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Views of Questions

to be examined by the Local Council
of the Russian Church.

1. *Division of the Russian Church into
Metropolitan Districts.*

The Holy Synod edict of 18-22 March 1905 proposes the restoration of Patriarchal dignity in Russia. Not only would this be in harmony with the dignity and the greatness of the Russian church, but it also would bring it nearer to the statute indicated in the canons. The wish to realize this statute calls for another reform in our church: its division into metropolitan districts. As is known we have metropolitans in the Russian church as it is, but they differ from the other bishops in their titles, not in their rights. Yet in accordance with the canon, a metropolitan s

"the chief in the district", and the bishops of every district must look up to him as their head and undertake nothing exceeding their authority without consulting him. Besides the canonical basis, practical considerations also speak for the metropolitan districts: the Russian land is too extensive, and the supreme church government is burdened with a great mass of affairs, which could conveniently be transferred to the districts. We can also entirely endorse the argument of the Chief Procurator, expressed by him 28 July 1905, Nr. 100, that "the existence of especial problems which are to be discharged by the church government in various territories of the Empire and which serve as a vital foundation for the institution of the district or territorial autonomies (for example, in the Western provinces, in the East of Russia, and in the Caucasus)".

Fearing that such a division may prove contrary to the state unity has no sufficient foundation: the districts are but parts of the same church, the supreme church government remaining in the capital of the Empire. In spite of certain peculiarities in various territories, the *one faith* still remains, and its oneness in itself is a strong moral cement which soulders the various tribes of our population into one family.

As to the division of Russia into metropolitan districts, it is a matter of course that it could not be done on any one special principle, either geographical or ethnographical: in one case it would be necessary and natural to deal according to the one, in another to the second, and in a third case the past history of the orthodox tribes which make up the Empire ought to be kept in view. Accordingly it seems that it would not be groundless to divide Russia into the following metropolitan districts: the Novgorod district which is to be composed of all the northern governments, except St. Petersburg, where is to be the residence of the Archbishop of St. Petersburg, who is also to be the Patriarch of all the Russians; 2) the Vilna district, for the western provinces, in fact the sees which used to belong to the Unia; 3) the Kief district, for the provinces of the south west; 4) the Moscow district for Central Russia; 5) the Kazan district for the eastern governments and those situated along the Volga; 6) the Tiflis district for the Caucasus, and the exarch of Georgia ought to be given the title of "catholicos"; 7) the Tomsk or Tobolsk district for western Siberia and the Turkestan, and 8) the Irkutsk district, for eastern Siberia, which

might include the orthodox churches of Japan and China.

As to the see of North America it ought to be made into an exarchate of the Russian church. The fact is that this see is composed not only of different nationalities, but also of different orthodox churches, which though one in faith each have their peculiarities in the canonical order, the office ritual and the parish life. These peculiarities are dear to them and altogether tolerable from the general orthodox point of view. This is why we do not consider we have the right to interfere with the national character of the churches in this country and, on the contrary, try to preserve it, giving each a chance to be governed directly by chiefs of the same nationality.

Thus the orthodox Syrian church in this country was given its own bishop (the Right Reverend Raphael of Brooklyn), who nominally is the second vicar of the Archbishop of the Aleutian see, but who in his own field of Activity is almost independent. The bishop of Alaska is similarly situated. The Servian parishes are directly subject to a separate chief, who at present is an archimandrite, but may be consecrated a bishop in the near future. The Greeks of

this country also wish to have their own bishop and have entered into communication with the Synod of Athens on this subject. In short, it is possible that there will be formed in America an entire exarchate of national orthodox churches with their own bishops, whose exarch is to be the Russian archbishop.

In his own field of work each of these bishops is to be independent, but the affairs which concern the American church in general are to be decided by a general council, presided over by the Russian archbishop. Through him will be preserved the connection of the orthodox church of America with the church of all the Russias and a degree of dependence of former on the latter. Also we must keep in view that, compared with the life in the old country, life in America has its peculiarities, with which the local orthodox church is obliged to count, and that consequently that it ought to be allowed to be more autonomous than other metropolitan districts of Russia. The future exarchate of North America may be composed as follows:

- 1) The archbishopric of New York, with all the dependent Russian churches in the United States and Canada;
- 2) The bishopric of Alaska, which is

to embrace all the churches of the orthodox inhabitants: Russians, Aleutians, Red Indians and Esquimaux;

- 3) The bishopric of Brooklyn: Syrians;
- 4) The bishopric of Chicago: Servians;
- 5) The bishopric (?) of the Greeks.

To complete my answer to the question concerning the division of Russia into church districts, I think it useful to say that bishops of the more important towns, though subject to their metropolitan, may be given the title of archbishops, especially those amongst them, who have vicars. However, it is desirable that these latter, being the bishop's assistants, should be more independent and spend more time in the towns and *ouesds*, the names of which are attached to their titles.

