

On Orthodox Christian Ecclesiology and the Antiochian Crisis

Brief Background

On February 24, 2009, nine hierarchs of the Holy Synod of Antioch met in the Patriarchal compound in Damascus to consider questions regarding the status of bishops in the Patriarchate of Antioch. The outcome of this meeting was a series of amendments to the Patriarchal bylaws that ostensibly had the effect of reducing five¹ diocesan bishops of its North American Archdiocese to the status of auxiliary bishops, among other things.²

This action produced a firestorm of controversy in North America. Much of the discussion has focused on the personality and leadership style of Metropolitan Philip Saliba, Primate of the Archdiocese. The decision has been questioned on the basis of its compatibility with the sacred canons and the constitutions of the Patriarchate of Antioch and the North American Archdiocese. We propose here to analyze the theological implications of this decision.

We must begin by laying a little groundwork in church history – the history of ordained ministry, specifically that of bishop and presbyter. This will of necessity be sketchy, but it is required to get the complete picture of the issues involved in this decision.

Bishop and Presbyter

The earliest attestation of congregational leadership in New Testament era churches reveals a “group leadership” model.³ A grouping of men known as elders (presbyteroi) or overseers (episcopoi) was responsible for the governance of the congregations. It is clear in the New Testament that the terms are used interchangeably⁴; there is no distinction between “presbyter” and “bishop.” All governance was local and congregational; there was no supra-congregational leadership structure other than the oversight of the apostles and their associates, who traveled from church to church. Various New Testament texts make it clear that this ministry of oversight was invested with spiritual authority derived from apostolic appointment.⁵

By the early second century, Church Fathers such as Ignatius of Antioch reveal a fresh development in this system of governance. By then, it was apparent that the “overseer” (bishop) presided over a council of “elders” (presbyters). Leadership remained vested in the clergy assembly, but the term “bishop” became reserved for the presiding presbyter, the one who occupied the place of Christ, as it were, amidst the apostolic college. A bishop thus governed each Christian congregation with his council of presbyters.

As Christianity spread, and new satellite congregations formed augmenting the original communities, the bishops often sent presbyters from the mother churches to lead the nascent congregations. There, they performed the functions typically reserved to the bishop: teaching, preaching, and presiding over the eucharistic celebration. As congregations spread from the cities into the hinterlands, bishops were sometimes consecrated for the new areas to preside over the developing churches, but more and

more often, presbyters began to function as the heads of local congregations. Certain critical distinctions were retained between the function of bishops and presbyters that became fixed, however. In particular, the authority to ordain was reserved to bishops, and presbyters only were allowed to lead congregations at the express delegation of their bishops.

The legalization and normalization of Christianity in the fourth century brought about the organization of the Church into the diocesan system. Typically, a bishop presided from the mother Cathedral in the main metropolis of a Roman province, assisted by his presbyters. Presbyters would staff the associated churches in the city. New bishops would be consecrated for other important cities in the province, and sometimes for the villages and countryside. In the fresh “dioceses” formed by the consecration of new bishops, presbyters would typically preside over the satellite congregations tied to the new mother churches in the same way as in the metropolitan diocese (archdiocese).

The diocesan system thus consisted of bishops in important cities (sees) with associated congregations governed by presbyters under his authority. In some cases, he would also supervise bishops consecrated for rural areas of his diocese (chorepiscopoi) who had a more limited scope of authority. The bishop possessed the authority to assign his presbyters to various congregations, and to order the activity of the “chorepiscopoi,” who, like the presbyters, represented extensions of his authority to govern.

In time, the bishop of a metropolitan see became known as a “metropolitan.” He would preside over a gathering of all the bishops of the province (synod) and function as the supreme ecclesiastical authority in the province. For example, the metropolitan diocese of Basra and Hauran in Syria in the 5th century counted 37 bishops presided over by the Metropolitan of Hauran. Such a metropolitan did not possess direct authority over the other bishops in his province in the conduct of local affairs, yet he was acknowledged head of the apostolic college of bishops for the province, and certain powers were reserved to him. Canon 34 of the Holy Apostles reflects this arrangement: “The bishops of every country must acknowledge him who is first among them and account him as their head, and do nothing of consequence without his consent...but neither let him (who is head) do anything without the consent of all.”

