Orthodoxy in America.

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Orthodoxy in the U.S. and Canada.
Orthodoxy in America has a complex history and a complicated present. In the 18th Century, the great Orthodox Christian missionary work which began with Pentecost in Jerusalem, so many centuries before, finally crossed from the continent of Euro-Asia into North America. The first missionaries traveled with the explorers Vitus Bering and Alexei Chirikov, who formally claimed Alaska and the Aleutian Islands in 1741. For the next fifty years, together with the exploration and economic development of this new outpost of the Russian Empire, the first attempts were made to bring the Orthodox Faith to the natives of that region (the Aleuts, the Athabascan Indians, the Tlingits, and the Eskimos). The first formal Orthodox Christian Mission to America arrived on September 24, 1794, in Kodiak.

1741 Divine Liturgy celebrated on a Russian ship off the coast of Alaska.
1767 Community of Orthodox Greeks establishes itself in New Smyrna, Spanish Florida.
1794 Missionaries, including Herman of Alaska, arrive at Kodiak Island, bringing Orthodoxy to Russian Alaska.
1796 Martyrdom of Juvenaly of Alaska.
1799 Ioasaph (Bolotov) consecrated in Irkutsk as first bishop for Alaska, but dies in a shipwreck during his return.
1816 Martyrdom of Peter the Aleut near San Francisco.
1817 Russian colony of Fort Ross established 60 miles from San Francisco.
1824 Fr. John Veniaminov comes to Unalaska, Alaska.
1834 Fr. John Veniaminov moves to Sitka, Alaska; liturgy and catechism translated into Aleut.
1836 Imperial ukaz regarding Alaskan education issued from Czar Nicholas I that students were to become faithful members of the Orthodox Church, loyal subjects of the Czar, and loyal citizens; Fr. John Veniaminov returns to Russia.
1841 Return of Innocent of Alaska to Sitka; sale of Fort Ross property to an American citizen; pastoral school established in Sitka.
1850 Alaskan episcopal see and seminary moved to Yakutsk, Russia.
1867 Alaska purchased by United States from Russia.
1868 First Russian parish established in US territory in San Francisco, California; Innocent of Alaska becomes Metropolitan of Moscow.
1870 Diocese of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska formed by the Church of Russia with Bp. John (Mitropolsky) as ruling hierarch.
1872 See of the Aleutians diocese moved to San Francisco, placing it outside the defined boundaries of the diocese (i.e., Alaska).
1876 Bp. John (Mitropolsky) recalled to Russia.
1888 Bp. Vladimir (Sokolovsky) becomes Bishop of the Aleutians and Alaska.
1890-1914 Greek Immigration to USA: widespread unemployment and economic problems led to migrations to the US of 350,000 Greeks, one-fifth of the total population.
1892 Archim. Raphael (Hawaweeny) arrives in America.
1898 Tikhon (Belavin) becomes Bishop of the Aleutians and Alaska; American annexation of Hawaii.
1900 Name of Russian mission diocese changed from the Aleutian Islands and Alaska to the Aleutian Islands and North America, thus claiming an expansion its territorial boundaries.
1905 Bp. Tikhon (Belavin) raised to rank of archbishop; seminary opened in Minneapolis; Russian see transferred to New York.
1907 1st All-American Sobor held in Mayfield, PA, at which name of the Russian mission was declared to be The Russian Orthodox Greek-Catholic Church in North America under the Hierarchy of the Russian Church; Abp. Tikhon (Belavin) returns to Russia and is succeeded by Platon Rozhdestvensky.
1914 Abp. Platon (Rozhdestvensky) recalled to Russia and made bishop of Kishinev, after having received 72 communities (mainly ex-Uniate Carpatho-Russians) into Orthodoxy during his rule.
1915 Death of Raphael of Brooklyn; Abp. Evdokim (Meschersky) succeeds Platon.
1916 Consecration of Philip (Stavitsky) of Sitka; Alexander (Nemolovsky) appointed Bishop of Canada with his see in Winnipeg.
1917 Abp. Tikhon (Belavin) elected Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia at the All Russian Sobor of 1917-1918.
1919 2nd All-American Sobor meets in Cleveland, electing Alexander (Nemolovsky) as its new diocesan bishop, pending approval from Moscow (which never comes).
1920 Tikhon of Moscow issues Ukaz No. 362; first session of the Higher Church Administration outside borders of Russia.
1921 34 ROCOR bishops meet in synod in Karlovytsky, Serbia, including Metr. Platon (Rozhdestvensky), primate of the Russian Metropolia.
1922 Russian Metropolia convenes 3rd All-American Sobor in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
1924 4th All-American Sobor of the Metropolia votes to establish "temporary self-government," breaking administrative ties with Moscow.
1926 Metr. Platon (Rozhdestvensky) of the Metropolia breaks ties with ROCOR synod.
1927 ROCOR synod sends epistle to American parishes suspending Platon and his clergy; founding of American Orthodox Catholic Church by the Russian Metropolia under Aftimios Ofiesh; founding of Federated Russian Orthodox Clubs (FROC) in Pittsburgh.

