



SCOBA Resolution on the “Ukrainian Autocephalous Church”

On 17 May 1962, the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) adopted a resolution concerning the so-called “Ukrainian Autocephalous Church.” This body did not have even the semblance of apostolic succession, as its “holy orders” were derived from a self-consecrated “bishop.” The situation is remarkably parallel to the modern-day Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC), whose hierarchs make up a significant minority in the newly-created “Orthodox Church in Ukraine” (OCU). Like the original UAOC addressed in the SCOBA resolution, the modern-day UAOC also traces its origins to self-consecrated “bishops.” These so-called bishops are not legitimate hierarchs who were defrocked or went into schism; rather, they are men without even any external appearance of apostolic succession.

*The 1962 SCOBA resolution was published in Archimandrite Serafim Surrency’s 1973 book *The Quest for Orthodox Church Unity in America: A History of the Orthodox Church in North America in the Twentieth Century*.*

Inasmuch as the chief Hierarch of the Autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church functioned as a bishop in the United States between the two World Wars without being ordained in Apostolic Succession, and then endeavoured to obtain ordination in an irregular manner, and as the body over which he presides retains in its active ministry men whose only priesthood is derived from his attempted ordination in the period in which he was not in Apostolic Succession, the following considerations are important:

- Certain communities in this body are obviously, even now, deprived of the grace of the Sacred Mysteries, while retaining the external forms of the Church.
- Almost an entire generation will not have received the Mystery of Chrismation. This is an especial difficulty in respect to young men who have been, or may be, admitted to Holy Orders.
- The attempted admission of any of these communities into the Church would eventually throw doubt on the existence of the grace of Holy Orders in any part of the Church which had sacramental fellowship with them, and would incidentally place the Church at a serious polemical disadvantage over against other bodies, e.g., the Latin communion.

In view of these facts the Study and Planning Commission recommends to the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas that one of two courses be followed:

(A)

Immediately after the body in question applies to the Oecumenical Patriarchate for regularization, a Commission of hierarchs receive the profession of faith, and if this be satisfactory, especially as it touches upon the so-called consecration of Basil Lipkovsky in 1918, the Mystery of Holy Orders and ecclesiology, then the Commission will chrismate and ordain every cleric in the petitioning body, and chrismate as many lay persons as possible, especially of candidates for Holy Orders.

That these certificates testifying to the above-named actions be:

- Deposited in the archives of the Oecumenical Patriarchate
- Officially published and circulated as widely as possible for a period of five years.

That all of these actions be taken in a fashion designed to commend them to the members of the body in question, and that all precautions be taken to avoid harshness or lack of love.

(B)

If the petitioning body, or any member of it, refuse the procedure outlined in (A), then the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas will petition the Oecumenical Patriarchate, and the other autocephalous Churches, to issue an encyclical outlining the history of the Autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the nature of the heresy, and the unfruitful course of the negotiations proposed above, and that the same be circulated for five years, together with a warning to the end that hierarchs and faithful may not be misled by the external conformity of these persons to the traditions of the Orthodox Church. And further, that a file be maintained on the clergy of this body, or fragments from it, until such time as it or they disappear.