A final critical development in the orchestration of the episcopate and the presbyterate took place after the conquest of the Roman Empire by the Ottoman Turks. The Ottomans made the bishops civil representatives of the conquered Christian populations. Thus, gradually, Orthodox bishops began to adopt the trappings of Byzantine civil authority and integrate them into the liturgy. The miter, the trikiri and dikiri, the “eagle rugs,” the sakkos, and the repetition of “many years” to the bishop were all derived from the Imperial cult. When the bishops were granted the role of civil authorities for the subjugated Christians, they also adopted various symbols of authority that were proper to it.

The result of this historical process has been the concentration of ecclesiastical authority in the office of bishop, and a corresponding diminution of the authority of presbyters.

Whereas originally the offices were one and the same, through a process of historical development, today the bishop is often viewed as possessing authority “in himself,” exercising lordship over his clergy and congregations. Thus metropolitans and other diocesan bishops typically govern their dioceses alone as a supreme authority, without a college of presbyters. The collegial system that was essential to the leadership model of the early Church has for all intents and purposes been lost in many places in the Orthodox world. In the modern setting, bishops rule *over* presbyters, not *with* them.

Holy Synods

Yet while the collegial relationship between bishops and their presbyters has been seriously compromised over time, the collegial relationship among bishops has retained its paramount importance in the Orthodox world. The universality of the Synodal system, in which bishops collegially exercise their pastoral responsibility, is testimony to this. The requirement that three bishops must consecrate a new bishop is another witness to this principle. The consecration of a bishop for a particular church is an act of the Church itself, an act manifesting the communion and fellowship of the churches among themselves, not merely the passing of a certain power or authority from one individual bishop to the new one.

The Synodal system, originally the gathering of governing bishops of a province, has over time expanded to become the governing body of the Patriarchates and national Churches. Thus, the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Antioch consists of the Metropolitans of all the major sees in the Patriarchate. Over the course of time, all “sub-dioceses” have disappeared, and only the “Archdioceses” still exist, each presided over by a Metropolitan.

Other Orthodox Churches have different Synodal systems, featuring in some cases a rotating membership, as the entire body of bishops would be too large for effective governance and decision-making.

In each case, however, Patriarch or Archbishop of the capital city presides over the synod as the highest-ranking hierarch. He has no direct authority over the other bishops, nor can he interfere in the internal business of their dioceses. Yet the other members of the synod report to him and defer to his presidency.

The Nature of the Episcopal Office

Critical to the understanding of the nature of the episcopacy is the concept of the Episcopal “seat” and the “see.” To this day, a bishop’s home congregation is known as a “cathedral” from the Greek “kathedra” meaning “seat.” The “kathedra” is literally a chair reserved for the bishop in his church. In modern practice, it is located at the far end of the east apse, behind the altar, but in earlier practice, it was suitably located so that the bishop could teach and preach from it (seated, as was the custom). In time, following Imperial Roman usage, it became known as his “throne.”

When a man was consecrated a bishop, he was formally “enthroned” or “given the seat,” meaning that the governing and teaching authority for that church – and its diocese – was entrusted to him. His “see” was the scope of his authority within and beyond his local church. For a typical diocesan bishop, it would be his diocese. For a metropolitan, it would be the entire province with the diocesan bishops under him.

A formal principle of Orthodox ecclesiology required that no bishop could be consecrated except for a specific “seat.” This tradition referred back to the Ignatian vision of the bishop as governor of a local congregation. Without a church and an assembly of presbyters under him, there could be no bishop. Thus consecration was immediately followed by enthronement, with the bishop assuming his rightful duties as overseer of his diocese, and supreme pastor and teacher within it.

The enthronement of a bishop in a particular cathedral has been understood in the Tradition as an inviolable act. Thus, his presidency over his diocese can only be broken by a limited and specific set of circumstances: death, conviction of a crime of heresy, immorality, or abuse of his office, physical or mental incapacity, voluntary retirement, or elevation to a higher see, i.e., to metropolitan of a province or Patriarch.

Thus, bishops are popularly referred to as being “wedded” to their sees; when a bishop dies, his diocese is referred to as being “widowed.” The analogy to the indissolubility of marriage is apparent. In fact, in ancient tradition, a bishop is buried by being lowered into the earth in his chair, symbolizing the irrevocable nature of his enthronement in his “kathedra.”

The importance of this for Orthodox sacramental theology cannot be overstated. There is no such thing as a “generic” consecration to the episcopacy in Orthodoxy. A bishop is always consecrated for a particular throne. His office does not exist independently of a local church, but precisely for and within that church. His pastoral relationship to that community is signed and sealed by his consecration for that chair.

