy in the countries of the former USSR, including the UOCC's ancestral homeland, Ukraine. Seventy years of militant atheism in Eastern Europe could not snuff out the flame of

faith in this land. In this way, we saw the words of the prophet Isaiah fulfilled once again:

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**Isaiah 8:10**

God continues to be with His People throughout the world, leading them to the fullness of life. It is for this very

reason that the Church and all Her ministries exist, as attested to by St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians:

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**Ephesians 4:11-13**

This growth "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" is our growth into spiritual maturity – a process we discussed in Study One of this series. Such growth, however, is not limited to people alone. Churches, too, as organic and living communities, are also called to growth.

In Part Three of this Study, we learned about the missionary work of the Apostles. An apostle would go into a town to preach the Good News, baptise new believers and oversee their fledgling communities. He would

remain there until the new church was stable enough to support itself, with a critical mass of members and a circle of local leaders – deacons and presbyters – ministering with the apostle. When the Church had reached this point, it was time for the apostle to move on. Out of the college of presbyters, one man would be elected bishop, to take over for the apostle as the community's new leader. With the new Church firmly able to look after its own affairs, the apostle continued on his mission to a new location.

From this apostolic "template", a historical pattern has developed in Orthodoxy. The Church in a given geographic region would grow to such a point that, under the authority of its ruling bishop, it would be recognized by its sister Churches as self-governing in all internal and external affairs.

With the fall of the USSR and the continued social and political development of the Ukrainian nation, our Church hopes and prays that, in accordance with the ancient pattern, a

self-governing Orthodox Church will emerge in our ancestral homeland, Ukraine – a Church that is recognized by all other Orthodox jurisdictions in the world, and that will unify all the Orthodox faithful into one ecclesiastical Body.

Such unity, we have already seen, is an essential characteristic of the Church. It is also clearly the will of Christ for His believers, as He shows in the Gospel of John as He prays to His Father at the Mystical Supper.

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**John 17:11**

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**John 17:22**

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It is in the spirit of Christ's desire that His believers "all may be one" that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, in 1990, established Eucharistic relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchal of Constantinople. Through the Patriarchate of Constantinople, our Church has a place on the sphere of world Orthodoxy. We enjoy communion with all other mainline, canonical Orthodox jurisdictions across the globe. This communion connects us organically to the Church

of Christ and His Apostles, and gives us a voice in the Church.

Such an organic connection with the Church is an absolute necessity. In the western world, we have witnessed a foreign influence on our spirituality has left us with two ideas unknown to classical Orthodox thought.

The first is individualism, which states that our spirituality is our own personal business, and that we only need involve others in it as much (or as little) as we wish.

In truth, we are not expected to "go it alone" in our spiritual lives. Not only is this not necessary, it is not healthy.

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Right from the first book of the Bible we are taught that we were not made to be "lone wolves" in the world.

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### **Genesis 2:18**

"It is not good for us to be alone" – whether it be socially, emotionally or spiritually.

The second western idea that has crept into our thought is an overly spiritualized notion of Church – that is, that "the Church" exists in the world without any real, concrete ties, relations or boundaries. Again, Orthodox Sacred Tradition and the Holy Scriptures teach that the Church is a real, concrete Body, composed of real people, with an actual connection

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(we prefer to say "communion") between them.

Earlier, we read the words of the Apostle Paul to the Church in Corinth, teaching them about their unity as the Body of Christ. St. Paul's words to the Romans also bear testimony to this understanding:

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### **Romans 12:4,5**

A body is a tangible, concrete thing, existing in this world. If the apostles and other great teachers of the Church speak of the Church as the Body of Christ then one obvious implication of this is that the Church is also a tangible, concrete entity existing in this world.

As Christians, we have an innate need to be part of a real and tangible community, the Body of Christ. Likewise, our connection has to be real. Our Church's communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate gives us this real point of contact with the wider Orthodox Body of believers throughout the world.

A connection with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople is part of the historical legacy of the Ukrainian Orthodox people. For the first 500 years of her existence, the Orthodox Church in the Ukrainian lands was under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Looking at the period in our Church's history, we can see that it was the "golden age" of Ukrainian Orthodoxy. It was the time of such great churchmen as St. Ilarion, the first Metropolitan of Kyiv, and St. Peter

Mohyla – both of whom were bishops of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

By entering into Eucharistic relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1990, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada further solidified our connection with the spiritual heritage of our holy fathers and mothers of Rus'-Ukraine.

This connection with the wider Body of Christ is not optional. In the Gospel of John, Jesus makes this clear.

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#### **John 15:5**

Our communion with world Orthodoxy, through our communion with the Church of Constantinople is our assurance that, in faith and good will

all our endeavours that are for the Lord will be successful. This work will be both for our own benefit and for the glory of Christ and His Kingdom.