Structure of the Orthodox Church

PART B

Adult Education Series 12/16

Outline

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- Orthodox Church of America

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Clerical Offices

- Bishop
- Priest
- Deacon

Church and churches

- From the Orthodox perspective, the Church is one, even though she is manifested in many places.
- Orthodox ecclesiology operates with:

  diversity in unity and unity in diversity.

- No attempt should be made to subordinate the:
  - many to the one (the Roman Catholic model)

    nor
  - the one to the many (the Protestant model)
- Christ is the head of the Church and the Church is His body. In the divine Eucharist we have the whole Christ and the body (Church).

Church Roles

Each Orthodox church has a

Eucharistic president (**the bishop**)

represented by the clergy (**priest**)

participated in by the (**laity**)

Each of these is essential to constitute the whole Church.

The Orthodox church is a local church, and yet is of the one Church.

The one Church of Christ is equally and fully present in all these localities because we are all the one Body of our Lord.

Patriarchates

5 Original	1 Modern
1. Rome – (Catholic Church)	Moscow
2. Constantinople – (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America)	
3. Alexandria	
4. Antioch	
5. Jerusalem	

Orthodox Jurisdictions in America

There are 10 Orthodox jurisdictions in the United States

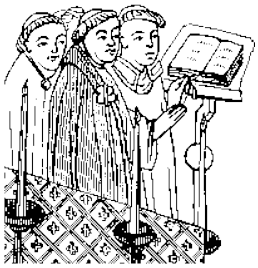
1. Greek
   - Carpatho-Russian Diocese
2. Antiochian
3. Romanian
4. Russian Church outside of Russia (ROCOR)
5. Jerusalem
6. Albanian
7. Ukrainian
8. Serbian
9. Bulgarian
10. Orthodox Church of America (OCA)

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Jurisdictions

There are 9 Orthodox Metropolises in America

New York	San Francisco
Chicago	Denver
Detroit	New Jersey
Pittsburgh	Boston
Atlanta	

The current situation in America is *uncanonical*!



- "Phyletism" or religious principle of church organization based under national or ethnic lines.
- It arose after the destruction of Constantinople in 1453 and gave autonomy to the various churches of the Byzantine Rite.
- In 1872 Ecumenical Patriarch Anthimus VI convened a synod in Constantinople, which condemned phyletism.
  - Canon 12 of the Fourth Ecumenical Synod forbids the establishment of two metropolitans within the same province
- The situation in Genesee County is a prime example of phyletism in that we have four (4) Orthodox jurisdictions each with their own bishop operating in a single geographical area.

Source: Dr. Patsavos, Unity and Autocephaly

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Clerical Offices

- **Major Orders** – χειροτωνία – inside the altar
  - Bishop
  - Priest
  - Deacon

- **Minor Orders** – Χειροθεσία – outside the altar
  - Subdeacons
  - Acolytes
  - Chanters
  - Altar Servers
  - Readers

Defining “Bishop”

The Bishop represents the:

- Catholicity of the one Church for *each* church within his diocese
- Fullness and unity of the eschatological community.
- Historical continuity of the Church in time (Apostolic Succession)
- Communion and unity of the Church in space

- Bishop is alter Christus as portrayed in the Eucharist as the presence of the Church [in unity].
- Bishop is alter Apostolus as he maintains the continuity of the Apostolic teachings

Hippolytus of Rome

The Bishop and the Church

Bishop Zizioulas
Metropolitan of
Pergamum

and

Orthodox
Theologian

"In an ecclesiology of communion each local Church is a Church in the full sense.

From that point of view all bishops are equal: each local Church guided by them are Churches in the full sense.

For that reason, no institution, such as synod, council or the primate should act in such a way as to compromise or cancel the full nature of the local Church."

"The difficulty concerning the Petrine (Papal) primacy lies in the fact that it entails universal jurisdiction whereby the Pope can interfere in a local Church.

If we can find a way in which to see the universal primacy of the pope that doesn't encroach on the full nature of the local Church, we could accept it."

Bishop's role through history

- Up until the 4th century the Bishop was the sole administrator of the sacrament of Eucharist.

- During the Middle Ages Western theology began to foster the idea of a distinction or autonomy between the body of the Eucharist, body of the historical Christ and the mystical body of the Church.

- By the 17th century the size of many dioceses became so large that one bishop could not manage them by himself which resulted in the bishop celebrating the Eucharist less frequently.

Relationship Between Bishop and Priest

Wherever there is a Bishop there is a Church, but presbyters are the image of the Apostles

Ignatius

A priest must be given the authority to perform the sacrament of Liturgy from the Bishop.

The authority to do this is present in the Metropolitan's signature on the Antimesion (Αντιμετσιον)

Defining “Patriarch”

Patriarch (Gr. *patriarches*; Lat. *patriarcha*)

father or chief of a race (*patria*, a clan or family)

Used in OT for the chiefs of the tribes
(1 Chronicles 24:31, 27:22 and 2 Chronicles 23:20)

Was also used in a more general sense for the fathers of the Old Law (Gen 17:4)

It is applied to Abraham as a version of his title "father of many nations“ (Heb 7:4 - see also David (Acts 2:29)

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH

As Ecumenical Patriarch, His All Holiness, BARTHOLOMEW, holds the titles of Archbishop of Constantinople and New Rome.

He is the 270th successor of the 2,000 year-old Christian Church founded by St. Andrew.

As Patriarch he occupies the First Throne of the Orthodox Christian Church and presides as first among equals.

He also works to advance reconciliation among Catholic, Muslim and Orthodox communities, and is supportive of peace-building measures to diffuse global conflict in those regions.