Due to historical vicissitudes, Synods at various times have rearranged, combined, or suppressed dioceses within their governance. In no case, however, did a Synod exercise its authority to do such things by depriving a presiding bishop of his existing seat and see. One episcopal seat might be elevated in rank above another. Certain territories might be transferred from one diocese to another. But in no case could a bishop be deprived of his rightful see without proper canonical cause.

Deposition from the Episcopacy

This issue came to the fore in the fifth century. The sources differ, but apparently either the bishop of Beirut or the bishop of Tyre suppressed six dioceses in modern day Lebanon and reduced their bishops to the rank of presbyter. The 29th Canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Council condemned this action. The English translation of the canon reads as follows:

“For a bishop to be reduced to the rank of presbyter is sacrilege. If there is just reason for their removal from the episcopacy, then neither ought they occupy the position of presbyter. But if they have been deprived of the dignity of the episcopacy for any other cause than some crime, they should be restored to the dignity of the episcopacy” (προς την της Επισκοπης αξιαν επαναστρεψουσιν).

The logic of the canon is as follows:

1. A canonical offense that renders a man unworthy of bearing the episcopacy renders him unworthy of the presbyterate as well. There can be no reduction in ordained rank for disciplinary or pragmatic reasons.
2. A bishop can only be deprived of the dignity of the episcopacy for conviction of a canonical crime.
3. If a bishop has been deprived of his episcopacy without conviction of a canonical crime, it is to be restored to him.

To properly understand the directive of this canon, however, we must return to the original meaning of “episcopate” – oversight. The emphasis in much sacramental theology is to view the episcopacy as a spiritual gift vouchsafed a man by virtue of his ordination at the hands of bishops in apostolic succession. In this approach, to be “restored to the dignity of the episcopacy” would mean that the offended bishops would once again be properly recognized and ranked as bishops after ostensibly being demoted to the rank of presbyter. Yet episcopacy is not simply a rank one *possesses*, but a ministry one *exercises*. One does not *possess* oversight, one *exercises* oversight. Episcopacy is a dynamic term that describes a function, not a static term that describes a position. In the case of the demoted bishops, then, restoration to the episcopacy meant not simply recognition of their inherent ecclesiastical rank on account of ordination, but restoration to their episcopal seats and oversight in their dioceses. Consequently, the canon forbids not only depriving bishops of their rank as bishops, but also depriving them of their sees and their responsibility of authoritative oversight – without canonical cause. It orders those unjustly dethroned to be restored to their canonical rank, seat, and ministry.

Auxiliary and Titular Bishops

An auxiliary bishop functions as an assistant bishop.⁶ He performs ordinations, consecrations, parish visitations, administrative tasks, and his other episcopal duties on behalf of the diocesan to whom he is tied. He substitutes for the physical presence of the diocesan and represents him. His authority is strictly derivative; the diocesan delegates it to him as he sees fit and may withdraw it on the same basis. In some ways he functions as a presbyter did in ancient times, as a ministry associate subordinate to the bishop; however, he is able to perform specifically episcopal duties such as ordinations. Yet the problem with this form of episcopal office is that *it violates the very nature of the episcopacy itself*.

In the Orthodox Church, as in the Roman Catholic Church, an auxiliary bishop is a *titular* bishop; that is, when consecrated to the episcopacy, he is given the title of a now-defunct

diocese. As Metropolitan John Zizioulas points out, this preserves the Church's fundamental principle that *a bishop is always consecrated for a specific seat*.⁷ In fact, his see must be named in the very prayer of ordination. Yet, in the case of titular bishops, this is done in name only and not in reality, for such bishops do not occupy thrones of their own, but are consecrated as assistants to metropolitans and other diocesan bishops.

Zizioulas thus comments, "The existence of titular bishops in the Orthodox Church points to a grave anomaly. If a bishop is ordained for a certain community, he must be free to exercise fully his ministry in this community. Only if he is separated from his flock because of historical circumstances can he be regarded as a canonical bishop in spite of his absence from his community. But the ordination of bishops with the intention of using them as bishops with a dependent authority (assistant bishops, etc.) is a violation of basic ecclesiological principles."⁸

In other words, auxiliary bishops have a non-canonical status in that the very nature of this form of episcopal ministry is at odds with what the Church holds to be essential to the episcopacy itself: enthronement to oversight over a particular see.