1933 Platon (Rozhdestvensky) refuses to pledge loyalty to Moscow, which declares Metropolia to be in schism and establishes Exarchate of Moscow on American soil.

1934 Death of Platon (Rozhdestvensky); Theophilus (Pashkovsky) of San Francisco elected primate of Metropolia at 5th All-American Sobor in Cleveland, Ohio.

1935 "Temporary Regulations of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad" signed by ROCOR synod in Karlovtsy, Serbia, including Theophilus (Pashkovsky) of the Metropolia, thus renewing relations; ROCOR divided into four regions, including North America with Theophilus as the regional primate.

1937 6th All-American Sobor of Metropolia declares itself to report to ROCOR in matters of faith.

1938 Carpatho-Russian diocese established by Constantinople with second wave of Uniat returns to Orthodoxy.

1946 7th All-American Sobor of Russian Metropolia breaks ties with ROCOR.

1950 ROCOR moves headquarters to New York; Leonty (Turkevitch) becomes primate of Metropolia at 8th All American Sobor in New York City.

1963 Beginning of rapprochement between Metropolia and Moscow Patriarchate; arguing that the Metropolia's 1924 declaration of "temporary self-government" amounted to a canonical declaration of autocephaly, Toward an American Orthodox Church published by St. Vladimir's professor Alexander Bogolepov, galvanizing the Metropolia to seek autocephaly.

1964 Bulgarian Diocese in Exile established under the ROCOR.

1968 Meeting between Metropolia representatives and Moscow Patriarchate in Upsala, Sweden, discussing autocephaly for the Metropolia; Synod of Bishops of Metropolia decides to start official exploratory negotiations with MP.

1969 Official autocephaly meetings of Metropolia with Moscow Patriarchate take place on New York City, Tokyo and Geneva.

1970 Russian Metropolia reconciles with the Church of Russia and is granted autocephaly; 14th All-American Sobor/1st All-American Council accepts autocephaly Tomos and approves new name of Orthodox Church in America (OCA); Constantinople ceases all official contact with the OCA and declares it uncanonical; Russian Exarchate of North America is dissolved, but the majority of its parishes remain under the Church of Russia; glorification of Herman of Alaska in separate services by the ROCOR and the OCA.

1971 ROCOR denounces Moscow's grant of autocephaly to the Metropolia; OCA receives rebel ROCOR parish in Australia; Albanian Archdiocese received into the OCA at 2nd All-American Council held at St. Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA.

1972 OCA receives the Mexican National Catholic Church, creating its Exarchate of Mexico.

1976 Reception into OCA of ROCOR's Bulgarian Diocese in Exile and its hierarch, Bishop Kyrill (Yonchev).

1977 OCA holds its 5th All-American Council in Montreal, electing Theodosius (Lazor) as metropolitan, replacing the retiring Ireney (Bekish); glorification in Russia of Innocent of Alaska.

1981 OCA primatial see transferred from New York to Washington.

1982 Calendar schism in OCA Diocese of E. Pennsylvania, ROCOR receiving multiple parishes in the area.

1989 Glorification in Russia of Tikhon of Moscow.

1990 Contact between Constantinople and OCA resumes.

2002 Retirement of Theodosius (Lazor) and election of Herman (Swaiko) as Metropolitan of the OCA at 13th All-American Council held in Orlando, Florida.

2006 Fourth All-Diaspora Council of the ROCOR votes to restore full communion with Moscow Patriarchate.
2007 Restoration of full communion between ROCOR and Moscow Patriarchate with incorporation of the ROCOR as a semi-autonomous entity of the patriarchate.  
2008 Metr. Herman (Swai ko) retired by OCA amidst financial scandal; Jonah (Paffhausen) elected primate of OCA.

1.2. Some Facts about Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA).

1943 Founding of Federated Orthodox Greek Catholic Primary Jurisdictions in America, a proto-SCOBA body.
1960 Founding of Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA).
1965 SCOBA appeals to mother churches to allow concrete steps to be taken toward American Orthodox unity;
1994 Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) becomes SCOBA agency and changes to its current name.
2001 Second meeting of most bishops associated with SCOBA

1.3. ROCOR and OCA.

The ROCOR and the OCA have a complicated history of cooperation, rivalry, and sometimes outright hostility. These two jurisdictions, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) and the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), both have their origins in the Church of Russia (a.k.a. the Moscow Patriarchate or MP), and their histories as clearly distinct and identifiable entities both stem from the Revolution in Russia in the early 20th century. In examining this history, other names are used for the pre-1970 OCA, the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America (its official name) and the Metropolia (its common name). The ROCOR is also referred to as the Karlovtsy Synod (from its seminal formations in Serbia) or simply the Synod, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, or ROCA. Since the election of Metropolitan Laurus (Skurla) of New York as First Hierarch of the ROCOR and that body's subsequent ongoing rapprochement with Moscow, signs have appeared of better relations between the OCA and ROCOR. With the reconciliation of the ROCOR with the Moscow Patriarchate in 2007, the ROCOR and the OCA have resumed full communion and clergy of both jurisdictions have concelebrated in multiple areas; one area of note is Seattle, where clergy and communicants of thirteen area parishes concelebrated within a week of the canonical reunification.
2. The Autocephalous Churches.

