

## 22 The Macedonian Orthodox Church

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The dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was the result of deep economic and political contradictions which socialism could not resolve without democracy, human rights and a market economy. In addition, many foreign factors contributed also to the process of dismemberment of the country. The turning point took place in January 1990 when the XIV Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia led to political transition and a reconsideration of the position of Macedonia in the federation. This political process was paralleled by the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) strengthening its jurisdictional claims over the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC). During the post-1990 period the MOC became an integrative part of the social and political life of the Republic of Macedonia. This chapter focuses on the activity of the Macedonian Orthodox Church after the country's political independence and discusses relations between the MOC with the SOC and other religious communities in the Republic of Macedonia.

### Surviving the fall of communism

According to research conducted by the Consortium of the Institutions in the Former Yugoslavia in the mid-1990s, 86 per cent of Macedonians declared themselves members of the Macedonian Orthodox Church with 51 per cent defining themselves as deeply religious.<sup>1</sup> According to official sources, in 1991, the MOC had 1,355,816 members, representing 66 per cent of the total number of citizens in the Republic of Macedonia.<sup>2</sup>

The independence of the Republic of Macedonia in 1990 began the process of democratisation of the country's social and political life. Among the first institutions that felt the benefits of democracy were the MOC and its clergy. The status of the religious communities found its place in the first Macedonian Constitution adopted on 17 November 1991, which stated in Article 19 that

The freedom of religious confession is guaranteed. The right to express one's faith freely and publicly, individually or with others is guaranteed. The Macedonian Orthodox Church and other religious communities and groups are separate from the state and equal before the law.

The Macedonian Orthodox Church and other religious communities and groups are free to establish schools and other social and charitable institutions, by way of a procedure regulated by law.<sup>3</sup>

Until 1990 it was unimaginable for a person from the high political establishment in Macedonia to attend a religious celebration. This situation changed after the first democratic multi-party election, which was held in November 1990. In January of the following year, while party discussions were underway to elect a new President of Macedonia, the name of Metropolitan Mihail (Metodij Gogov) of Povardarska-Veles was put forward as a potential candidate.<sup>4</sup> Metropolitan Mihail, later Archbishop of the MOC, publicly expressed his thanks for the nomination; however, he declined the offer mentioning his unwillingness to replace Church duty with a state position.

The significance of the MOC in the life of the new state was acknowledged by the presence of Metropolitan Gavril (Ghorgi Miloshev) at the meeting of the Macedonian Parliament on 20 March 1991 when the mandate of the first government of the Republic of Macedonia was assigned. For the first time in Macedonian history, a member of the hierarchy attended the election of a new government, and immediately after parliamentary voting, Prime Minister Nikola Kljusev publicly kissed the hand of the MOC hierarch.

Since then, hierarchs have continued to attend important events in the political life of Macedonia. At the same time, relations between the MOC and state institutions have become more visible from the presence of politicians at religious services during Orthodox celebrations. After 1990 it has become a practice for both the President and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia to attend the festive liturgy at Christmas and Easter. This practice also took place during the presidency of Boris Trajkovski (1999–2004), who, although a member of the Methodist Church, attended the Christmas and Easter celebrations at St Clement of Ohrid Cathedral in Skopje.

### **Relations with the Serbian Orthodox Church**

Religious-political events post-1990 have been dictated by the conflict between the MOC and the SOC regarding the MOC's autocephalous status. This dispute has deep political and historical roots. After 1945 the SOC discarded all initiatives to transform the Ohrid Archbishopric (OA) into an autocephalous Macedonian Orthodox Church, including that of the 1958 Clergy–Laity Assembly in Ohrid. Less than ten years later, in 1967, the unilateral declaration of the autocephaly of the MOC represented a national decision under the liberal leadership of the Communist Party in Macedonia, led by Krste Crvenkovski (1964–74)<sup>5</sup> indicating the close relations between the nation and the Church in the Orthodox world which were central to the dispute.