Zizioulas applies the same principle to the structure of Synods. "The roots of the synodal institution are to be found precisely in the *ordination* of each bishop. Hence *every* bishop (with a community) has the right to participate in the synodical activity of the Church by virtue of his ordination. The practice which has prevailed in some Orthodox Churches in modern times to be governed by "permanent synods" based on the selection of certain bishops and the exclusion of others constitutes a direct violation of this important ecclesiological principle."⁹ A bishop participates in a synod by virtue of the fact that he shepherds – and thus represents – a particular community. Synods are comprised of the gathering of all the churches within a certain territory embodied in their bishops; a bishop without a community (auxiliary) thus cannot participate, and no (diocesan) bishop ought thus be excluded.

Self-Rule and the North American Antiochian Dioceses

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America is one of the 20 Archdioceses of the Patriarchate of Antioch, each presided over by a Metropolitan Archbishop. The Archdiocese in its present form was created in 1975 by the union of the former Archdiocese of New York, presided over by Metropolitan Philip Saliba, and the Archdiocese of Toledo, presided over by Archbishop Michael Shaheen. After the union, Archbishop Michael voluntarily took on the role of auxiliary to Metropolitan Philip. In 1983, Bishop Antoun Khouri was consecrated as a titular auxiliary to Metropolitan Philip. The same applies to Bishop Basil Essey, who was ordained to the episcopacy in 1992. Bishop Demetri Khoury was consecrated as another auxiliary in 1995, and that same year, Bishop Joseph Zehlaoui, an auxiliary to the Patriarch in Damascus, was transferred to the North American Archdiocese as yet another auxiliary to Metropolitan Philip.

Archbishop Michael Shaheen passed away in 1992. In July 2003, Bishop Demetri Khoury was arrested and subsequently convicted for criminal sexual conduct. He was

suspended from the exercise of all ecclesiastical functions upon his arrest, and went into retirement following his conviction in 2004. Thus by late 2003 the active hierarchs in the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America were Metropolitan Philip and three auxiliaries: Bishop Antoun, Bishop Basil, and Bishop Joseph.

In late 2003, the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Antioch issued a decree granting the North American Archdiocese “self-rule” status,¹⁰ and authorizing the creation of dioceses within the Metropolitan Archdiocese. The dioceses were to be headed by the existing auxiliary bishops. These bishops, together with the Metropolitan, would then constitute an “Eparchial” or “Local” Synod under the presidency of the Metropolitan. The “Damascus Resolution” further empowered the Local Synod to create new dioceses within the Archdiocese.

As a result, fresh diocesan boundaries were drawn within the Archdiocese, based on the existing “regions” originally created for Archdiocesan organizations. In December 2004, three new bishops were consecrated at the Patriarchal Cathedral in Damascus, Syria, to fill the need for diocesan bishops: Bishop Mark (for Toledo, OH), Bishop Thomas (for Pittsburgh, PA, later Charleston, WV) and Bishop Alexander (for Ottawa, Canada).

As the Damascus Resolution authorized the enthronement of the existing auxiliaries as diocesans, Bishop Joseph was enthroned as Bishop of Los Angeles and the West on September 12, 2004 at St. Nicholas Cathedral, Los Angeles. Bishop BASIL was enthroned as Bishop of Wichita and Mid-America on December 15, 2004 at the Cathedral of St. George, Wichita. Bishop Antoun was assigned to the Diocese of Miami and the South, but was not enthroned.

During 2005, Bishops Thomas (May 6), Alexander (June 12), and Mark (August 25), were all enthroned in the respective diocesan cathedrals for which they were ordained. Metropolitan Philip presided over all the enthronements, transferring full diocesan authority to each of the new bishops as they were seated in their cathedrals in keeping with Tradition.

By this process, the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America moved from a canonically dubious provisional structure consisting of one Metropolitan and many auxiliaries, to a canonically proper synodal structure as described above. A revised Archdiocese Constitution approved by the Patriarchate vested Archdiocesan authority in the newly constituted Local Synod, presided over by the Metropolitan, with deference to the Holy Synod of Antioch in specific essential matters. This promising development would only endure four years, however, before nine members of the same Holy Synod that authorized it would purport to have reversed it.

The Decision of the Nine Hierarchs of the Holy Synod

As mentioned above, on February 24, 2009, nine members of the Holy Synod of Antioch met in Damascus and adopted several amendments to the portion of the by-laws of the Patriarchate; these amendments primarily provide that auxiliary bishops have as their

point of reference the Metropolitan for whom they serve, rather than the Patriarch, himself. Metropolitan Philip moved swiftly to disseminate his understanding of this meeting's result and to explain why he supported it. In his understanding, based on the decision of these nine hierarchs, the five diocesan bishops of the Local Synod of the Archdiocese were effectively dethroned and reduced to the status of auxiliaries but their diocese and the Local Synod mysteriously remained intact.