2.1. The Orthodox Church in America.

The Orthodox Church in America (OCA) is an autocephalous Eastern Orthodox church in North America. The OCA is a member of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in America (SCOBA).

The supreme canonical authority of the OCA is the Holy Synod of Bishops, composed of all the Church's diocesan bishops. The ex officio chairman of the Holy Synod is the metropolitan, currently Metropolitan Jonah. The Holy Synod meets twice annually, however special sessions can be called either by the metropolitan or at the request at least three diocesan bishops.

The primate of the OCA is the metropolitan. He also serves as the bishop of one of the Church's dioceses. With the other bishops of the Church, the metropolitan is considered the first among equals. His official title is "Metropolitan of All-America and Canada." His role is to manage the welfare of the Church, and to act as its representative with other Orthodox Churches, religious organizations, and secular authorities. The metropolitan is elected, when necessary, by the Holy Synod at an All-American Council (a general council of OCA clergy and laity). There are no age or term limits for the metropolitan, and he may retire at any time, but usually does so only for health-related reasons.

The diocese is the basic church body that comprises all the parishes of a determined geographical area. It is governed by the Diocesan Bishop, with the assistance of a Diocesan Assembly and a Diocesan Council. The OCA is currently composed of twelve geographic and three ethnic dioceses. The boundaries of the ethnic dioceses overlap those of certain geographic ones. These dioceses are the result of smaller ethnic jurisdictions joining the OCA at some point in its history, usually after having broken from other bodies. Dioceses are established by the Holy Synod whenever needed, and the Synod may also modify the boundaries of an existing diocese.

According to the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, the All-American Council is the "highest legislative and administrative authority within the Church." The Council is composed roughly of the Metropolitan, all bishops, priests, and selected lay delegates. The purpose of the All-American Council is to discuss and vote on Church matters. When necessary, the Council has also elected new metropolitans. The period between All-American Councils is set at three years, although this is not always the case. The first thirteen Councils (held from 1907–1970) are referred to as All-American Sobors, reflecting the American Church's jurisdictional ties to the Russian Orthodox Church. The fourteenth Sobor (held 1970) is jointly known as the 1st All-American Council, reflecting the autocephalous status of the OCA. The most recent All-American Council (14th) was held in Toronto in July 2005, with the 15th tentatively scheduled for 2008.

The Metropolitan Council is the permanent executive body of the Church's administration. It is tasked with implementing the decisions of the All-American Council, as well as handling the Church's budgetary concerns. The Council is headed by a chairman (the current Metropolitan), and is composed of the OCA's chancellor, secretary, treasurer, and selected clergy and lay delegates. It usually meets twice per year, but in December 2006 a rare joint meeting between the Metropolitan Council and the Holy Synod of Bishops was held.

The OCA's headquarters are located in Syosset, New York and consists of more than 700 parishes, missions, communities, monasteries and institutions located primarily in the United States and Canada. Additional parishes and missions are located in Mexico and Australia.
Membership estimates for the OCA vary, with recent figures ranging from as low 27,169 to as high as 1,064,000.

The primate is Metropolitan Jonah (Paffhausen), who was elected on November 12, 2008, and was formally installed on December 28, 2008.

The history of the OCA began with the arrival of eight Russian Orthodox monks at Kodiak Island, Alaska, in 1794. The monks established a mission in Alaska, which became a diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church a few years after the United States purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867. By the late 19th century, the church had grown in other areas of the United States due to the arrival of immigrants from areas of Europe and the Middle East. Most of these immigrants, regardless of nationality or ethnic background, were united under a single North American diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church.

By 1917, the American diocese was the largest in the Russian Orthodox Church. It had grown from ten parishes in 1890 to more than 350. Most of the funding for the diocese was provided by Russian Church, via the Imperial Missionary Society. The connections between the American diocese and the Russian Church would be severely compromised by the events of that year. The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent establishment of the Communist Soviet government ushered in a period of repression for the Russian Orthodox Church. Church property was confiscated, and when Patriarch Tikhon resisted, he was imprisoned from April 1922 until June 1923. On November 20, Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow directed all Russian Orthodox churches outside of Russia to govern themselves autonomously if they were not able to contact the central administration or if it were disabled. Some Russian Orthodox churches outside Russia took this directive as applying to them as well, and used it as the basis for declarations of autonomy even without the necessary condition of the inability of the central administration to govern them. Ethnic groups within the American diocese began to re-align themselves with other national churches. In 1918, a group of Ukrainians in Canada formed the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church in Canada, and in 1922, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America was established. In 1926, the Serbians aligned with the Serbian Orthodox Church. While many ethnic dioceses subsequently placed themselves under the jurisdiction of other Orthodox churches, a large number of Orthodox in America became a self-governing Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America (known informally as the "Metropolia" - named after Metropolitan Platon) under the leadership of Metropolitan Platon (Rozhdestvensky).

