

December 23/10, 2010  
Martyrs Menas, EUGRAPHIUS and HERMOGENES

## NOT AUTOCEPHALOUS

We have never claimed to be an autonomous or autocephalous Church, nor are we in a position to do so. We are struggling to serve our flock and to spread the word of Christ and Orthodoxy in the chaotic conditions of apostasy and blasphemy in America. We are certainly not large enough to claim autocephaly.

We have grown impressively over the past twenty-two or so years. According to the latest census, "Religious Congregations and Membership Study, 2010", and figures given to us by Metropolitan Makarios for the Canadian parishes, we now number over 5,500 faithful in North America. When we began from scratch in 1988, we were about 2,000 or so faithful. The number of our clergy has doubled. (We now have almost 70 clergy in our synod). In 1988, the vast majority of our parishes did not have a church building of their own. In 2010, the majority of our parishes have beautiful church edifices, with exquisite iconography adorning the walls to boot. Our monastic institutions have increased four-fold.

We still have a way to go, however. Furthermore, another reason we have never claimed to be an autocephalous Church, as Bishop Demetrius of Carlisle has pointed out, is out of deference to other traditional Orthodox Christian church jurisdictions in North America. It is our hope that, in time, we may be able to reach out more and more to these other groups and form a bond with them, and, eventually, grow into one organic unit with them.

The article, "Conditions of Autocephaly" by Professor Alexander A. Bogolepov, which appeared in *St. Vladimir's Quarterly* in 1961, covers the issue of autocephaly from a canonical and historical perspective in a very thorough manner. It demonstrates that, in many ways, we fulfill the requirements for an autocephalous Church, yet, as mentioned above, we have never claimed autocephalous status, which will only come about when a union in Orthodoxy upon canonical grounds comes to pass in America.

We prefer to wait to see how our aspirations for the future of traditional Orthodox Christianity in North America will develop in God's time.

✠Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston  
✠Bishop Demetrius of Carlisle