We will leave aside all the thorny constitutional issues that this decision raises, as they are covered in detail elsewhere. Nor, for the same reason, will we submit it to a detailed canonical analysis. We propose here to investigate its legitimacy in the light of the Tradition of the Church regarding the episcopacy as described above.

Theological Problems

When we analyze the Antiochian Decision in the light of Holy Tradition, several serious problems become evident.

The North American diocesan bishops were dethroned but not deposed; that is, they were deprived of their seats and sees while they retained their episcopal rank and their dioceses retained their diocesan character. Such an act is unheard of, and is based on the erroneous assumption, that once given, the rank and ministry may be separated – that episcopal rank belongs to bishops by virtue of ordination, but the ministry of authoritative oversight does not, so that the latter may be removed at will by synodal action.

The three bishops elected and consecrated for the specific sees of Toledo, Pittsburgh (Charleston), and Ottawa were granted their episcopal office and ministry of oversight simultaneously, as is proper. How could one be stripped away while the other is retained?

The same principle applies to the existing auxiliaries who were enthroned some time after their ordination. Once enthroned, they were given the fullness of oversight appropriate to their episcopal dignity. Subsequently, by action of the nine hierarchs, they were deprived what was inalienably granted to them. In both scenarios, the North American bishops were improperly divested of their thrones while retaining episcopal dignity. This unquestionably violates the spirit of canon 29 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council.

Metropolitan Philip has argued the bishops were “demoted” and not dethroned, using secular language to describe an ecclesial event. “To dethrone a bishop is to remove him from his episcopal throne. This has not been done. The status of the bishops has changed from diocesan bishop to auxiliary bishop.”¹¹ Yet that is precisely what has been done. Very simply, the Metropolitan confuses *dethronement* with *deposition*. To illustrate, a Synod may vote to dethrone a diocesan bishop for reason of mental incapacity. In such a case, he retains his episcopal dignity, but is relieved of his see. This is a case of dethronement; such a bishop remains a bishop and is not deposed. He no longer retains, however, his authoritative oversight over his diocese – the very situation we are confronting here.

The Metropolitan's assertion fails to recognize the sacred bond that exists between a bishop and his throne, that is, in his authoritative oversight from his seat. Thus he imagines that somehow a bishop may still retain his throne while being deprived of his diocesan oversight and reduced to an auxiliary. The opposite is in fact the case.

Even more egregiously, this action was taken against the North American dioceses without canonical cause. No accusations of misconduct were brought against them, as Metropolitan Philip admits.¹² They were not convicted of any misdeeds. Nor did they voluntarily acquiesce to it. It was undertaken even without consulting them. On all counts, this action is therefore strictly uncanonical. "Does our law judge a man without giving him a hearing ...?" (John 7:51). So Nicodemus objected to proceedings undertaken against Jesus. Can the Church do less?

Metropolitan Philip has characterized the action as a "narrow administrative decision."¹³ But this is most assuredly not the case. Dethroning canonically ordained and enthroned bishops from their seats and sees is not "administrative." It is a violation of the sacramental integrity of their episcopal office – and an assault on Holy Tradition.

Additionally, it is canonically anomalous, to say the least, to maintain that the dethroned bishops are henceforth to be referred to as, for instance, "the auxiliary bishop of Wichita."¹⁴ An auxiliary bishop is auxiliary *to* a diocesan bishop, not an auxiliary *of* that diocese – especially when there is no diocesan bishop! An auxiliary bishop of Wichita would be auxiliary to the bishop of Wichita. But after the dethronement, who is the bishop of Wichita? Metropolitan Philip? If all the dioceses are now auxiliaries, then in that case, he would have to be the diocesan bishop of several dioceses at once – which is sheer ecclesiological nonsense. To expect former diocesan bishops to retain their episcopal rank and their affiliation with their former dioceses while being deprived of their episcopal seats and inherent authoritative oversight of those same dioceses is nothing less than a travesty of ecclesiastical order.