On April 10, 1970, The Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America was granted autocephaly by the Russian Orthodox Church (Patriarch Alexius I and fourteen bishops of the Russian Church's Holy Synod signed the official Tomos of Autocephaly), and was renamed the Orthodox Church in America (OCA). The name change, as well as the granting of autocephaly, was officially accepted at the 14th All-American Sobor (also known as the 1st All-American Council in recognition of the Church's new-found independence) in October 1970. The OCA's autocephaly is not currently recognized by all other autocephalous Orthodox Churches (e.g., the Church of Constantinople). Most of these churches recognize the OCA as canonical and its sacraments as valid, however. Although the autocephaly of the OCA is not universally recognized by all autocephalous Eastern Orthodox churches, it is in full communion with them. Within the past twenty years, the OCA has established more than 220 new parishes. It is a member of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in America (SCOBA), together with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America (AOCA) and the other member jurisdictions. Serious consideration has been given recently to a possible merger between the OCA and the AOCA. Both groups share a significant common history, in that a Syrian priest, Father Raphael Hawaweeny, was sent by the Moscow Patriarchate in the late 19th century as a missionary to Arabic-speaking Orthodox Christians living in North America. Raphael was ordained a bishop in 1904, and his flock eventually became the AOCA. Bishop Raphael was canonized in March 2000 by the OCA as St. Raphael of Brooklyn.
3. The Autonomous Orthodox Churches.

3.1. The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America (often referred to in North America simply as the Antiochian Archdiocese) is the sole jurisdiction of the Antiochian Orthodox Church in the USA and Canada with exclusive jurisdiction over the Antiochian Orthodox faithful in those countries, though these faithful were originally cared for by the Russian Orthodox Church in America (indeed, the first bishop consecrated in North America, St. Raphael Hawaweeny, was consecrated by the Russian Orthodox Church in America to care for the Orthodox Arab faithful in the USA and Canada). On 9 October 2003 the Holy Synod of the Antiochian Orthodox Church granted the Archdiocese's request to be granted self-rule/autonomy to allow it to better govern itself, improve and increase its outreach efforts, internally organize itself into several dioceses, and progress further on the road to the administrative unity of the Orthodox Church in the Americas.

After the Bolshevik Revolution threw the Russian Orthodox Church and its faithful abroad into chaos the Orthodox Arab faithful in North America, simultaneously shaken by the death of their beloved bishop St. Raphael, chose to come under the direct care of the Patriarchate of Antioch. Due to internal conflicts, however, the Antiochian Orthodox faithful in North America were divided between two archdioceses, those of New York and Toledo. In 1975 the two Antiochian Orthodox archdioceses were united as one Archdiocese of North America (now with its headquarters in Englewood, New Jersey). Since then it has experienced significant growth through ongoing evangelization and the immigration of Orthodox Arabs from the Middle East. Its current primate is Metropolitan Phillip (Saliba), who has six other diocesan bishops assisting him in caring for the nine dioceses of the growing Archdiocese, which is the third largest Orthodox Christian "jurisdiction" in North America, with an estimated 41,840 full members and 83,700 adherents.

3.2. The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.

The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (Russian: Ру́сская Правосла́вная Церкв́ь Загра́ницей), also called ROCOR) is a semi-autonomous part of the Russian Orthodox Church. The ROCOR is also referred to as the Karlovtsy Synod (from its seminal formations in Serbia) or simply the Synod, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, or ROCA.

It was formed as a jurisdiction of Eastern Orthodoxy as a response against the policy of the Soviet Union soon after the Russian Revolution of 1917, and separated from the Russian Church of the Moscow Patriarchate in 1927 after an imprisoned Patriarch Sergius I of Moscow. The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia officially signed the Act of Canonical Communion with the Moscow Patriarchate on May 17, 2007 restoring the canonical link between the churches.

In 1920 near the end of the Russian Civil War, after the White Russian Army under Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak was crushed, a mass exodus of Russian refugees moved into Manchuria. Over ninety thousand refugees settled in Harbin, Shanghai, Dairen, Hailar and the smaller towns along the Chinese branch of the Trans-Siberian Railway within three years. Lacking adequate lodgings or employment many migrated to America, Europe or Australia. Also in 1920 the
Soviet government revealed that it was hostile to the Russian Orthodox Church. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow, issued an ukase (decree) that all Orthodox Christians currently under the authority and protection of his Patriarchate seek protection and guidance elsewhere. Among some Russian Bishops and other hierarchs, this was interpreted as an authorization to form an emergency synod of all Russian Orthodox hierarchs to permit the Church to continue to function outside Russia. To add urgency to the synod's motives, in May 1922, the Soviet government proclaimed its own "Living Church" as a "reform" of the Russian Orthodox Church. On September 13, 1922, Russian Orthodox hierarchs in Serbia met in the town of Sremski Karlovci and established a Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad, the foundation of ROCOR. In November 1922, Russian Orthodox in North America held a synod and elected Metropolitan Platon as the primate of an autonomous Russian exarchate in the Americas. This led to a three-way conflict in the United States among the Exarchate, ROCOR (sometimes known as "the Synod" in this period), and the Living Church, which asserted that it was the legitimate (Soviet-government-recognized) owner of all Eastern Orthodox properties in the USA.