In general, the position of the episcopal vicars ought to be regulated and they ought to be given more rights than they have at present.

2. The reform of the episcopal government and law court.

The episcopal government also needs reforms. At present its chief organ consists of the consistory, against which there are many complaints from laymen and clergy alike.

The consistorial Statute is out of date and is permeated with extreme formalism, which deadens the "living spirit". This is most necessary that this statute should be revised so that the spirit of consistory should come nearer to the "council of presbyter elders", who worked with the bishops of old. It must not be a "wall" between the bishop and the clergy (and the parishioners).

"The less work a bishop leaves to the consistory the better for the church; writes the archbishop of Volynia in his answer: "the appointments and the transfers of the clergy, for instance, and the various decisions concerning the ritual, ought to be attended to outside of the consistory and to be sent there when already decided; a bishop ought to make the least use possible of the existing administrative instances, but ought to enter in direct communication with all who seek him".

The consistories ought rather to conduct all the economical and financial operations, and also to be the clerical courts of justice.

I do not think it either necessary and consistent with the canon of the church to separate the clerical lawcourts from the consistory, making them a separate organ-

ization, which was much talked about some thirty years ago. However, this does not mean, that the consistorial law courts need no reforms: quite the contrary, reforms are needed both in the character of cases brought before it and in the procedure. A consistorial "table of judgement" ought to consist of the man appointed by the bishop and of two men besides, who are to be elected by the clergy in eparchial assemblies.

With regard to the principle of election, there exist among us two extreme opinions. The one insists that the suffrage is a sort of a panacea against every kind of evil and tries to introduce it even when there is no great need of it. The other condemns it altogether, seeing in it an expression of "parlamentarism", and of the republican spirit.

But in the true church of Christ, where there ought to be no worldly ownership, where no one should be above anyone else, where there should be no struggle, no contradicting each other, where on the contrary all ought to seek the common good, uniting in a common harmonious labour, the suffrage can be applied usefully in many regions. Thus it may be adopted in the election of clerical judges and in the election of the ecclesiastical superintendent,

if he is to be considered not as a mere organ of the episcopal power, but also as an intercessor before the eparchial authorities, an expresser of all such needs of the clergy and the churches of his district, which in some sees it would be impossible for the bishop to learn personally.

As to the objects of consistorial jurisdiction, the divorce cases ought to be transferred from it to civil law courts, though the church must preserve the right to confirm or to disagree with the verdicts of the civil authorities, and also to have a decisive voice as to the legality of second marriages for the divorced. The civil law courts also ought to take up the cases of the members of the clergy, accused of breaking the public peace or order, of giving offense to somebody, of disorderly conduct etc. It frequently occurs at present that the culprit judged by the clerical court is not punished as severely as he would by the civil judges, which meets with the disapproval of lay men and is apt to weaken the clergy.

People also speak against the procedure of the consistorial law court, and it also ought to be reorganized in accordance with the modern methods of justice. The so called "inquests" ought especially to be altered for the better, because at present

they are conducted in such a way which undermines the authority of the accused member of the clergy amongst his parishioners, even when the result of the inquest demonstrates that he was not guilty. In this the archbishop ought to be given more authority to have a private cross-examination instead of an inquest.

Once we touch upon the subject of reforms and improvements in the episcopal government, we as well express the wish that the episcopal assemblies of the clergy should also be reorganized and improved. They arose for the purpose of finding means for the satisfaction of the material needs of the see; for the ecclesiastical schools, the missionary and the charitable institutions. But it is not always *reason* that the clergy *should leave the word of God and serve tables* (The Acts 6, 2). Why should not the clergy be also granted the right of coming together for the purpose of talking over how to serve the Word of God best, discussing questions of the clerical life, of the pastoral guidance, missionary work, the work against the heresies and kindred subjects. Even with the present regime it is customary in some sees to discuss these matters in "pastorial gatherings".

The activities of the episcopal assem-

blies ought to be widened throughout Russia in all the sides of the life of the church parishes: in questions of faith, of tuition, of conduct and of charity. As to the material questions of money and economy some representatives of the laymen surely ought to be invited to take part in them, when the assemblies take place, especially the elders and the church wardens: we must remember that the churches have to pay for all kinds of items and that it is not to be wondered at that it is not an unfrequent occurrence that elders are reluctant to pay out, by order of the assembly, sums of money for the disposal of which no one asked their consent.

If laymen take part in the see assemblies they will be something like church conventions customary in America, amongst the episcopalians for instance. These conventions have general sessions, in which both the laymen and the clergy take part, and also private sessions reserved for the discussion of purely ecclesiastical affairs by the clergy alone. This participation of the lay element would give to the function of church life the character of a council, and also would tend to enliven it.