The disintegration of Yugoslavia, followed by sovereignty announcements of its former republics, contributed to the tension and added a new dimension

to the dispute. In 1994 the Synod of SOC presented an ultimatum to the MOC 'to return to the canonical order' and 'enter into the Church canons'. The ultimatum was followed by the SOC's designation of Bishop Pahomie Catchich as 'administrator of the parishes in Macedonia'.<sup>6</sup> Pahomie put forward threats of criminal accusations against the MOC which would be investigated by the Great Ecclesiastical Court of the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The SOC's claims came at a time of evident political tension indicated by disturbances on the Serbian-Macedonian border. However, in order to demonstrate strong unity, on 31 October and 1 November 1994 the MOC's Clergy and Laity Assembly promulgated a new constitution for the Macedonian Orthodox Church which declared the autocephaly of the MOC, reaffirmed as 'the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church which preserves dogmas, the canons and the unity of the worship space in the Eastern Orthodox Church'.<sup>7</sup> Opposing interference into the MOC's internal affairs, Metropolitan Mihail, underlined the ancient origin of the Ohrid Archbishopric and claimed that 'our Orthodox believers should remember that the Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian churches with respect to Macedonia do not work as churches but as advocates of the ideals of a Greater Serbia, a Greater Greece and a Greater Bulgaria'.

Negotiations on the so-called Nish agreement establishing religious unity between the SOC and the MOC on 17 May 2002, through which the MOC was recognised as autonomous rather than autocephalous and its title was replaced by that of the 'Ohrid Archbishopric', caused considerable turmoil on the Macedonian side. As a result of public pressure on 6 June 2002 the draft of the Nish agreement was unanimously rejected by the Synod of the MOC. On the same day, in an interview for the weekly magazine *Start*, President Boris Trajkovski linked losing the MOC's autocephaly with losing the state's status. Two weeks later relations between the SOC and the MOC reached another impasse when Metropolitan Jovan Vranishkovski declared that he was separating his diocese of Povardarska-Veles from the MOC, joining instead the ecumenical unity of the SOC. On 8 July the Synod of the MOC demoted Metropolitan Jovan from his position. The SOC renewed negotiations with the new schismatic MOC acknowledging an 'Ohrid Archbishopric' under the leadership of Jovan Vranishkovski. On 12 November 2009 in order to maintain unity, the Synod of the MOC changed the Church Constitution by which the MOC added to its name the title of the 'Ohrid Archbishopric', with the Church being officially titled as the Macedonian Orthodox Church – Ohrid Archbishopric (MOC-OA). According to the Synod, the addition to the name was in full accordance with the 'centuries old tradition of Orthodox churches whose names contain historical and relevant attributes of every local church'. Furthermore, the MOC-OA changed its flag to include the image of the Holy Mother Church-Perivlepta, which is now St Sophia Church in Ohrid, as the seat of the Ohrid Archbishopric. The Synod appealed to all Orthodox churches for the sake of 'evangelical love' to provide 'full acceptance of the MOC among local Orthodox churches'.

The complexity of the MOC Church dispute has had a wider international dimension within the Orthodox world. On several occasions, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) offered its mediation in the dispute between the MOC and the SOC. During a meeting in Skopje on 7 December 2009 with the Macedonian leadership, Nikolaj Balashov, the ROC's representative, reiterated some of the previous issues by suggesting the status of autonomy for the MOC rather than autocephaly.<sup>8</sup> It became evident that the ROC, taking into account not only close ties with the SOC, but also problems with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and tendencies of autocephaly and canonical separation within its own Church, was not prepared to depart from traditional canonical principles on this issue. Nevertheless, the meeting between the Macedonian President Gjorgje Ivanov and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in April 2011 resulted in the announcement that the Ecumenical Patriarchate would attempt to initiate a new proposal to restore the dialogue between the Macedonian and the Serbian Orthodox Church.<sup>9</sup>

In the Republic of Macedonia, the SOC does not have a special diocese. Citizens of Serbian ethnic origin perform their religious services in a number of MOC churches. The same situation exists for those Macedonian priests who perform the liturgy in Serbia and Croatia. This lack of official recognition between churches has recently led Serbian Orthodox priests to enter the Republic of Macedonia as civilians and to perform religious rites in private houses; according to the country's law, this practice is considered an offence.