Between 1997–2000 the ROCOR and the ROC came into direct conflict over ownership of churches and properties within Palestine. In 2000 Metropolitan Laurus became the First Hierarch of the ROCOR and expressed interest in the idea of reunification. In 2003 Vladimir Putin met with Metropolitan Laurus in New York. This event was later hailed as an important step by Patriarch Alexy II who said that it showed the ROCOR that "not a fighter against God, but an Orthodox Christian is at the country's helm." In May 2004, Metropolitan Laurus, the head of the ROCOR, visited Russia participating in several joint services. In June 2004, a contingent of ROCOR clergy meeting with Patriarch Alexey II. Committees were set up by both the Patriarchate and ROCOR to begin dialogue towards rapprochement. Both sides decided to set up joint commissions, and determined the range of issues to be discussed at the All-Diaspora Council, which met for the first time since 1974. On December 28, 2006, it was officially announced that the Act of Canonical Communion would finally be signed. The signing took place on the May 17, 2007, followed immediately by a full restoration of communion with the Moscow Patriarchate, celebrated by a Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, at which the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexius II and the First Hierarch of ROCOR concelebrated for the first time in history. On May 17, 2007, at 9:15 a.m., Metropolitan Laurus was greeted at Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow by a special peal of the bells, and shortly thereafter, Patriarch Alexey II entered the Cathedral. After the Patriarch read the prayer for the unity of the Russian Church, the Act of Canonical Communion was read aloud, and two copies were each signed by both Metropolitan Laurus and Patriarch Alexey II. The two hierarchs then exchanged the "kiss of peace," and they and the entire Russian Church sang "God Grant You Many Years." Following this, the Divine Liturgy of the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord began, culminating with the entirety of the bishops of both ROCOR and MP partaking of the same Eucharist.

The ROCOR has over 400 parishes worldwide, and an estimated membership of over 400,000 people. Within the ROCOR there are 13 hierarchs, and also monasteries and nunneries in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, and South America.

3.3.The Russian Orthodox Church in America.

The Russian Orthodox Church in America (ROCIA) is the direct continuation of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church chartered in February 1927 by Metropolitan PLATON with the blessing of Moscow Patriarch TIKHON. Although the HEOCAC was incorporated under various names throughout the 20th century, it continued directly to Metropolitan SYMEON, who was elected Primate and enthroned by the Holy Synod in 1989.
In 1996, due to the theft of the original church corporation, it was the decision of the current Metropolitan SYMEON, in conjunction with the rest of the bishops of the Holy Synod, to recharter the Church as the Russian Orthodox Church in America. Since the Church was originally chartered by the Russian Orthodox Bishops under Metropolitan +PLATON as autocephalous, the Russian Orthodox Church in America considers itself non-SCOBA (i.e., turned down Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas membership, in 1965) and autocephalous. The Russian Orthodox Church in America holds a policy much like the Churches listed as In Resistance, communing the faithful but not con-celebrating among hierarchs. The ROCIA's status is unclear, with many faithful and even priests received into other Orthodox Churches including the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), the GOA and the Orthodox Church in America with their sacraments recognized, but as the Hierarchs of the ROCIA do not seek to con-celebrate with other Churches, the exact standing of those hierarchs remains unclear. Metropolitan SYMEON is the 10th primate from Archbishop AFTIMIOS (Ofiesh).

4. The Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA).

Founded in 1960, the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), brings together the canonical hierarchs of Orthodox jurisdictions in the Americas. The purpose of the Standing Conference is to create and foster ties of unity among the canonical Orthodox Churches and administrations for a stronger and more visible witness to the Orthodox Faith. The hierarchs meet semi-annually for discussion and decisions on inter-Orthodox and ecumenical matters, to review the work of its commissions and dialogues, and to plan future events.

American Orthodox Churches – members of the SCOBA:
- Albanian Orthodox Diocese of America
- American Carpathian-Russian Orthodox Diocese (ACROD)
- Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
- Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church Diocese of America, Canada and Australia
- Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA)
- Orthodox Church in America (OCA).
- Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada
- Russian Orthodox Church in the USA
- Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR)
- Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA and Canada
- Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA (UOC of USA)

The Orthodox Christian Mission Center is the official Orthodox Missions and Evangelism Agency established by the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas. The headquarters of the OCMC is in St. Augustine, Florida. It supports Orthodox missionary activities world wide and currently includes training and sending missionary teams to countries such as Argentina, Paraguay, Uganda, Tanzania, Albania, Korea, Puerto Rico, and
Philippines. The teams preach, teach, and baptize as well as minister to the poor, hungry, suffering, and orphaned. They also strive to strengthen the infrastructures of the local churches through development of local leaders.

4.1. Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, headquartered in New York City, is an eparchy of the Church of Constantinople. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is composed of an Archdiocesan District (New York City) and eight metropolises: New Jersey, Chicago, Atlanta, Detroit, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Boston and Denver. It is governed by the Archbishop and the Eparchial Synod of Bishops. The Synod of Bishops is headed by the archbishop and comprised of the bishops who oversee the ministry of the metropolises. It has all the authority and responsibility which the Church canons provide for a provincial synod.