The same must be said of Metropolitan Philip's claim that the demoted bishops will continue to constitute an Archdiocesan Synod with him.¹⁵ Per the comments of Metropolitan John Zizioulas above, if bishops do not represent particular dioceses on a synod, whom do they represent? Themselves? Ecclesiologically, a seat on a synod is representative of the diocesan seat a bishop occupies. If he does not possess the latter, how does he have the former? What sense does such a synod make, in any case, when all decision-making authority is vested solely in the Metropolitan?¹⁶

A further uncertainty concerns the existence of Presbyters' Councils that exist in at least three of the affected dioceses. As we have seen, historically, the college of presbyters was a consultative body, together with which a bishop exercised his ministry of oversight. Similar bodies were instituted in the North American dioceses to bring bishops back to the historic pattern for governance. If, however, the bishops are no longer diocesans, to whom are the Presbyters' Councils bound? Again, Metropolitan Philip? In that case, once again, we find ecclesiastical order overthrown. And, if the

Presbyters' Councils are dissolved, would this not be a regrettable return to the historical process of the over-concentration of authority in the person of one bishop – in this case, Metropolitan Philip?

Lastly, in the creation of the Antiochian Local Synod with its dioceses and bishops, the Antiochian jurisdiction moved toward parity with the other North American Orthodox jurisdictions, many of which operate under similar arrangements. Antiochian diocesan bishops in North America were canonical equals to their counterparts in other jurisdictions. Reducing these bishops to auxiliaries moves the Antiochian Archdiocese back to a structure that other jurisdictions abandoned decades ago. Parity in ecclesiastical structure between jurisdictions lays important groundwork for Orthodox administrative unity on this continent. That process has been handed a severe setback by the Antiochian Decision.

Conclusion

For all the above reasons, we consider the February 24, 2009 Decision by the Antiochian metropolitans an ecclesiological disaster. As a leading North American canonist has written regarding the Decision, “Our ecclesiology and theology of conciliarity say all there is to say about the permanency of episcopal authority, making it superfluous to affirm the obvious. This is a synodal act of shared authority which cannot be revoked once it has been sanctioned, unless it is the result of a grave canonical violation. Revoking one’s episcopal authority by demoting one to the rank of an auxiliary bishop is an act of betrayal of what we profess about shared hierarchical authority. I could go on and on, always returning to the same point: what was done was canonically and theologically untenable.”¹⁷

¹ There were six bishops assigned to dioceses besides the Metropolitan Archbishop, however one was never formally enthroned.

² For the text of the amendments see

[http://www.antiochian.org/sites/antiochian.org/files/Decision%20\(English\)%20of%20Synod%20of%20Antioch%202-24-09.pdf](http://www.antiochian.org/sites/antiochian.org/files/Decision%20(English)%20of%20Synod%20of%20Antioch%202-24-09.pdf)

³ We leave aside the question of whether in some communities there was no local leadership structure in the earliest formative stage, the communities being presided over by apostles, apostolic delegates (i.e., Timothy, Titus, etc.), and itinerant prophets (see the *Didache*’).

⁴ See Acts 20:17,28.

⁵ See 1 Tim. 3:4-5; Titus 1:5-7; Hebrews 13:7,17.

⁶ Auxiliary bishops are similar to the ancient “chorepiscopoi” in that they do not possess authority independent of their metropolitan or diocesan. A major difference, however, is that the chorepiscopoi were assigned to specific territories in which they exercised their ministry of oversight. Auxiliary bishops have no geographical assignment and function completely at the disposal of their diocesan.

The practice ordaining auxiliary bishops seems to have entered the Orthodox Church from the West, as it is at odds with essential principles of Orthodox ecclesiology.

⁷ See his *Being as Communion*, p. 197.

⁸ *Being as Communion*, 197 n. 94.

⁹ *Being as Communion*, 202 n. 110, italics his.

¹⁰ For complete documentation of this process and its provisions, see the “Timeline” at www.orthodoxattorneys.org

¹¹ See the answer of Metropolitan Philip to the Wichita Council of Presbyters,
<http://www.antiochian.org/node/19042>

¹² Answer to question #8, at above link.

¹³ See March 4, 2009 letter of Metropolitan Philip, at <http://www.antiochian.org/node/18887>

¹⁴ See answer to question #12 at <http://www.antiochian.org/node/19042>

¹⁵ See answer to question #11 at above link.

¹⁶ See articles 76-78 of the amendments at

[http://www.antiochian.org/sites/antiochian.org/files/Decision%20\(English\)%20of%20Synod%20of%20Antioch%202-24-09.pdf](http://www.antiochian.org/sites/antiochian.org/files/Decision%20(English)%20of%20Synod%20of%20Antioch%202-24-09.pdf)

¹⁷ Private communication with request for anonymity.