

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

Official Minutes – Eighth Plenary Session

Friday, July 30, 1999

1. The session opened at 9:56 AM with the singing of the "Grace of the Holy Spirit."

Fr. Paul Jannakos read from the Scriptures.

2. His Beatitude spoke of Bishop Maximos' (of the Greek Archdiocese) reaction to Metropolitan Theodosius' banquet address, noting his own desire for Orthodox unity in America.
3. Results of elections for Church-wide positions were announced:

- a. **Metropolitan Council:**

- i. *Clergy delegates:*

6 year term Fr. Eugene Vansuch

3 year term Fr. John Dresko

Alternate Fr. Gregory Pelesh

- ii. *Lay delegates:*

6 year term John Erickson

3 year term Judge Harold Kalina

Alternate Gregory Nescott

- b. **Pension Board:**

- i. *Clergy delegates:*

6 year term Fr. Peter Pawlack

3 year term Fr. Michael Westerberg

Alternate Fr. David Brum

- ii. *Lay delegates:*

6 year term John Sedor

3 year term Gregory Sheshko

Alternate Peter Junda

- c. **Auditors:**

6 year term Fr. Paul Suda

3 year term Frank Tkacz
Alternate Fr. David Mahaffey

- d. Bishop SERAPHIM announced that the Holy Synod had approved the minutes of the Seventh Plenary Session with adjustments.
- e. His Grace also noted four resolutions presented from the floor that will be reviewed and discussed by the Holy Synod of Bishops.
- f. Fr. Thomas Hopko read three resolutions submitted to the Resolutions Committee from the floor of the Council for consideration:

a. **On Education Materials**

Whereas textbooks, periodicals and other educational materials, especially for children and young people, that are prepared by non-Orthodox publishers often contain erroneous information about the doctrine, worship, history and spirituality of the Orthodox Church, be it resolved:

That the Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America establish a procedure for the Church to respond officially to publishers, school boards and other organizations producing and employing such materials;

That The Orthodox Church newspaper and the OCA website appeal to Church members to report such materials to the Holy Synod; and

That a list of materials containing erroneous information be posted on the OCA website.

Fr. Peter Smith moved to accept the Resolution, seconded by Fr. Ernesto Rios. Motion carried.

b. **On Violence Among the Young**

The Twelfth All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America deplores the increasing violence in North American society, especially among young people. It sees the sources of this violence in the breakdown of the family, the proliferation of violence in films, television, computer games and the Internet, the glorification of violence as a means for solving political problems, and the anger, depression and despair produced by isolation, loneliness, neglect, false and unrealistic expectations, senseless and cruel competition, and unfulfilled desires for prestige, power, pleasure and possessions.

The Council affirms [Metropolitan THEODOSIUS' word spoken on the sorrowful occasion of the tragedy in Littleton](#). It underlines the Metropolitan's conviction that violence among the young can be stopped by "loving adults" freed by God's grace from passion and rage, "who are willing to listen, empathize and

accept young people ... to help them overcome the uncertainties and doubts, the angers and fears, the disappointments and cynicism that are part of adolescence."

The Orthodox Church in America commits itself to the elimination of violence among the young by a renewal of spiritual life first and foremost among the adult members of church and society.

Fr. Michael Herrick moved to accept the Resolution, seconded by Dn. Lawrence Daniels. Motion carried.

c. **The Church's Efforts for Peace and Reconciliation**

The 12th All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America gives its strong affirmation to the participation of the Orthodox Church in America in worthy efforts of humanitarian aid and towards peace and reconciliation.

1. The members of the 12th All-American Council were deeply moved by the story and witness of two Russian staff of [International Orthodox Christian Charities](#), Dmitry Petrov and Dmitri Penkovski, who were taken captive and held hostage in Chechnya. For 2-1/2 years, International Orthodox Christian Charities staff in the northern Caucasus delivered aid directly to victims and refugees of the Chechnya war, both Chechens and Russians. Dmitry Petrov and Dimitri Penkovski worked with courage and steadfastness to aid people in need.
 - We are grateful for the witness of Dmitry Petrov and his wife Elena, Dmitri Penkovski and his wife Galina, and thank God for their release.
 - We affirm the labors of Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky, as head of the IOCC "Crisis Management Team," Fr. Daniel Hubiak, as Representative of the OCA to the Patriarchate of Moscow, and Alexis Troubetzkoy, as IOCC Country Representative for Russia, in support of the hostages and their families.
 - We strongly support the ministry of IOCC to people in need, often in regions of danger and conflict. The humanitarian work of IOCC is an affirmation of human dignity, an expression of love, and a contribution to peace and reconciliation.
2. The Balkan crisis in recent months has been expressed in violence and atrocities in Kosovo, NATO bombing, the flight and return of refugees, the entry of a NATO-led international force into Kosovo, and now continuing occasions of violence and atrocities in Kosovo.
 - We can never condone the actions of those who initiate and execute violence and atrocities.

