

## **Bulgarian Metropolitan: Ukrainian “unification council” is non-canonical**



Last Saturday’s Ukrainian “unification council,” a project of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, is non-canonical and will only serve to deepen the schism in Ukraine, His Eminence Metropolitan Daniil of Viding of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church believes.

In an interview posted on the official site of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Met. Daniil stated that, although the Bulgarian Holy Synod has not formulated its collegial opinion on the Ukrainian question yet, a statement is necessary because “the dispute in Ukraine is not just a dispute between two local Orthodox churches. It affects the entire Orthodox Church.”

Met. Daniil was one of three metropolitans who urged the Bulgarian Holy Synod to call for a pan-Orthodox council on the matter in October, though the majority of the Synod did not agree. The three metropolitans' statement was later published on the official Bulgarian Church site.

In the new interview, Met. Daniil explains that by invading the Ukrainian Church's canonical territory, Constantinople is violating Church canons about territorial integrity, as Patriarch Bartholomew himself has, since his 1991 enthronement as patriarch, recognized the Ukrainian Church as the territory of the Russian Orthodox Church, until this year. The canons allow for 3 or 30-year deadlines on contesting territorial boundaries, Met. Daniil explains, but the Ukrainian Church has been under the Russian Church for more than 300 years already.

He brings forth the interesting historical example where the Georgian Church declared its own independence from the Russian Church in 1917, but Patriarch German V of Constantinople responded that he could not recognize this action as the Georgian Church had been under the Russian Church for more than 100 years, and thus the latter's permission and blessing was needed in order to adhere to the canons of the Church.

More specifics on Met. Daniil's canonical argument can be found [here](#).

The Bulgarian hierarch also notes that a schism cannot be healed by creating a new church with schismatics.

He comments:

I will state in the words of one of the archbishops of the canonical Church, by which he answered the invitation of Patriarch Bartholomew to attend this council: "I am firmly convinced and profess that I will remain faithful to the one Orthodox Church, and my presence at this council would contradict the first Psalm of David, which reads: Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked."

Met. Daniil also points out that the initiative to create an autocephalous church is an exclusively political project, which Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has never attempted to hide.

Referring to the venerable primate of the canonical Ukrainian Church, His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine, Met. Daniil reflects:

Who are those who insist on autocephaly? The state authorities, first of all. As Met. Onufry rightly notes, the authorities only hear the voices of those groups that

burn churches, profess nationalism, call for hate, and cry “death to Moscow.” Why are only their voices and demands for autocephaly heard? Why is the opinion of the only recognized canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church taken into account? What is the point of listening to groups whose leaders are lacking in spiritual reason and are excommunicated from the Church?

Despite the sorry events that occurred today, Met. Daniil does note that there is one comforting thing in the situation—the desire of the Orthodox people in Ukraine to preserve the unity of the holy Orthodox Church, which finds support throughout the entire Orthodox world.

Photo: [bg-patriarshia.bg](http://bg-patriarshia.bg)