

The XXth Century

1. Old and New Churches

The Ottoman conquest had concentrated the Byzantine commonwealth of diverse peoples and nations into the '*Rum millet*' led by the Ecumenical Patriarch. So it was not entirely surprising that, as the various peoples gained liberation, they should seek '**independence**' (*autocephaly*)¹ also from the ecclesiastical authorities in Constantinople. If Constantinople itself had been liberated, history might have been different. But what actually happened in the wake of the Greek war of independence (1821) was the establishment of national Churches in the new nation states. These included ancient patriarchates that had been suppressed (Serbia, Bulgaria), but also new independent Churches (Greece, Romania, Albania).

Country	Old Autocephaly (Imperial Times)	Gained Independence from Ottomans/Soviet Union	New Autocephaly (Modern Times)
Bulgaria	870 – Autocephaly 927 – Patriarchate	1878	1872 – self-declared 1945 – recognized by Ec. Patriarchate
Serbia	1219 – Autocephaly 1346 – Patriarchate	1878	1879
Georgia	1010 – Patriarchate	1991 from Soviet Union	1943 – recognized by Moscow Patriarchate 1990 - recognized by Ec. Patriarchate

¹ Autocephaly (from Greek: αὐτοκεφαλία, meaning "property of being self-headed") is the status of a hierarchical Christian church whose head bishop does not report to any higher-ranking bishop. The term is primarily used in Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches. In Eastern Orthodoxy, the right to grant autocephaly is nowadays a contested issue, the main opponents in the dispute being the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which claims this right as its prerogative,[4][5] and the Russian Orthodox Church (the Moscow Patriarchate), which insists that one autocephalous jurisdiction has the right to grant independence to one of its components

Romania	-	1878	1865 – negotiations started 1885 – recognized without Transylvania 1925 – Patriarchate + Transylvania
Greece	-	1832	1833 – self-declared 1850 – recognized
Albania	-	1912	1922 – self-declared 1937 – recognized
Ukraine	-	1991 from the Soviet Union	1992 – self-declared “Patriarchate of Kyiv” 2018 – recognized by the Ec. Patriarchate as “Orthodox Church of Ukraine”, independent but NOT granted the Patriarchal title

2. The Orthodox Diaspora

As the Churches in the Balkans were emerging from Turkish domination, new Churches were growing up outside Europe. The revival in Russian Church life had led to a revival in mission, both in the Russian Far East and in China, Japan and Korea.

Notable among the Russian missions was Alaska. In the 1870s, the Russian missionary diocese in North America moved from Alaska to **San Francisco** to serve growing numbers of Orthodox emigrants across the continent. For some fifty years, most parishes recognized the Russian bishop, who made strenuous efforts to find suitable clergy and bishops to serve the pastoral needs of the various ethnic groups. But increasing numbers of Greek communities were making their own arrangements; in 1921 Ecumenical Patriarch Meletios (Metaxakis) brought them under his jurisdiction, and in the chaos following the Russian revolution many other ethnic communities made similar moves back to their original mother Churches.

The political upheavals of the twentieth century have resulted in a significant Orthodox '*diaspora*' in Western Europe as well as the Americas and Australia. This unsatisfactory term is used to denote communities started by groups of migrant Orthodox rather than by missions; nevertheless, most of these communities are now well established and include many indigenous Westerners, despite a disinclination to proselytise among other Christians. Orthodox

emigration to Western Europe presents new problems of church order: it would run counter to Orthodox ecclesiological sensibilities to establish another autocephalous Church within what is historically the territory of Rome. Most communities are still under the jurisdiction of their original mother Churches; but in several places there is close cooperation at episcopal level and a real desire to work towards functioning as a local Church.

The ancient Churches of the Middle East continue to decline in numbers in the XXth century, due both to emigration and to proselytism by other Christian groups. The picture is not uniform, however. The vitality of the Church of Antioch in Lebanon and Syria contrasts with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, where the Palestinian Orthodox population has suffered drastic attrition: the overwhelming pressures that they share with their Muslim compatriots (1948), pastoral care problems linked with the Greek identity of the clergy. New Churches emerged inside the Patriarchate of Alexandria in Sub-Saharan African countries: Uganda, Kenya and Ghana.

3. Towards the Modern Orthodoxy, the *Paris* time

The Russian revolution was the decisive event for modern Orthodoxy, ushering in a new '*age of martyrs*' for most of the Orthodox Church.

