

tation before the convocation of the Great and Holy Council. During this stage of implementation, it would be preferable that proposals before the Episcopal Assemblies express if possible the unanimity of its members; in the absence of unanimity, proposals will be approved according to the principle of majority.

4. The presidents of the Episcopal Assemblies convoke and preside over all the gatherings of the bishops of their region (liturgical, pastoral, administrative, etc.). As for the questions of common interest which, according to the decision of the Episcopal Assembly, require being examined at the pan-Orthodox level, the president of the Assembly refers to the Ecumenical Patriarch for follow-up according to pan-Orthodox practice.

5. The Orthodox Churches pledge not to proceed to acts which might impede the above-mentioned process for regulating the question of the diaspora in a canonical way, including the creation of new dioceses in the diaspora beyond those already in existence. On the contrary, these Churches, in their capacity as mother Churches, will do everything within their power to facilitate the work of the Episcopal Assemblies and to restore normality of canonical order in the diaspora.

## 4. AUTOCEPHALY & THE WAY IN WHICH IT IS TO BE PROCLAIMED

Interorthodox Preparatory Commission Document:  
ADOPTED TEXT  
Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,  
Chambésy, Switzerland, November 7-13, 1993

The Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission, after having worked on the basis of contributions from the most holy Orthodox Churches and the report of the Secretary for the Preparation of the Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church on the question of autocephaly and the way in which it is to be proclaimed, examined the ecclesiological, canonical, pastoral and practical dimensions of the institution of autocephaly in the Orthodox Church and reached the following conclusions:

1. The institution of autocephaly expresses in an authentic way one of the fundamental aspects of the Orthodox ecclesiological tradition concerning relations between the local Church and the universal Church of God. The profound connection between the canonical institution of ecclesiastical autocephaly and Orthodox ecclesiological teaching concerning the local Church justifies the concern of the autocephalous local Orthodox Churches to solve existing problems with regard to the correct functioning of the institution, as much as it does their willingness to participate, through their detailed contributions, in the enhancement of this institution for the advancement of the unity of the Orthodox Church.

2. The *perichoresis* between locality and universality, faithful to Orthodox ecclesiology, determines the functional relationship between the administrative organization and the unity of the Church. Because of this, complete agreement was established with regard to the place of the institution of autocephaly in the life of the Orthodox Church.

3. Complete agreement was established concerning the canonical conditions which the proclamation of the autocephaly of a local Church requires, namely the consent and action of the mother Church, the obtaining of a pan-Orthodox consensus, and the role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the other autocephalous Churches in the procedure of the proclamation of the autocephaly. According to this agreement:

a) The mother Church which receives a request for autocephaly from an ecclesiastical region which depends on it evaluates whether the ecclesiological, canonical and pastoral conditions are satisfied for the granting of autocephaly. In the case where the local synod of the mother Church, as its supreme ecclesiastical body, gives its consent to the request, it submits the proposal on this subject to the Ecumenical Patriarchate in order to seek a pan-Orthodox consensus. The mother Church informs the other local autocephalous Churches of this.

b) The Ecumenical Patriarchate, according to pan-Orthodox practice, communicates by patriarchal letter all the details concerning the said request and seeks the expression of a pan-Orthodox consensus. Pan-Orthodox consensus is expressed by the unanimous decision of the synods of the autocephalous Churches.

c) In expressing the consent of the mother Church and the pan-Orthodox consensus, the Ecumenical Patriarchate officially proclaims the autocephaly of the applying Church by the publication of a patriarchal *Tomos*. The *Tomos* is signed by the Ecumenical Patriarch. It is desirable that it be co-signed by the primates of the autocephalous Churches, but in any case it must be by the primate of the mother Church.

4. The local Church proclaimed autocephalous is integrated into the communion of the autocephalous Churches as a full member and enjoys all the canonical privileges hallowed by pan-Orthodox practice (diptychs, commemoration, interorthodox relations, etc.).

Note: The content of paragraph 3c was referred for further

scrutiny to the coming Interorthodox Preparatory Commission, which will seek the consensus of the Orthodox local Churches on this question, thus completing its work on this theme.