- We express our gratitude to and support of his Holiness Serbian Orthodox Patriarch Pavle, whose witness for peace and justice for Albanians, as well as for Serbs, is an example for all. We affirm the Serbian Orthodox Church's role in the effort to move Yugoslavia from dictatorship to democracy, from policies of violence to policies of peace.
- We express our gratitude to and support of his Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, whose witness to Christ in the midst of a humanitarian crisis has been faithful and inspiring. We affirm the role of the Orthodox Church of Albania in offering humanitarian aid to Muslim and Christian alike.
- We affirm the participation of the OCA, through Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky, in two religious delegations to Belgrade in April - May 1999. The first delegation secured the release of these American Prisoners-of-War, while the second delegation offered its good offices to end the cycle of violence in the Balkans. Both delegations met with Patriarch Pavle and with President Milosevich.

In the midst of the tensions and conflicts in today's world, faithful Orthodox men and women serve in the armed forces. We affirm their service, offered with dedication and sacrifices and we affirm the ministry of the military chaplains. We pray for their families. We pray that their military service may always be to defend the innocent and to free the captives. We embrace them in the love of Christ and the family of faith.

It is appropriate and necessary that the Orthodox Church in America bear witness against violence and atrocities, for peace and reconciliation. This principle, to be effective, must be applied in specific situations, such as Kosovo and Chechnya, the epidemic of violence and abortions in the U.S.A., and other urgent social and humanitarian crises.

That the Orthodox Church in America has made its witness known and effective in the public arena is due to the wise guidance of His Beatitude Metropolitan THEODOSIUS, together with the Holy Synod and of the Central Church Administration, especially the Chancellor, Fr. Robert Kondratick.

May God help us to be persistent and faithful in this witness.

Fr. Michael Senyo moved the adoption of the Resolution, seconded by Mary Ann Bulko. Motion carried.

- d. Fr. Gregory Safchuk, Judge Harold Kalina and Brett Nolte gave a presentation on Diocesan Boundaries and Structures.
- e. A presentation by youth observers was led by Deacon Michael Anderson. Elena Karlgut read a statement from the young people:

[Our Mission in the Church](#)

We, the youth and young adults of the 12th All-American Council, in order to help realize "[Our Dream for the Church](#)" -- as presented at the 11th All-American Council -- have chosen to commit to the following actions:

- We commit to becoming parishioners of the Orthodox Church who know and are prepared to explain our faith by gathering at retreats each year, meeting with other Orthodox youth across North America, reading the bible on a regular basis, and having the courage to ask the clergy to help us understand the meanings of our traditions.
- We will welcome newcomers and converts to the Church by volunteering as greeters in our parishes, and by publicizing our Church in local newspapers, Chambers of Commerce, and local cable channels. We will reach out to youth who visit our parish by offering discussion groups for them.
- We will welcome newcomers by hosting parish open houses, orientations, festivals, and picnics, and by participating in local outreach programs such as soup kitchens, building projects, hospital visits, and neighborhood clean-ups.
- We will support and encourage our parishes to be communities where laity and clergy work together within their own church and among area churches. We will ask our clergy to have more inter-Orthodox services. We will plan and run inter-Orthodox events such as picnics, dinners, retreats, and camps. We will also become more involved and help to increase the number of international youth exchanges such as those offered by [SYNDESMOS](#).

We call on all the youth of the Orthodox Church to join us in these actions to help realize *our Dream*.

- f. Fr. William Evansky reported from the Credentials Committee:

. **Registrations at the Council:**

Bishops	11
Bishops	2
Clergy Delegates	278
Lay Delegates	267

Observers	488
<i>Total</i>	1046

- a. It was noted that of the observers 71 were guests and 160 youth.
- b. **Plenary Session #5:**

Bishops	10
Guest Bishops	2
Clergy Delegates	198
Lay Delegates	198
Observers	113
<i>Total</i>	521

- g. Fr. Alejo Antonio Pacheco Vera spoke about the Exarchate of Mexico with translation help by Fr. Eduardo Nejera-Fuentes.
- h. The floor was opened for New Business.

Metropolitan THEODOSIUS announced that the next All-American Council will be held in the year 2002 on a date and at a place to be determined by the Metropolitan Council.

- i. Fr. Robert Kondratick thanked the seminarians from St. Tikhon's and St. Vladimir's Seminaries for their help, as well as the Secretariat and Parliamentary Committee. He then moved the adoption of the following *Motion of Recognition and Thanks*:

Recognizing the work of the 12th All-American Council, convened July 25-30, 1999, in the city of Pittsburgh, was most excellently facilitated by the efforts of the Local Committee, so that all participants were assured of essential services and movement necessary to their deliberations:

the hierarchs, clergy, and laity of the 12th All-American council resolve to express their love and gratitude to the members of the Local Committee, headed by Right Reverend KYRILL, Bishop of Western Pennsylvania, and VRev. Paul Suda, General Chairman; VRev. Paul Ziatyk, Clergy Co-Chair; and Larice (Lory) Nescott, Lay Co-Chair.

Sam D'Fantis second the motion. The motion carried.

- j. It was announced that Matushka Cornelia Hategan fell asleep in the Lord during the time of the Council. Also, press kits about the council were available.
- k. His Beatitude summed up with words of encouragement.
- l. Fr. Peter Pawlack moved to adjourn the Council, seconded by Fr. Daniel Kovalak. The motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 AM with a Service of Thanksgiving and the installation of the newly-elected members of the Metropolitan Council, Pension Board, and Auditors.