

THE POSITION OF THE UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA ON THE UNITY OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN UKRAINE

1. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada was founded in 1918 by our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ through immigrants who saw their God-given vocation to be: to serve Him in this new land as they had served Him in their homeland.
2. This meant that they would seek to be loyal and productive citizens of Canada. At the same time they believed that our contribution to this wonderful land would always include faithfulness to, and the unfolding of, the particular heritage of the land of their roots. They were convinced that Canada would be enriched by this contribution. Also the heritage of their homeland, Ukraine, would live on in an atmosphere of unity in diversity and the freedom that had been denied to the people of Ukraine for centuries.
3. The concern of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada for its ancestral homeland has, as a matter of course, also included the vision of an autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine in Eucharistic communion with all the Orthodox Churches. This unity in diversity is the way Orthodoxy sees the Church: it is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic and at the same time made up of diverse cultural and linguistic communities, united by faith and especially by mutual participation in the Marriage Feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9), the Holy Eucharist.
4. This vision has always been faithfully maintained by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada. This led us to seek and accept, in 1990, Eucharistic union with the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Ukraine's Mother Church. At the same time we firmly expressed our commitment to what we believe to be our God-given mission: to pray and work, as God grants opportunity and as we are able, for a united autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine in communion with world Orthodoxy.
5. The Standing Commission of Inter-Church and Ecumenical Relations of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada has noted that all of our Sobors since November 12-13, 1947, have maintained and proclaimed this vision and **we have never departed from it.**
6. Our firm vision and hope inspired our Hierarchy and Church leaders to make an official visit to Ukraine in May of 1993, headed by our Metropolitan, His Beatitude Wasyly (Fedak) of blessed memory. This most authoritative delegation visited the leaders of all the Orthodox communities of Ukraine: the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyivan Patriarchate) and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate). We felt joy that after years of oppression by an atheistic regime the Church was again

free to serve its people but also pain at the separation between these three communities.

7. Our joyful but also sorrowful message to our Orthodox brothers and sisters was: **come together!** We offered our help, should it prove to be useful to have a neutral (i.e. unaligned with any of these communities, but not neutral with regard to the above vision of our Church for our homeland Ukraine) third party as a facilitator in the dialogue that must inevitably precede such a coming together.

8. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada remains willing, prepared and steadfastly committed to offer whatever assistance is possible to realize this vision. We have always prayed and shall ever continue to pray for its realization with full faith and expectation that, as the Lord wills and as we, His imperfect servants, cooperate with His will, **it shall be so**, in His time.

9. Complex and challenging though the situation may be we nonetheless reiterate our faith and our hope, based upon love for God and for our people of Ukraine, that an autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine is a work in progress by the action of the Holy Spirit in cooperation with God's people in Ukraine.

10. We do not withhold our love and respect from those whose vision differs from ours. Nonetheless we call upon all who love Ukraine and the Orthodox Church as an integral part of its stability, culture and history to join in this noble work of prayer and preparation for unity. Above all, we commit ourselves to preparing our hearts and minds for this by praying for **all** the participants in this complex and challenging process of discovering the unity in diversity of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, and believing that, with God's help, each one will make his/her unique and indispensable contribution to it.

*The Standing Commission for Inter-Church and Ecumenical Relations
of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada*

*Bright Wednesday,
April 11, 2007*