There are about 540 parishes, 800 priests and approximately 440,000 to 2 million faithful in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, depending on the source of reports and the counting method being used. The number of parishes in the Greek Archdiocese rose by about 9% in the decade from 1990 to 2000, and membership growth has largely been in terms of existing members having children.

The Archdiocese also includes 21 monastic communities, 17 of which were founded by Elder Ephraim (former abbot of Philotheou Monastery (Athos)). The largest of these is St. Anthony's Greek Orthodox Monastery (Florence, Arizona).

Additionally, one seminary is operated by the Greek Archdiocese, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, which educates not only Greek Archdiocese seminarians but also those from other jurisdictions, as well.

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is also a member of SCOBA. Its current primate is His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios (Trakatellis) of America.

4.2. Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America is the sole jurisdiction of the Church of Antioch in the USA and Canada with exclusive jurisdiction over the Antiochian Orthodox faithful in those countries.

The current primate has six auxiliary bishops assisting him in caring for the nine dioceses of the growing Archdiocese, which is the third largest Orthodox Christian jurisdiction in North America, having 236 communities (38 of which are missions). Estimates of the number of faithful range from 51,320 to 84,000 to 380,000 depending on the report and the counting method being used. The number of new Antiochian parishes in the decade between 1990 and 2000 rose by approximately 33%, and the primary membership growth in the Archdiocese has been from American converts. From 2003 to 2005, an increase of 1,229 communicants was reported at the conventions, an increase of 2.5%.

The Archdiocese also includes the Western Rite Vicariate, a group of about 16 parishes and 7 missions which worship according to the Western Rite.

On October 9, 2003, the Holy Synod of the Church of Antioch granted the Archdiocese's request to be granted self-rule (as distinct from autonomy, and though the words have the same literal
meaning in English, they are distinct in Arabic) to allow it to better govern itself, improve and
increase its outreach efforts, internally organize itself into several dioceses, and continue
progress toward Orthodox administrative unity in the Americas. Three new bishops were
consecrated in December of 2004 to assist in the governance of the reorganized Archdiocese.
The Archdiocese also includes one monastic community, St. Paul Skete (Grand Junction,
Tennessee), a community for women. It does not run any of its own seminaries, but sends its
seminarians to theological schools run by other jurisdictions or overseas. The Archdiocese does
run various non-seminary educational programs, however, including the St. Stephen's Course in
Orthodox Theology.
The Antiochian Archdiocese is also a member of SCOBA and was formerly a member of the
National Council of Churches (NCC), but on July 28, 2005, its Archdiocesan Convention voted
unanimously to withdraw fully from that organization, thus making it the first of the major
Orthodox jurisdictions in the US to do so.
Its current primate is the Most Reverend Philip (Saliba), Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of all North America.

4.3. Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA and Canada.
The Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA and Canada consists of four dioceses of the Church of
Serbia (Serbian Patriarchate) that are governed by the Bishop of America and Canada Longin
(New Gracanica Metropolitanate). The four dioceses of the Church in North America are: the
Dioceses of Eastern (Bp. Mitrophan), Midwestern (Metr. Christopher), and Western (Bp.
Maxim) United States and the Diocese of Canada (Bp. Georgije).
A seminary, the St. Sava Serbian Orthodox School of Theology is located at the St. Sava Serbian
Orthodox Monastery in Libertyville, Illinois.
The Serbian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of America and Canada is a member of the Standing
Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), represented by Metr.
Christopher.

4.4. American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese in the USA.
The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese (ACROD) is a
diocese of the Ecumenical Patriarchate with about 75 parishes in the
United States and Canada, led by Metropolitan Nicholas (Smisko) of
Amissos. Though the diocese is directly responsible to the Patriarchate,
it is under the spiritual supervision of the primate of the Greek
Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Its full name is the American
Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese.
At the end of the nineteenth century, many Ruthenians (Rusyns)
imigrated to North America, and established their Greek Catholic
Church parishes. However, the differences between the Eastern Rite
Catholics and the predominant Latin-Rite Catholics (especially regarding a married priesthood
and the form of the Divine Liturgy or "Mass") led some of them to withdraw from the Catholic
Church and become Eastern Orthodox.
Besides its 75 parishes, the ACROD has one seminary located in Johnstown, Pennsylvania,
called Christ the Saviour Seminary. The bulk of the diocese's parishes are in the United States,
with one in Toronto, Canada; nearly half are located in Pennsylvania. There was formerly a
diocesan monastery, the Monastery of the Annunciation in Tuxedo Park, New York, which
closed in the early 1990s. Another monastery at Beallsville, Maryland, called Monastery of the
Holy Cross, dissolved in the late 1990s when the abbot returned to Eastern Rite Catholicism.
The diocese is a member of Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in America.
4.5. Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada.

The Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada is an overseas archdiocese of the Church of Romania. The Archdiocese came into existence in a restructuring of the original Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America formed in the 1930s. The restructuring resulted from the impacts of controls placed upon the Church of Romania by the communists’ government that governed Romania after World War II. As in other eastern European countries at that time the communist government of Romania attempted to exert political control over elements of Romanian institutions located outside the country. As in similar situations with other Orthodox Churches with "overseas" communities, the government used the indigenous Mother Church to control the "overseas" communities. In the case of the Romanian Church, the American Episcopate was dissolved after a majority of its members would not accept directions from the communist controlled Patriarchate. Then, the new Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate in America and Canada was formed with a new, patriarchate-appointed bishop.