3. *Concerning parish orderliness.*

Together with the episcopal govern-

ment, the activities of the parish life also need regulations. It can not be denied that in many localities of Russia the life of the parish is very slack and the bond between the church and the parish is weak, finding expression alone in going through the various rites and visiting the church on holidays. Institutions of tuition and of charity are absent from such localities; the voice of the priest is heard but seldom, and there are but few people who listen to it.

Of late much has been written concerning all this, and many loud voices speak about infusing new life into the parishes, about the restoration of the former importance of the parish and about the advisability for the parish communities to be responsible for the material needs of the church, the asylums and the schools, as well as for the election of the members of their clergy.

At present the parish is not considered for a juridical individual and the legislation of our country ought to make alterations concerning this as well as concerning the acquisition of property in general by churches, monasteries and the clergy. And it is difficult to imagine that any one could object to the parish being given rights of acquiring property as a juridical individual,

or to the parish community, headed by their priest and chosen wardens, having the right to manage their property. Of course, all this is to be done with the full knowledge and under the control of the episcopal authority. This is the way the work is carried out in the majority of the parishes of North America.

Here the churches are the property of the congregation (the parish); but even in localities where they are assigned to the bishop, they are supported by the parish. It is customary to hold one yearly meeting of the parishioners, when the church officers are elected, or the curators: the elder, the treasurer and the wardens; the treasurer's reports are read for the whole year, though there are some parishes where these reports are read every half year and even every month. It is the curators duty to see that the annual fees are paid by the parishioners, and also visit them for the purpose of various collections. The parish supports the church and pays the priest and the school-teacher — the pay varies in different places. At the yearly meetings also the fee for various rites is agreed upon by the priest and the parishioners. All this is entered into the statutes, which are to be approved of by the bishop.

If the parish owns no church house, the parishioners have to provide for the priest suitable furnished lodgings, also a schoolhouse and in some places a reading room. There is a fraternity in every parish, and populous localities may form several. The fraternity necessarily bears an ecclesiastical character: it chooses some saint or some sacred event to be called after, and gives a certain part of its money for the support of the priest, the school and the church, that it may be kept in good repair and adequately adorned.

Moreover the fraternities also have charitable objects, they pay certain sums to its members in cases of sickness, accidents or lack of work. It is also customary for the fraternities to have a kind of a private judgement over the members. In general, the fraternities are a very popular institution over here and do a good deal to enliven the church parishes, together with the Orthodox Society of Mutual Help, with which they are connected and which is of great assistance both in the erection of new churches and the education of the people.

However, we as well have no elected priests and moreover we consider that such a custom would be untimely as yet over here. The more so in Russia.

In itself the principle of clerical election is quite legal, its introduction is desirable, and we ought to seek its realization. But realizing it immediately, putting it at once into the foundation of the restoration of the ancient parish order would amount, in the graphic words of the Archbishop of Volynia, to "offering a very sick person some coarse greasy food, which is excellent for a working man, but deathly for an invalid". In his note, this prelate minutely describes the disease of the modern church community, which disables it from the right of choosing its own pastor.

Our ecclesiastical schools are also an obstacle for the introduction of the suffrage principles, for they have almost monopolized the right of supplying the candidates for priesthood.

And this brings us to the question of

4. *The improvement of ecclesiastical schools.*

The chief weakness of our ecclesiastical schools is that they pursue two objects, both of which are quite praiseworthy in themselves, but which in practice can hardly be always reconciled.

The ecclesiastical schools exist first to give education to the children of the clergy, and second to prepare candidates for the

priesthood. The ranks of such candidates could be filled from amongst other classes as well as from amongst the clergy. Yet though the children of other classes are admitted into the ecclesiastical schools, their number is very limited, and thus the clergy is deprived of the influx of new strength coming from the laymen. On the other hand, it is not possible for all the children of the clergy to be equally willing to become priests, yet they are all forced into the clerical estate, as the seminaries can hardly prepare them for anything else.

Hence the constant discontent, murmuring and disorders amongst the pupils of the seminaries.

The school authorities introduce various concessions into the life of the seminary, trying to give to it a secular character, which is an obvious wrong to the second object of preparing candidates for priesthood of forming servants for the church of God. The result is that the ranks of the clergy are filled not only by unwilling but simply by undesirable young men. Who and what can be the gainer so long as this order or rather disorder exists? It seems to me that the only natural solution of this difficulty would be the institution in the episcopal sees of such especially theological schools

(the name does not matter, the old name of seminary need not be abolished), which would be accessible for the children of any class who have gone through some intermediary educational establishment and feel an inclination for priesthood. In these schools the tuition is to be entirely clerical, the order of life strictly ecclesiastical and their object but one -- the service of the church.