### **Religious education**

In the period after 1989 religious education in Macedonia, within the formal educational system, scarcely existed. This situation was certainly a consequence of the previous social system with its dominant atheist tendencies. Young people and students in elementary and secondary education mainly gained their basic knowledge of Christianity at home and through thematic units, related to the educational activity of the brothers Sts Cyril and Methodius and their disciples Sts Clement and Naum of Ohrid.

More concrete undertakings in relation to religious education have taken place since the independence of Macedonia, with teaching in this area in some of the Macedonian churches. In particular, a significant contribution to religious instruction designed primarily for Christian believers was given by Fr Stephan Sandzhakovski in Kalishte, Struga, and Fr Jovan Takovski. The latter translated a number of prayer books and introduced regular lectures at St Demetrius Church and St George Church in Krivi Dol, Skopje.

On 3 October 2002 Nenad Novkovski, Minister of Education and Science, introduced a religious education option in the third grade. In relation to this decision the Constitutional Court initiated proceedings on the grounds that the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia stipulated a principle of separation of state and religion and the Primary Education Act prohibits religious organisation or activity in primary schools.

On 3 and 4 October 2005 the Archbishopric's Clergy and Laity Assembly (ACLA) of the MOC, at its annual meeting, held at the Virgin Mary Monastery in Kalishte, Struga, passed a resolution which expressed

the need to introduce religious education in primary and secondary education in Macedonia. The ACLA notes a slowdown in this very important process and appeals to the competent structures in the Church for a greater engagement, and in the State for a greater understanding, of the need to introduce religion into state educational institutions.<sup>10</sup>

A year later the Council for Inter-religious Cooperation proposed a concrete initiative to introduce religious instruction across state education with the incorporation of the Orthodox Theological Faculty and the Faculty of Islamic Sciences within state universities.<sup>11</sup> Although the initiative divided the general public, it received government support, with religious education becoming mandatory in primary schools.<sup>12</sup>

The official instruction of 'religion' in state schools began in September 2008; however in the same month the Liberal Democratic Party took the decision to the Constitutional Court. On 14 April 2009, the Constitutional Court abolished Article 26 of the Law on Primary Education, which previously allowed state religious education. Instead, religious communities were allowed to have their own religious schools.<sup>13</sup>

The debate over religious education illustrates both political and ideological divisions within Macedonian society. A compromise solution was found in introducing 'Ethics of Religions' courses as a substitute for religious instruction in which students were taught a wide range of religious subjects. In the 2011/12 academic year, 'Ethics of Religions' was selected by 46 per cent of the students, an increase from 33 per cent in the previous academic year.<sup>14</sup>

Following the example of other churches, the MOC-OA began to establish its own religious media. Bishop Pimen (Sotir Ilievski) was charged by the MOC-OA Synod to find the means to do so and proposed the opening of a national television station. The station would not have a commercial character but would exclusively broadcast religious and educational programmes. In addition, the MOC-OA opened a local religious radio station in Ohrid, informing the public of Church traditions and the lives of saints. Since 2010 religious programmes have been an integral part of the programmes broadcast by Radio Ohrid and the local Ohrid television station TVM.<sup>15</sup>

In 1990, the first translation of the Bible into contemporary Macedonian was officially approved by the MOC. A paraphrased translation illustrated with pictures of important events and personalities from the Old and New Testaments was published in 2001 with the support of the Biblical Association of Macedonia in cooperation with the United Bible Society to address the needs of younger Bible readers. A fully revised translation of the Bible was published in 2007.

The MOC-OA has ten dioceses, seven within the Republic of Macedonia and three in its diaspora. Each diocese has an active publishing presence, with most of its works translations, especially of *Poukite na svetite otci* [Lessons of the Church Fathers]; however, it also publishes original texts. In addition, the dioceses publish a number of periodicals. The diocese of Povardarie publishes the journal *Pravoslavna svetlina* [Orthodox Light] and the journal *Troichnik* [Troichnik], the latter under the direct editorial supervision since 2003 of Metropolitan Agatangel (Atanas Stankovski). The diocese of Skopje issues the magazine *Pravoslaven pat* [Orthodox Path], which has a wide audience throughout the MOC. In addition, the St Kliment Ohridski Orthodox Theological Faculty publishes its *Godishen zbornik na trudovi* [Annual Proceedings] with contributions from the professorial body, while the Association of Students in Orthodox Theology publishes the journal *Pravoslaven blagovesnik* [Orthodox Annunciation], stimulating debate on theological themes. The library of the Orthodox Theological Faculty has over 9,000 publications on theology, philosophy and history; a significant contribution was made by Metropolitan Gavril, who donated around 2,000 books and a number of old manuscripts. In addition, interest in the study of religion outside the theological context has been evident in the establishment of a group named 'The History of Religions and Cults in Macedonia' which brings together academic staff and postgraduate students at the Institute of National History in Skopje.