Furthermore, **the emigration following the revolution** meant that the heirs to the intellectual ferment of the nineteenth century were largely scattered abroad. Many Russians fled in many countries, but the centre of the emigration was Paris, where the St Sergius Institute of Orthodox Theology (founded 1926) and the Russian YMCA Press would remain key centres for the dissemination of Orthodox theological thought.

Many émigrés came to see a providential meaning in the catastrophe that had engulfed their country; indeed, this resulted in an unprecedented mutual encounter between Orthodoxy and the West, a more free and relaxed encounter of thoughts and philosophies since it was not an institutional encounter. Through the ecumenical efforts of the émigrés, Western Christians were able to hear for the first time the voices of highly articulate and thoughtful Orthodox theologians from various nationalities.

This set in train a profound **rediscovery of the Orthodox tradition**. The logic of the Orthodox émigrés' understanding of the Church and its mission required a rediscovery of the universality of Orthodoxy across national cultural boundaries, but it was ecumenical contacts that allowed this to happen.

The period between the two world wars saw a welter of meetings and conferences bringing together youth and theologians from Greece, the Balkans and the Russian emigration. These included the 1936 conference of Orthodox theologians in Athens, which agreed on the task of freeing Orthodox theology from scholastic influences and reconnecting with the Church Fathers.

Within ten years, however, almost the whole of Orthodox Europe had fallen to Communism. Yet, remarkably, this did not altogether derail the project of theological renewal. That project is well exemplified in one of the great theologians of the twentieth century, Fr Dumitru Stăniloae (1900-93), whose continued teaching and writing transformed the character of theology in Romania. Having studied in Athens and Paris in the 1920s, Stăniloae was profoundly influenced by the theology of the Russian emigration, and had a keen sense of Romania's place as meeting-point of the Greek and Slav worlds. Serbia followed a somewhat different path: the dominant figure was Iustin Popović (1894-1979), a pioneer of patristic scholarship and spiritual renewal who reached out to the Greek and Russian traditions but was deeply suspicious of Ecumenism.

Communities outside Eastern Europe have acquired an increasingly prominent role in world Orthodoxy. In 1942, an encounter with Russian émigré theological writings inspired a group of young Orthodox Lebanese and Syrians to found the Orthodox Youth Movement, which was to make Antioch one of the foremost heirs to the **Paris renewal**.

Paris itself continues to be an important theological centre: the tradition of the émigré thinkers has been carried on by such figures as Olivier Clément, **Maria Skobcova** and Fr Boris Bobrinskoy, and by a younger generation of theologians from Russian, Greek and French backgrounds.

4. Orthodoxy in Anglo-American World

In Britain, the spirit of the renewal gained momentum after the Second World War through the ministry of Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) at the head of the Russian diocese, and Sophrony (Sakharov), whose unconventional monastery in Essex is both a meeting place for pilgrims from all over the world and a strong presence in the Anglo-Greek community. The Orthodox presence in Britain includes such internationally known theologians as Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, who during his years as lecturer at Oxford supervised large numbers of graduate students from around the world. The journals *Sobornost*, with *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* and the *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* in America, have been an important source of theological writing in English.

In 1948, Fr Georges Florovsky and other leading theologians from Paris left for America, to be followed shortly by Alexander Schmemmann and John Meyendorff. All of these figures were to have a great impact on Orthodoxy in North America, and especially on *St Vladimir's Seminary in New York (founded 1938)*. The seminary's publishing house has become the leading source of Orthodox books in English, many of which have subsequently been translated into the languages of other Orthodox countries.

5. Mount Athos revival

A remarkable aspect of Orthodox renewal in the later twentieth century has been the resurgence of monasticism. Mount Athos, widely given up for dead in the 1960s, now has some 1,600 monks, many highly educated, several of the monasteries are quite international in composition. "3 A similar renewal can be seen in men's and women's monasticism throughout the Orthodox world. Monasticism has traditionally been a prime source of authentic theology, understood as 'praying in truth'," now we once again see the monastic experience re-invigorating theological life. The teaching of St Silouan of Mount Athos has reached a global audience through his disciple Fr Sophrony. Many Orthodox who write about theology today have been marked by their encounters with people of holiness who know at first hand the realities that doctrines seek to describe.

6. The Orthodox Church and EU

Greece 1981

Romania and Bulgaria 2007

Special status

Ukraine

Moldova

Georgia