As to the existing ecclesiastical schools they could be transformed into usual intermediary schools where could be sent the children of the clergy, but where the tuition would be of a more general character, so that their pupils could be admitted if they wish into universities and other high schools. As to such pupils of these schools who on having terminated their studies there would wish to become members of the clergy they could seek the entrance of the above mentioned theological school.

This is the way the problem is solved amongst the members of alien creeds as well as amongst the orthodox and the uniats of Austria. Yet it remains to decide who is to support ecclesiastical schools with secular tuition. Is it to be the church? But such means as the church has must be given to the strictly theological schools. And more-

over could the church be expected to be willing to spend money for the education of children, who in all probability are not going to serve her? Then, perhaps, it is to be the government? But as it is all the intermediate schools are supported by it, admitting anybody, where, consequently, the children of the clergy also can be educated. And so there could be no reason for the government to keep up separate schools for the children of the clergy. As to the members of the clergy, they can hardly be expected to support their own separate schools.

We must also confess that we feel very reluctant to touch our clerical schools, in spite of all their failings. Some of them have already lived more than a century and a half, and have trained many remarkable and useful workers in all the branches of the service of church, state and society. And so, would not it be more simple and more just to take the theological schools we plan as a ramification of the existing ecclesiastical seminary? In other words would not it be simpler if the schools where the children of the clergy are taught adopted the usual intermediate program, but retained the ecclesiastical character and order of life, to which the clerical class are accus-

tomed from childhood? As part of the seminary there may exist an especially theological faculty, which is to retain its pupils for three years more and which may be sought by all ecclesiastically disposed, whether they come from the seminary or from any secular school. Both the education and the training these three years give must be strictly ecclesiastical, such as is required by future pastors. If this order of things obtains, there could be no more question as to who is to support the clerical schools: as of yore they will be supported by the church, the government and the clergy alike.

We have yet to mention:

5. *The part that the clergy may take in secular institutions and some other subjects which may be discussed by General Council of all the Russia.*

Some people oppose the idea of the servants of the church taking part in institution of secular character, as through this the pastors must come into contact with the whirlpool of worldly affairs and vanities, which is not in harmony with their direct duties and the eternal principles of priestly service. To this, however, we can reply, that a priest is the guide of the Christian's conscience, of his spiritual life,

and the purely Christian spiritual principles must be reflected by and introduced into the region of worldly affairs also, the more so in a Christian country. And who if not the clergy is to remind the secular institutions of these principles? And is the clergy to show inertia and indifference, now that the government is quite eager to invite the collaboration of elected men? Is this the time for the church to give up a chance of influencing the worldly affairs, when all circumstances tend to show that the orthodox faith instead of being the state religion will be only tolerated, and in some localities not even tolerated?

Of course it is necessary, that the clerical members of a secular gathering should remember they are the representatives of the church and must stand for the church's point of view and not their own opinions, however humanitarian or liberal.

As to other subjects which the council may discuss, they probably will be many. And it is better for the representatives of the church authority to raise and discuss them before they are forced to do so by Mr. Rosanoff and other "walkers on new ways".

As one of such questions the communication of the Chief Procurator points the

attitude of the Orthodox Church towards the old ritual people and the people of different creeds, since the Decree of the religious toleration. Together with this goes the question of the adherents of the "one faith" and the bishop who is in charge of them and represents them in the Holy Synod, as well as the question of the curses of the Moscow Council of 1666, which still are a great scandal amongst many who hold to the old rites.

For the American mission it is also important to get the solution to the question of our attitude towards the Anglican church and its hierarchy, and for all the Russian Churches abroad it would be most important to have a solution of the question of the calendar.

It is also necessary that the representatives of different churches, who live abroad, should harmonize their practices in the liturgical and canonical regions, so that the members of alien churches should see that we truly have *one faith*.

It is important that the Russian church should have a new Slavonic translation of the church manuals, for the existing one is out of date and not quite correct in places. This may forestall the demand that the service should be conducted in the modern

every day Russian. It may also be desirable to introduce a few changes in the manuals themselves; for instance, the number of the response prayers should be lessened and some silent prayers should be spoken aloud. Fit subjects for discussion may be the fasts, the deposition and the restoration of priests etc. etc.

Many of these questions are common to all the church, and so it would be necessary to hear, at their discussion, the voice of the Eastern and the Slavonic churches. It is highly desirable that the representatives of such ought to be invited to the council, and they could be represented by the Moscow rectors of the Homes of the various eastern nationalities who belong to our church and live in Moscow.

And it would be still more desirable when the Moscow council is over to call a council of all the Orthodox churches. It is very necessary and its calling without doubt would be of much use to the holy Orthodox Church.

TIKHON,

*Archbishop of the Aleutian Islands and
of North America.*

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