



A hierarchy of the Georgian Church: It is the faithful alone who can demand autocephaly in Ukraine

Metropolitan Andrea of Gori And Ateni, head of the delegation of the Georgian Orthodox Church, who came to Moscow for the celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of the enthronement of His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, gave an interview to RIA News Agency, in which he spoke about the attitude to the church situation in Ukraine.

- Your Eminence, how do you assess the actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and state authorities in Ukraine?

- My personal assessment: the issue is very complicated and sensitive for the whole Orthodox Church, and it should be treated very carefully. I also think that this careful attitude also includes the need to find out the opinions of the rest of the Churches on this matter.

Does Ukraine have a right to demand autocephaly for the Church? We believe this right belongs to the Ukrainian Orthodox faithful, but it should include all the clergy, hierarchy and the faithful of the Church, and all this should develop along canonical lines, not in any other way.

- Is it known when the Synod of the Georgian Orthodox Church is to meet to make a decision on this matter?

- I can say nothing about it because I do not know.

- Recently, the Patriarchate of Constantinople resolved that the clergy be allowed to marry for the second time. How do you assess this decision?

- My opinion on this matter is this: If canon law is believed to be inviolable on some matters while violable on others– I do not understand such an approach...

- What is your attitude to the idea of convening a Pan-Orthodox Council or a conference on the church situation in Ukraine with the participation of all the Primates?

- It is difficult for me to answer this question because it should be decided by Primates of Churches, and I would not like stating my opinion before they speak out.

- The situation as it has developed delivers a blow on the prestige of Orthodoxy in the eyes of the rest of the world, especially non-church people. How can it be improved now, in your view?

- By seeking unity.

Interviewer Sergey Stefanov

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