The current ruling hierarch for the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada is Archbishop Nicolae (Condrea). His see is in Chicago, Illinois. The Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada is a member of the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA).

4.6. Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church Diocese of America, Canada and Australia.

The Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada, and Australia is one of fifteen dioceses of the Church of Bulgaria. Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada, and Australia had its origins before World War II as the Bulgarian Diocese of North and South America and Australia. However, a result of the establishment of a Communist government in Bulgaria after the war, relations of the diocese with the Church of Bulgaria were disrupted. Under Metr. Andrei (Petkov), the diocese attempted, in the late 1950s, to join the Metropolia but was unsuccessful. In 1964, Metr. Andrei petitioned the Holy Synod of the Church of Bulgaria for his return to the Bulgarian episcopacy and to continue to lead the diocese in America. With the return of Metr. Andrei and his diocese to the Church of Bulgaria, a group under Archimandrite Kyrill (Yonchev) broke with Metr. Andrei and joined the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) as the Bulgarian Diocese in Exile. The ROCOR bishops consecrated him bishop. Later the Bulgarian Diocese in Exile became part of the Orthodox Church in America. The diocese is currently led by Metr. Joseph with parishes in the United States, Canada, and Australia as an overseas diocese of the Church of Bulgaria under Patriarch Maxim and the Bulgarian Synod of Bishops. The diocesan cathedral is Ss Cyril and Methody Bulgarian Orthodox Cathedral in New York City. The Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada, and Australia is a member of the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA). The diocese is led by Metropolitan Joseph.
4.7. Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA (UOC of USA) is a jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the United States. In 1923 a petition was sent to the newly formed Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC), a jurisdiction formed in the aftermath of Ukrainian independence in 1918, but which has never enjoyed canonical recognition in mainstream Orthodoxy.

On April 9, 1929, a meeting of 15 clergy and 24 laity was held in Allentown, Pennsylvania, at St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church, in which those attending agreed to form a diocese of Ukrainian Orthodox Christians, though unlike those who had affiliated themselves with the UAOC, they wished to be part of a recognized canonical authority.

On March 12, 1995, all the Ukrainian hierarchs outside of Ukraine which had not yet done so were received into the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The following year, in November, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA (formerly under the UAOC) and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America (under Constantinople since 1937) were finally united, with Vsevolod becoming one of the new jurisdiction's diocesan bishops.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA is divided into three eparchies: Central Eparchy (Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Upstate New York, Western Pennsylvania), headed by Metr. Constantine of Irinoupolis (Parma, Ohio); Eastern Eparchy (Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Eastern Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia), headed by Abp. Antony of Hierapolis (New York, New York and Washington D.C.); Western Eparchy (Arizona, California, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin), headed by Bishop Daniel of Pamphilion (Chicago, Illinois).

In total, there are about 105 parishes, two monasteries, and one seminary, St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Theological Seminary in South Bound Brook, New Jersey. Besides the three hierarchs, the clergy consists of 106 priests and 15 deacons. 15 of the parishes currently have either no pastor or are served by clergy in their deanery.

Its current primate is His Beatitude, Metropolitan Constantine (Bahan) of Irinoupolis.

4.8. Albanian Orthodox Diocese of America.

The Albanian Orthodox Diocese of America is a jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the United States.

A significant portion of Orthodox Albanian-Americans petitioned the Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras (himself of Albanian ancestry), to send a canonical bishop. The Rt. Rev. Mark (Lipa) organized the Diocese in 1949-1950 and accepted into it the large community in Chicago and an older parish, the first of three Albanian Orthodox parishes to locate in South Boston. Bp. Mark immediately took his seat as a full member of SCOBA.

The Albanian Orthodox Diocese of America played a crucial role in the resurrection of the Church of Albania. In 1990, the Diocesan clergy and laity petitioned the Ecumenical Patriarch, Demetrios, during his visit to North America, to prepare a plan for the restoration of the Church of Albania. In 1991, the (then) Protopresbyter Ilia Katre, who had served for many years as Dean of Students at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA, took up residence in Albania, organized and opened the Resurrection of Christ Seminary with the blessing of the newly-arrived Patriarchal Exarch, Anastasios. The Very Rev. Ilia also directed the enthronement of Anastasios as Archbishop of All Albania in August 1992. Individuals and delegations from the Diocese made major financial contributions to the Church of Albania as well as applied pressure on the government for the return of confiscated property to the Church.

In 2002, His Grace, Bp. Ilia, returned to lead the Seminary for three years during which he expanded, strengthened, and lengthened the course to a full four year programme.

In North America, the Diocese has successfully integrated many pious, talented, and successful Albanian Orthodox immigrants into positions of leadership in her established communities. In
addition, the Diocese has made outreach to new communities in Toronto, Montreal, Washington, and Baltimore a priority with the hope that they may also be able to form permanent Albanian Orthodox churches in the near future. The Albanian Orthodox Diocese of America current leader is Bishop Ilia (Katre) of Philomelion (Vicar General since 1982 and bishop since 2002), who lives in Boston, Chicago, and Las Vegas.