## Monasticism

During the communist period, and particularly in the 1980s, Macedonian monasticism was extremely limited, with a small number of monasteries of two or three monks who regularly changed their abode. At a time when the Orthodox faith was marginalised in society, Gavril Svetogorec, who spent ten years at the Holy Mount of Athos, played an important role in restoring the monastic liturgical life. Until his death on 12 January 1990, Gavril was an active promoter of monastic renewal in Macedonia and became the spiritual father of many faithful, introducing them to the practice of Jesus prayer.<sup>16</sup> His legacy was followed in the 1990s by Jovan Takovski and Stephan Sandzhakovski, who gathered many adherents, especially among the younger population, some of whom would become students at the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Skopje.

An active monastic renewal became more evident during the next year. In 1995, Bishop Naum (Zvonimir Ilievski) founded a monastic brotherhood at the Monastery of the Holy Mother of God, in the village Veljusa, Strumica, while Archimandrite Partenij and Fr Ilarion founded in the Bigor Monastery, western Macedonia. In 1997 a large number of monasteries were opened such as St Michael Archangel Monastery in Varosh, Prilep, and those in Zrze, Slepche, Treskavec, Zhurche and Ljubanci. At present, the MOC has 37 functioning monasteries with a population of around 150 monks and nuns.



Monks and nuns are engaged in liturgical practices and manual work supporting the economic survival of their communities, some are specialists in particular activities, such as preserving literary and artistic works, translating the writings of the Church Fathers, restoring Byzantine paintings, organising exhibition of Church icons (Marko Monastery) and producing garments for Church officials (Rajchica Monastery). The monasteries in Zrze and Tiveriopol are of national historical significance in holding treasures and doing archaeological excavations.

### Church restitution

In October 2005, the ACLA took notice of the 1998 Law on Restitution (*Zakon za denacionalizacija*) passed by the Macedonian government and requested the return of all mobile and immobile objects confiscated during the communist regimes including estates, icons, manuscripts and relics. The ACLA agreed that if a particular item required special protection and care, it could remain on the premises of the relevant state institution; however, it should be clearly identified as belonging to the MOC.

On 15 October 2006 a meeting took place at St Panteleimon Monastery between Prime Minister Vlado Buchkovski and the Synod of MOC under the leadership of Metropolitan Stefan (Stojan Veljanovski). Buchkovski promised a complete restitution of Church property on the condition that the MOC should submit official documentation to the government and the Ministry of Finance.<sup>17</sup> However, despite the support of the state, a number of hierarchs expressed dissatisfaction with the process. Metropolitan Timotej of Debar and Kichevo stated that ‘the process of restitution is slow, especially when it comes to extremely valuable property’ and that the restitution of these assets will significantly improve the Church’s economic position.<sup>18</sup>

The term used in the 1998 Law on Restitution, namely ‘the restitution of church property’, remains ambiguous. The state perceives that the restitution only relates to church buildings and monastery lodgings confiscated after 2 August 1944, while the MOC has also demanded the return of forests, pastures, schools, fields, orchards and shops which were previously in the Church’s possession. A number of bishops managed to obtain significant assets, such as around 70 per cent of its estates in the dioceses of Prespa and Pelagonija. On 17 February 2011 the Macedonian Information Agency stated that the land belonging to St Naum Monastery was returned to the diocese of Debar-Kichevo. This particular estate is composed of 2,770 acres, mainly woodland areas with natural rarities and habitats of endemic species, which was previously managed by the Galicica national park. The return of the MOC’s property has been largely welcomed by the general public; however, the MOC was criticised on a number of occasions when it sold part of its property, an act seen as a deviation from Church values.

## **Inter-religious dialogue**

The Republic of Macedonia is a multiethnic country which enjoys and respects the rights and freedom of religious faith and belief. The Law on the Legal Status of Churches, Religious Communities and Religious Groups which came into effect on 1 May 2008 was positively evaluated by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Venice Commission. Macedonia has thirteen recognised churches,<sup>19</sup> seven religious communities<sup>20</sup> and five religious groups.<sup>21</sup>

The government is a strong supporter of inter-religious dialogue at the international level and held the First World Conference on dialogue between religions and civilisations, 'The Contribution of Religion and Culture to Peace, Mutual Respect and Cooperation', from 26 to 28 October 2007 in Ohrid. The event brought together 400 participants from 50 countries.<sup>22</sup> A second conference took place between 6 and 9 May 2010 in Ohrid under the theme of 'Religion and Culture: The Unbreakable Link between Nations' attended by around 500 religious dignitaries from 30 countries. The conference led to the issuing of a Declaration which identified the basic principles and priorities of inter-religious cooperation, such as strengthening peace and cooperation through dialogue and exchange; providing educational, social and economic opportunities for new generations that will ensure peaceful coexistence and a sustainable future; and dealing with global challenges to peace, security, poverty and sustainable development through the public display of religious symbols and celebrations of religious holidays. The Second World Conference marked the celebration of three symbolic state anniversaries: 100 years since the birth of Mother Teresa, 1,100 years since the death of St Naum and 1,400 years since the publication of the first edition of the Koran.

Local inter-religious dialogue between Orthodox and Catholic believers is confirmed by the presence of the Skopje diocese of the Roman Catholic Church and Apostolic Exarchate for Byzantine-Slavic rite in Strumica.<sup>23</sup> Monsignor Kiro Stojanov, who was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI in 2008, heads both Macedonian dioceses. The Roman Catholic Church enjoys good relations with the MOC-OA, as evident each year on 24 May at the feast of Sts Cyril and Methodius, when Macedonian political and religious delegations are received at an official audience with the Pope.

Despite state support for inter-religious dialogue at both national and international levels, the MOC-OA has not yet been recognised as a canonical unity by other local Orthodox churches and has no official relations with autocephalous churches in the Balkans or beyond. Its relations with other churches are based on the good will and friendly relations between clergy. The MOC-OA has not established any formal links with the Orthodox Church of Greece, taking into account the official political stance of the Republic of Greece, which denies the use of 'Macedonia' as the name for the Republic's nation, language, church and culture.



### Macedonian diaspora

The Macedonian diaspora plays a significant role in the life of the Church. The organisation of the Church outside Macedonia dates back to the 1958 Constitution of the MOC. Article 12 of the Constitution<sup>24</sup> stated the formation of separate dioceses for Orthodox believers living abroad.<sup>25</sup> Since then, Macedonian emigrants have organised themselves in local church communities fostering cultural and educational activities.<sup>26</sup> The first church consecrated by a Macedonian hierarch, namely Metropolitan Naum (Zvonimir Ilievski) of Zletovo-Strumica, was St George Church in Melbourne, Australia, in August 1960.<sup>27</sup> In 1961, a Macedonian church was registered in Gary, IN, while in August of the following year, a Macedonian church was established in Toronto, Canada.

Today the MOC-OA has three dioceses abroad administering the faithful in Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The first diocese was established in 1967 for the Orthodox faithful in the USA, Canada and Australia. In 1981, the diocese was divided into two units, namely the US–Canadian diocese and Australia–New Zealand diocese.<sup>28</sup>

In 2006 Metropolitan Metodij (Metodij Zlatanov) was put in charge of the US–Canadian diocese. Upon his arrival in the USA he reorganised the diocese, dividing it into three regencies, namely the East regency, the Midwest regency (both in the USA) and the Canadian regency. The East regency is based in the city of Syracuse, NY and is led by Fr Branko Postolovski (*protojerej-stavrofor*), while Fr Tome Stamatov (*protojerej-stavrofor*) manages the Midwest regency with its seat in Crown Point, IN and Fr Trajko Boseovski (*protojerej-stavrofor*) leads the Canadian regency with its seat in Toronto, Canada. The regencies in the USA have over twenty churches, monasteries and parishes, with a similar number in the Canadian regency.<sup>29</sup>

The Australia–New Zealand diocese is based in Melbourne, Australia. Its first administrator was Metropolitan Tomotej of Debar-Kichevo; from 1995 to the present its administrator has been Metropolitan Petar (Jovan Karevski) of Prespa-Pelagonija. The diocese is divided into multiple regencies, which are consequently divided into municipalities and parishes. The archpriest's regencies are in Melbourne and Sydney; the former has nine churches, while the latter has seventeen. The Orthodox community founded the first monastery in Australia dedicated to St Kliment Ohridski – Chudotvorec, which is located in the King Lake area near Melbourne.

The Australia–New Zealand diocese has witnessed internal divisions over nearly two decades on the issue of property ownership. With regard to Australian legislation, many laymen consider themselves rather than the MOC as the owners of local churches and their properties. The MOC initiated litigation before the Australian courts, arguing that churches should be administered jointly by the clergy and local administration.

In early December 2012 negotiations started between representatives of the municipalities and parishes that do not recognise the legitimacy of Metropolitan Petar and Synod of the MOC-OA. As a result a temporary solution was agreed by confirming the existence of two groups: one under the leadership of the current administrator Metropolitan Petar, and the second under the authority of the Synod of the MOC-OA. Moreover, on 26 December 2012 the Synod of the MOC-OA held a meeting which decided that for the next three years Metropolitan Timothy would be the coordinator of the Macedonian parishes in Australia which oppose Metropolitan Petar. Thus fourteen parishes are under the jurisdiction of Timothy, while thirteen come under the jurisdiction of Petar. The two groups have decided to suspend the litigation process in order to be given the opportunity to resolve the dispute over the next three years.

In Europe, a Macedonian diocese was founded in 1994, and the following year Metropolitan Gorazd was appointed its spiritual leader. After his retirement in 2006, Metropolitan Pimen (Sotir Ilievski) was enthroned at St Naum Church in Malmö, Sweden, which also houses the diocese's headquarters.<sup>30</sup> On 31 July 2007 the European diocese was divided into four archpriest regencies, namely the Scandinavian–north German regency in Malmö, Sweden; the south European regency in Zagreb, Croatia; the central European regency in Munich, Germany; and the west European regency in Dortmund, Germany. The strong presence of the MOC-OA abroad demonstrates that these communities are not merely places of worship but institutions of preserving their cultural and national identity.

## **Conclusion**

Two decades of an independent Macedonian state have also meant two decades of free development for the MOC-OA. The fall of communism led to the recognition of the role of religion in Macedonian society and state support for the MOC-OA. Although the MOC-OA has existed administratively since 1958 it is still not officially recognised by the other autocephalous Orthodox churches. Nevertheless, the Macedonian Orthodox Church and believers continue to live a full spiritual life following the canons of the Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The post-1990 socio-political changes have contributed to the recovery and introduction of a stronger religious presence. Monastic life has been restored, 'Ethics of Religions' was introduced in state education, the MOC began the publication of periodicals and monographs, while also enjoying the benefits of the Law of Restitution which returned some of its previously nationalised properties. In addition, the Macedonian state has shown support for religious communities through two world conferences on inter-religious dialogue. The MOC-OA has continued to play a national role not only at home but also abroad through the establishment of a wide network of dioceses administering diasporic communities.

## Annexe

### 1 Religious leaders

- Gavril (Ghorgi Miloshev) (1912–96), in office 1986–93
- Michael (Metodij Gogov) (1912–99), in office 1993–9
- Stefan (Stojan Veljanovski) (1955–present), in office 1999–present.

### 2 Biography

*Title:* Archbishop of Ohrid and Macedonia.

Archbishop Stefan (Stojan Veljanovski) graduated from the St Kliment Ohridski Orthodox Seminary in Skopje in 1974. In the same year he enrolled at the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Belgrade, where he completed his studies in 1979. After graduating he was employed as a teacher in the Orthodox Seminary in Skopje and in 1980 he enrolled in postgraduate studies at the Institute ‘St Nicholas’ in Bari specialising in ecumenical and Byzantine studies. In 1982 he became a professor at the St Clement Orthodox Theological Faculty in Skopje. On 3 July 1986 he took monastic vows at St Naum Monastery in Ohrid and on 12 July 1986 was appointed Metropolitan of Strumica; soon afterwards he was appointed head of the diocese of Bregalnica. In 1999, at the age of forty-four, he was elected Archbishop of the MOC-OA.

### 3 Theological publications

- *Pravoslavna svetlina* [Orthodox Light]
- *Troichnik* [Troichnik]
- *Pravoslaven pat* [Orthodox Journey]
- *Godishen zbornik na trudovi* [Annual Proceedings]
- *Pravoslaven blagovesnik* [Orthodox Annunciation]
- *Premi* [Crossing].

### 4 Congregations

*Structure of the Church:* The MOC-OA has 10 dioceses, 7 of which operate on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, and 3 abroad.

*Number of clergy and church buildings:* 850 clergy; 150 monks and nuns; around 2,000 churches and monasteries.<sup>31</sup>

### 5 Population

The 2002 census revealed a total population of 2,022,547 people in the Republic of Macedonia. Of these, 1,310,184 people (64.78 per cent) declared

themselves a member of the Orthodox Church; 674,015 people (33.33 per cent) Muslim; 7,008 people (0.34 per cent) Roman Catholic; and 31,340 people (1.55 per cent) members of other religious communities.<sup>32</sup>

## Notes

- 1 Mirko Blagojević, *Religija i Crkva u transformacijama društva* [Religion and Church in a Transformed Society], Beograd: Institut za Filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, I.P. Filip Višnjić, 2008, pp. 225–6.
- 2 Aleksandar Trajanovski, *Vozobnovuvanje na Ohridskata arhiepiskopija kako makedonska pravoslavna crkva i nejzinot shematizam* [The Restoration of the Ohrid Archbishopric as a Macedonian Orthodox Church and its Hierarchy], Skopje: Institute for National History, 2008, p. 245.
- 3 <http://www.sobranie.mk/en/default-en.asp?ItemID=9F7452BF44EE814B8DB897C1858B71FF> (accessed 10 January 2013).
- 4 The proposal was put forward by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity. *Makedonska nacija*, Sreda, 03 Noemvri 2010, elektronsko izdanie ['Macedonian Nation', Wednesday, 3 November 2010, online edition].
- 5 Andrew Rossos, *Macedonia and the Macedonians: A History*, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2008, pp. 238–43.
- 6 <http://www.mpc.org.mk/vest.asp?id=452> (accessed 10 January 2013).
- 7 [www.mpc.org.mk](http://www.mpc.org.mk) (accessed 10 January 2013).
- 8 'Zamestitel predsedatela Otdela vneshnih cerkovnih svyazej Moskovskogo Patriarhata vstretilsya s Prezidentom Respubliki Makedoniya' [Wise Chairmen of the Department of External Church Relations met with the President of the Republic of Macedonia], <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/960831.html> (accessed 11 December 2012).
- 9 'New attempts at an old church problem', *Dnevnik*, 21 April 2011 <http://www.dnevnik.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=15521AFF6E50D046A2A2AD18CBCA4755> (accessed 11 December 2012).
- 10 [www.m-p-c.org/Vesti/Rezolucija\\_12.10/2005.htm](http://www.m-p-c.org/Vesti/Rezolucija_12.10/2005.htm) (accessed 10 January 2013).
- 11 The Council for Inter-religious Cooperation was composed of Ratimir Grozdanovski of the MOC, Jakub Selimovski of the Islamic Religious Community, Ante Cirimotikj of the Roman Catholic Church, Mihail Cekov of the United Methodist Chapels and Viktor Mizrahi of the Jewish Community.
- 12 'The opposition is against the introduction of religious education', <http://www.netpress.com.mk/mk/vest.asp?id=2298&kategorija=7> (accessed 11 December 2012).
- 13 'Constitutional court abolishes religious education', *Vecer*, no. 14079, 16 April 2009, <http://www.vecer.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=9F822A54EAE0A74091249A2126F2D05A> (accessed 11 December 2012).
- 14 'Increasingly, children learn ethics in religion', *Nova Makedonija*, no. 22410, 20 October 2011, <http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=1019111856113&id=9&setIzdanie=22410> (accessed 11 December 2012).
- 15 'MOC-OA will spread through religious media', 28 October 2011, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,15495458,00.html> (accessed 11 December 2012).
- 16 Tomislav Jančovski, *Monashtvoto vo Makedonija* [Monasticism in Macedonia], Skopje: Sigmapres, 2010, p. 102.
- 17 *Utrinski vesnik*, 16 October 2006, no. 1937.
- 18 [www.tvn.mk/vesti-mobil/ohrid/8959-prodolzuva-bitkata-vrakjanje-crkovni-imoti.htm](http://www.tvn.mk/vesti-mobil/ohrid/8959-prodolzuva-bitkata-vrakjanje-crkovni-imoti.htm) (accessed 10 January 2013).
- 19 Macedonian Orthodox Church – Ohrid Archbishopric; Catholic Church in the Republic of Macedonia; United Methodist Church in the Republic of Macedonia;

- Christian Adventist Church (Seventh-day Adventist Church) in the Republic of Macedonia; Christian Adventist Church in the Republic of Macedonia; Christian Baptist Church 'Dobra vest'; Evangelical – Congregational Church; 'Novoapostolska Church' in the Republic of Macedonia; Evangelical Church in the Republic of Macedonia; Christian Centre in the Republic of Macedonia; Crkva Bozja in the Republic of Macedonia; 'Christian Church Bozji Glas'; 'Christian Church Blaga Vest in the Republic of Macedonia.
- 20 Islamic Community in the Republic of Macedonia; Jewish Community in the Republic of Macedonia; Jehovah's Witnesses – Christian Religious Community; Holy Seat and Crown of the Islamic Erenleric Taricat Religious Community in the Republic of Macedonia; Sathya Sai Centre-Skopje; Vaishnavian Religious Community; and the Pre-Christian Community 'Univerzalen Zivot'.
  - 21 Christian Church 'Slovo na Nadez'; 'Reform Movement of the Seventh-day Adventists'; Christian Movement 'New Hope'; Caderian Religious Group 'Dzennet'; Free Evangelical Church 'Dobra Vest'.
  - 22 'Ohrid messages for peace and coexistence', <http://preminportal.com.mk/content/view/2782/82/> (accessed 11 December 2012).
  - 23 *Religious Almanac of the Republic of Macedonia*, Skopje: Committee for Relations with Religious Communities and Religious Groups, 2010, p. 47.
  - 24 Article 12 states: 'Organiziranje na Makedonskata Pravoslavna Crkva e arhi-episkopsko (centralno) i eparhisko (lokalno)' [The organization of the MOC is archiepiscopal (central) and diocesan (local)].
  - 25 *Ustav na Makedonskata Pravoslavna Crkva* [The Constitution of the Macedonian Orthodox Church], Skopje: Makedonska pravoslavna crkva, 1958; Borce Ilievski, *Makedonsko-srpskite crkovni odnosi 1944–1970* [Macedonian–Serbian Church Relations 1944–1970], Skopje: Filozofski fakultet – Institut za istorija, 2011.
  - 26 Ilievski, *Makedonsko-srpskite*.
  - 27 Slave Nikolovski-Katin, *Makedonskite pravoslavni crkovni opshtini vo Avstralija, Kanada i SAD* [The Macedonian Orthodox Church Communities in Australia, Canada and the USA] Skopje: Nova Makedonija, 1991, p. 45; Trajanovski, *Vozobnovuvanje*, p. 442; Ilievski, *Vozobnovuvanje*, p. 130.
  - 28 Trajanovski, *Vozobnovuvanje*, p. 436.
  - 29 Ibid., p. 438.
  - 30 Ibid., p. 448.
  - 31 <http://www.mpc.org.mk> (accessed 11 December 2012).
  - 32 *Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002 – Book XIII*, Skopje: State Statistical Office, 2005.