

12th All-American Council – The Orthodox Church in America

Church-Wide Initiative Proposals

Pastoral Continuing Education Seminars

Proposal Summary

To develop and administer regional Church-wide pastoral continuing education seminars for clergy with the intent for pastors to widen their knowledge, to broaden their skills, and to deepen their understanding of their pastoral responsibilities.

Statement of Condition/Problem

Pastors in the Orthodox Church in America share a particular vision of pastoral ministry in the face of unprecedented challenges in the history of Orthodoxy. Despite the many opportunities and blessings inherent in our society, a pervasive secularism has given rise to unanticipated consequences for Orthodox pastors.

Our seminaries seek to meet these pastoral challenges through their various pastoral education programs. Nevertheless, the context of pastoral ministry created by the rapidity of cultural change in North America compels clergy to continue their education in both theological and non-theological fields. The recent Pastoral Ministries Conference as well as several regional initiatives have proven beneficial to pastors as forums to gather for common reflection and discussion of pastoral issues and concerns. Formal learning opportunities like these are the best way for pastors to widen their knowledge, to broaden their skills, and to deepen their understanding of their pastoral responsibilities.

Statement of Goal/Objectives

1. Develop thematic seminars (e.g., abusive family systems, death and dying issues, caring for the elderly), lasting 2 to 3 days to be held in dioceses and regions throughout the Church and the country, respectively.
2. Identify clergy or laity with specific skills to lead the seminars.
3. Develop training materials to accompany the seminars.
4. Develop methods to record the seminars for clergy unable to attend or for future use.

Proposal Plan

In order to achieve these objectives, the plan calls for:

1. Holding a consultation of pastors and Christian educators to outline the program and the curricula to be developed and to identify pastoral education needs. The Central Church Administration in cooperation with Diocesan Bishops and other Church members will identify the leadership of the consultation.
2. Meetings of identified pastors and Christian educators to develop the actual materials, lessons, training procedures and other resources.
3. Development of a seminar schedule in cooperation with local diocesan representatives.
4. Selection of a project facilitator by the Pastoral Life Unit.

Proposal Evaluation

Appropriate evaluation instruments will be given to participants and groups requesting their reactions to the effectiveness of the materials they have used. It is the intent of the proposal that at least 25% of the OCA clergy would attend a seminar and that two seminars would be conducted annually. Long term, the outcome will be visible in better-educated pastors.

Proposal Expenditures

1. Expenses for travel and meeting for the initial consultation as well as for the meeting expenses of the individuals developing the materials.
2. Stipends and basic expenses for the authors and editors of the materials and for developers of multi-media resources.
3. Stipend and basic expenses for the project facilitator.

4. Cost of the actual production, publication and distribution of the materials.

5. Expenses for training sessions as for parishes and/or individuals who will be implementing the developed materials.