4.9. Russian Orthodox Church in the USA.

The Russian Orthodox Church in the USA is the name of the group of parishes of the Russian mission in America that recognize the canonical authority of the Church of Russia. They were previously known as the Russian Exarchate of North America before autocephaly was granted to the Metropolia in 1970. All of the parishes of the Exarchate were given a choice to join the OCA at that time. The parishes that remained were the list below.

4.9.1. The parishes list:

- St. Nicholas Church, Brookside, Alabama;
- St. Demetrius Monastery, Bellflower, California;
- Christ the Savior Church, Berkeley, California;
- St. Nicholas Cathedral, San Francisco, California;
- Church of All Saints Glorified in the Russian Land, San Francisco, California;
- Our Lady of Kazan Church, San Diego, California;
- Resurrection Church, Chicago, Illinois;
- Dormition Church Benld, Illinois;
- Holy Trinity Church, Baltimore, Maryland;
- St. Elias Church, Battle Creek, Michigan;
- St. Innocent Church, Detroit, Michigan;
- St. Michael the Archangel Church, Detroit, Michigan;
- Church of St. Andrew the First-Called Apostle, East Lansing, Michigan;
- Holy Trinity Church, Saginaw, Michigan;
- St. John Chrysostom Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan;
- House Chapel of St. Seraphim of Sarov, Westown, New York;
- St. Demetrius Church, Jackson, Michigan;
- St. Nicholas Church, Bayonne, New Jersey;
- Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Elizabeth, New Jersey;
- Three Hierarchs Church, Garfield, New Jersey;
- Holy Cross Church, Hackettsstown, New Jersey;
- Sts. Peter and Paul Church; Passaic, New Jersey;
- St. John the Baptist Church, Singac, New Jersey;
- St. Olga Church, Somerset, New Jersey;
- St. Mark Chapel, New York;
- Church of St. George the Great Martyr, New York;
- Church of All Saints Glorified in the Russian Land, on the estate of Pine Bush, New York;
- St. John the Baptist Chapel, Bronx, New York;
- Church of All Saints Glorified in the Russian Land, Amsterdam (Wolf Run), Ohio;
- St. Stephen Church, Lorairi, Ohio;
- Nativity of Christ Church, Youngstown, Ohio;
- St. Nicholas Church, Chester, Pennsylvania;
- St. Nicholas Church, Edinboro, Pageville, Pennsylvania;
- St. Nicholas Church, Reading, Pennsylvania;
- Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Mount Union, Pennsylvania;
- St. Nicholas Church, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania;
- St. Andrew the Apostle Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;
- St. Michael the Archangel Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;
- Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Scranton, Pennsylvania;
- Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Burgaw, North Carolina;
- St. Gregory the Theologian Church, Tampa, Florida;
- Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Manchester, New Hampshire;
- Church of St. George the Great Martyr, Buffalo, New York;
- All Exarchate parishes and clergy in Canada;
- St. Nicholas Cathedral, New York;

The parishes that that chose to remain under the canonical protection of the Moscow Patriarchate after the grant of autocephaly came to be known as the Russian Orthodox Church in the USA under the oversight of an auxiliary bishop.

4.9.2. Information.

The Russian Exarchate of North America was the distinct name of the group of parishes of the Russian mission in America which recognized the canonical authority of the Church of Russia during the period of the declaration of schism by the Patriarchate over the Russian Metropolia. It existed from 1933, when Metropolitan Platon (Rozhdestvensky) of New York was dismissed by the Patriarchate, to 1970, when the interdiction was lifted by Moscow and autocephaly granted to the Metropolia. At that time the Exarchate was officially dissolved.

The parishes of the Exarchate which remained under the canonical protection of the Patriarchate after the grant of autocephaly came under an auxiliary bishop came to be known as the Russian Orthodox Church in the USA.

During its existence the Exarchate participated in SCOBA, especially in the person of Metr. John (Wendland) of New York and the Aleutians.


The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (usually identified as National Council of Churches, or NCC) is an ecumenical fellowship of 35 Christian faith groups in the United States. Its member communions -- also variously called denominations, churches, conventions, or archdioceses -- include a wide variety of Mainline Protestant, Orthodox, African-American, and historic Peace churches. Together, they encompass 100,000 local congregations and 45 million adherents.

The NCC has long been a leading force in the Christian ecumenical movement in the United States. It was organized in 1950 as a merger of the Federal Council of Churches, formed in 1908, and the International Council of Religious Education, formed in 1905, with origins in the 1830's. The Council's sister organization, Church World Service, is a humanitarian and relief arm of the NCC's member communions which has work in more than 80 nations. The Council is related fraternally to hundreds of local and state councils of churches and interfaith organizations, and to
the World Council of Churches. Even though these councils may include many of the same member churches, they have no fiscal or administrative connections to each other.

The list of American Orthodox Churches – member of the NCC:
- Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America;
- Orthodox Church in America;
- Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in the USA;
- Serbian Orthodox Church in the U.S.A. and Canada;
- Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA;
- Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch.