



ORTHODOX
CHURCH in
AMERICA

Twelfth
All-American
Council

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Website: www.oca.org/aac

Study Guide
for
Parishes &
Delegates

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PREFACE

From the Chairman of the Preconciliar Commission

In preparing for the 3rd All-American Council (Pittsburgh, 1973), the Preconciliar Commission noted the following:

From now on...our Councils...must be thought of as the generators, each time, of inspiration and guidance for our Church on every level of her life, as the occasions on which the whole church gathers to discuss her problems, to find solutions, to strengthen her unity and to prepare...“blueprints” for action and growth.

The theme chosen for the 12th All-American Council, “On Behalf of All and For All,” reflects this vision of the All-American Council. The theme calls to mind what we personally—and our parishes, our dioceses, and the Church as a whole—can *offer* to each other, to the world, and especially to our Lord. The Council theme also expresses the purpose and mission of the All-American Council and its delegates within the life of the Orthodox Church in America at all levels.

Building upon the work of recent All-American Councils to enhance the life of the local parish community, to foster its growth, and to nourish its particular mission, the deliberations at the 12th All-American seek to “make a difference” within the life of the local parish. The Council’s deliberations, however, will also focus upon the broader mission of the Church and her dioceses. As the highest legislative assembly of our autocephalous Church, the All-American Council is responsible for the mission of the whole Church as articulated by the Mission Statement prepared by the Holy Synod of Bishops. Thus, the 12th Council will strike a balance between its emphasis upon the local community and its concern for the entire Church.

It is the hope of the Preconciliar Commission that through the essays, discussion questions, and reports contained in this book, parish communities will enrich their particular mission of being places where we are born into the Body of Christ, live out our life in the community of the Church, and learn therefor what it means to be a Christian—one who must live his entire life “on behalf of all and for all.”

With love in Christ,



+JOB

Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest
Chairman, Preconciliar Commission

INTRODUCTION

Read this section to help you better understand how to use this study guide.

Aim of the Study Guide

As part of the process to prepare parishes and delegates for the 12th All-American Council, this book is designed for your parish and its delegates to

- examine your community's life and ministry,
- learn about the work of major areas of church life over the past four years, and
- prepare and submit proposals for a Church-wide initiative that will be selected by the 12th All-American Council.

Using the Study Guide

Delegates who gather in Pittsburgh for the 12th All-American Council, July 25–30, 1999, will explore, discuss, and propose solutions to several important issues facing the Orthodox Church in America as it enters the 21st century. To aid parishes and delegates in preparing for the Council, the Preconciliar Commission has prepared a series of resource materials, each focusing on a particular aspect of the Council.

As part of this series, the study guide prepares parishes and delegates for the Council by reviewing four main areas of ministry within our parishes, dioceses, and the Church as a whole. An important aspect of the 12th All-American Council concerns the selection of a Church-wide initiative that will strengthen the life of parish communities, dioceses, and the Orthodox Church in America. This guide is a tool to help your parish evaluate its community life and ministry which, in turn, will assist it to develop specific Church-wide proposals for possible consideration by the All-American Council. It will also help delegates prepare for hearings on the Church Ministry Units.

Who Should Use the Study Guide

This study guide is an interactive resource directed to your parish's delegates, lay leaders, council members, church school teachers, youth workers, and others who are involved in the ministry and outreach of your parish.

Contents of the Study Guide

The study guide is divided into four freestanding units, each dealing with a particular area of life in the parish and in the Church as a whole.

- Education and Community Life (p. 8)
- Mission and Stewardship (p. 17)
- Pastoral Life (p. 26)
- Witness and Communication (p. 35)

Each unit contains three sections:

Section 1. *Introductory Essay.* Each unit begins with an essay that lays the foundation for a practical discussion of parish life. It reflects a vision of a parish’s ministry and suggests ways in which a community can work towards that vision. A series of *discussion questions* follows the essay to guide you in evaluating your parish’s life and ministry and assessing its needs.

Section 2. *Report on Church-wide Activities.* This section provides information about what is being done Church-wide in a particular area. It summarizes activities, projects, and accomplishments that have taken place since the 11th All-American Council. (More detailed reports will be distributed prior to the Council.) Also included for your reference are the decisions of recent All-American Councils pertaining to the particular area. *Discussion questions* follow the report and are intended to help your parish learn about and evaluate the resources and assistance available to assist its ministry and to assess the needs of your deanery, diocese, and the church as a whole.

Section 3. *Proposal Form for Church-wide Initiatives.* Based upon your review of the study guide and your discussions, your parish is asked to submit a proposal for possible selection at the Council as a **Church-wide initiative** by completing the enclosed form.

Church-wide Initiative

If the OCA could spend \$50,000 in each of the next three years (\$150,000 total) to enhance the mission of the Orthodox Church in America in its dioceses and parishes, how would you recommend this money be spent?

In addition to regular Council business including unit hearings and consideration of several administrative and financial issues, the 12th All-American Council will select from several proposals one Church-wide initiative to aid parishes, deaneries, and dioceses in fulfilling the mission of the Orthodox Church in America.

Parishes are the “front line” of church life—the place where the gospel is preached, the love of Christ is extended to those in need, where spiritual growth in individuals takes place. Your parish is invited to submit proposals for consideration by the Council that will enhance the life and ministry in your parish and the Church as a whole.

Like a “program grant” awarded to institutions and organizations, the proposals for a Church-wide initiative will

- be limited to three years and produce observable results,
- create an impact for the greatest number of parishes and be easy to implement, and
- answer a pressing need in the life of the Church.

The proposed initiatives will *not* seek to solve *all* the Church’s problems; the selected initiative will aid in solving at least one problem.

Unlike previous Council resolutions and actions, the selected initiative will include a specific funding mechanism: \$50,000 per year for the next three years will be raised by the Office of Development exclusively for the selected initiative. This funding will not come from the current OCA budget or a future budget. Money will be raised above and beyond the current or projected budget.

The proposals submitted will be reviewed by a committee that will select three or four that are the most realistic, feasible for implementation, and likely to affect the largest group of people. These will be further developed into four final proposals that will be distributed to parishes in advance of the Council. Parishes will then be asked to review and discuss these proposals and prepare their delegates to join with others from throughout the Church in selecting one Church-wide initiative.

The following proposal is provided to help you in developing your own proposal(s). Note that funding for proposals can be used for expenses such as printing books or other resource materials, salaries for priests or consultants, travel dollars for implementing the initiative, pilot programs, and grants.

A Sample Proposal

Proposal Summary

To establish Orthodox Campus Fellowships at the 25 largest universities in North America which do not have an existing OCF or nearby parish.

Statement of Condition/Problem

Every year, thousands of young Orthodox Christians leave home to attend colleges and universities spread across the United States and Canada. Often there is no Orthodox presence at or near the universities and colleges these young adults attend.

These students are faced with some of the most stressful and pressure-filled years of life without the support of their Church because there is no Orthodox community within 25 minutes of their school.

Statement of Goal/Objectives

By establishing campus ministries at the 25 largest colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada, the Church would

- provide opportunities for students to participate in worship and the sacraments,
- offer support to students at one of the most stressful and challenging times of life,
- promote fellowship among Orthodox students, and
- provide an opportunity for students to share their faith with non-Orthodox students on campus.

Proposal Plan

Steps to achieve these goals include the following:

- Development of personnel requirements by the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry needed to enact the plan
- Identification of the 25 largest universities in North America which do not have an Orthodox parish within 25 minutes and define a plan for establishing an Orthodox campus presence
- Development and implementation of a plan to establish an Orthodox presence on these campuses, working from the largest to the smallest
- Creation and distribution of start-up materials and resource aids
- On-site visitations to set up local groups
- Development of a network of clergy to support the OCF's pastoral needs
- Establishment of limited financial grants to support the efforts of the newly established OCFs

Proposal Evaluation

- Regular reports and presentations from program coordinator and local OCFs
 - Annual grant review process
- To be eligible for annual grants the OCFs would be subject to a review that would include, but not be limited to, the following areas of examination:
- Annual growth goals of the OCF
 - The OCF's life in general (worship, fellowship programs, outreach activities, etc.).

Proposal Expenditures

- _Stipend for program coordinator
- Production of resource materials
- Travel expenses
- Annual support grants

How to Use the Study Guide in Your Parish

Since this is an interactive resource, and each unit is freestanding, parishes can select the unit or units of greatest interest.

Parishes are invited to complete one unit and submit a proposal for an area of church life. It is not necessary to complete every unit in the Guide.

To encourage a broad discussion, each unit is designed to be discussed by a group of 10–20 persons led by a facilitator.

For each unit two options are recommended: **Option A:** Two 60-min. sessions; or **Option B:** One 2 ½-hour session.

Before You Meet

Regardless of which option your community chooses, the following steps should be taken before the session(s).

- **Identify a leader.** Leadership requires a facilitator to keep the discussion process moving. This could be a priest, teacher, or lay leader in the parish. The leader should
 - function as a facilitator rather than as a teacher conducting a session (see Appendix A, p. 45),
 - be familiar with the All-American Council (see Appendix B, p. 46), and
 - have read the entire Study Guide.
- **Schedule time(s) for the session(s).**
- **Select unit(s) of study.** Involve as many of the discussion participants as possible when selecting the unit(s) of study that most interests your group. The following is a listing of topics relating to each unit.

Education and Community Life

- Christian Education
- Youth and Young Adult Ministry
- Family Life
- Senior Life
- Community Life

Pastoral Life

- Clergy Care
- Clergy Compensation
- Theological Education
- Pastoral Ministry
- Medical/Ethics

Mission and Stewardship

- Evangelism and Church Growth
- Mission
- Stewardship
- Humanitarian Aid/Community Outreach
- Financial Development

Witness and Communications

- Communication/Publications
- Witness to Society
- Inter-Church Relations
- Church and Parish Histories
- Information Management

- **Photocopy the Mission Statement** (page 7) and study unit(s) and distribute to participants.
- **Have the participants read the materials applicable to the session.** (For a listing of materials, see the options below.)

INTRODUCTION

How to Use the Study Guide in Your Parish

Format for Discussions

1. Opening Prayer

2. Introduction (*First meeting only*, 15 min.)

- The leader briefly reviews the role and responsibilities of the All-American Council in the life of the Church. (See Appendix B, p. 46 and the separate book *Introducing the 12th All-American Council*.)
- The leader reviews the goals and objectives of the Study Guide (see p. 2).
- The leader reviews the Mission Statement of the Orthodox Church in America (see p. 7).

OPTION A (Two 60-min. sessions per unit)

Session I

3. The leader reviews the Introductory Essay and asks for general reactions.

4. After a few responses the leader summarizes the main points of the essay. (It may be helpful to have a person list important ideas on a chalkboard or a flip chart pad.)

5. The participants read and discuss the questions for discussion and reflection following the essay. (40 min.) If the group is large, break into small groups of 6–8 persons for 15–20 min. to gather main ideas that can be shared with the group.

6. After approximately 40 minutes the group should summarize the key points of its discussion and its practical application to your community.

7. The leader distributes the rest of the materials (the Church-wide activities report, and the Church-wide initiative proposal form) for the unit and announces the time for the next session.

Session II

1. Following an opening prayer, the leader should summarize the previous session. (5 min.)

2. The leader should begin to review the report on Church-wide activities with the following introduction: “*Before we develop our parish’s proposal for a Church-wide initiative, we should review the existing Church-wide activities and programs.*” (5 min.)

3. Following a brief review of the report, the participants then will read and discuss the questions about the report. (20–25 min.) (Break into small groups if needed.)

4. The group then develops its recommendation for a Church-wide initiative by completing the proposal form. (30–35 min.)

OPTION B (One 2½-hour session per unit)

Same as *Option A* except include a 15-min. break between Sessions I and II. Be sure to distribute the introductory essay and the Church-wide activities sections before the session.

MISSION STATEMENT of the ORTHODOX CHURCH in AMERICA

All the work we do with respect to the life of our Church, regardless of which level, should reflect the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.

The Holy Synod of Bishops prepared the following mission statement in 1990. It summarizes the vision of the Orthodox Church in America and its particular mission in North America. It reflects the legacy of our missionary founders and heavenly patrons, Saint Herman of Alaska, Saint Innocent of Alaska, and Saint Patriarch Tikhon.

Carefully consider the Mission Statement when preparing your parish for participation in the All-American Council and when preparing proposals.

The Mission Statement of the Orthodox Church In America

The mission of the Orthodox Church in America, the local autocephalous Orthodox Church, is to be faithful in fulfilling the commandment of Christ to “Go into all the world and make disciples of all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all [things that He has] commanded” so that all people may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth:

- to preach, in accordance with God’s will, the fullness of the gospel of the Kingdom to the peoples of North America and to invite them to become members of the Orthodox Church;
- to utilize for her mission the various languages of the peoples of this continent;
- to be the body of Christ in North America and to be faithful to the tradition of the Holy Orthodox Church;
- to witness to the truth, and by God’s grace and in the power of the Holy Spirit, to reveal Christ’s way of sanctification and eternal salvation to all.

EDUCATION and COMMUNITY LIFE

A Vision of Life and Way of Life

The aim of all religious teaching in the Church is to introduce the child, or the adult, into the Church, to integrate him into her life—the life of grace, communion with God, love, unity and spiritual progress towards eternal salvation, for such are the essential aims of the Church.

In the Orthodox tradition, the goal of education in the Church is communion with God and life in His Kingdom. This life is already offered, made present and accessible to us through Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Church. It is in and through the Church, the Body of Christ, that we grow in faith in order to become witnesses of Christ in the world. In the gathering of each local community, young and old alike learn, in different ways, what God expects of us and how we are to work towards our salvation.

The Acts of the Apostles records how the first Christians established their life together:

And they devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers....And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. (Acts 2:42–47)

As exemplified by these early Christians, the local congregation is a new community, a kind of “spiritual workshop” where we learn not only the “Who” (God) and “what” about Christian living, but the “why” and the “how.” Education in the Church can never be reduced to an academic exercise, for learning to live the life in Christ is a lifelong pursuit, carried out in all aspects of our life in the Church—through worship, formal study and practice—as we live and witness in the world.

Christian education, therefore, must always be an effort of the total parish community. Whether we are gathered in the church for worship and celebration, in a youth or adult study group for reflection and discussion, or in a family or community activity focused on fellowship, witness or outreach, we can learn from one another through our love, care, support, witness, actions and deeds.

NOTES

One of the most important concepts in Orthodox theology is that of “personhood,” and more specifically that of “persons-in-relation.” The understanding of personhood is rooted in our understanding of God in Trinity and in the Incarnation of His Son, Jesus Christ. There is no principle that is more fundamental for our understanding of Christian life, and more particularly, for Christian learning and education.

Christian learning is dependent upon relationships—relationships of persons with God, with each other, with God's created world, and with our own selves. The local congregation and the family provide the basic contexts for nurturing the concepts, attitudes, values and skills necessary for Christian learning and living.

Education is personal. In this community of the Church, every member (whether child or adult) is both a teacher and a learner, a guide and a disciple. Each of us is called to reflect Christ's love and light to one another. Each is called to serve the another. How do we learn this? Whatever we see, hear and do in the community of the Church can be a lesson for ourselves and for others, inasmuch as it reveals to us the vision and the way that Christ has given us.

A Model for Christian Learning

A parish model for Orthodox Christian learning should incorporate several important elements:

1. The fulness of church life as a context for education and nurture, one that provides for learning through worship, formal (and informal) instruction, and application (practice) in home and community life, in witness and service to the world.
2. An integrated approach in which the content of the faith—liturgy, scripture, doctrine, ethics and spiritual life—is woven together and related to life, i.e., to the story of the church's life in history, the story of our life as a community (both past and present), and the story of one's life in God.
3. A focus on personal and communal relationships: our relationship with God, with other persons, with the world God created, with our fellow believers in the church as well as friends and strangers in the larger world in which we live, and one's relationship with oneself.
4. An understanding of personal growth and development: physical, social, spiritual, cognitive, etc., and how these factors interact in shaping the growth and transformation of a person, most importantly his/her spiritual growth and transformation. ▲

Parish Reflection & Discussion

1. The essay emphasizes the importance of relationships in Christian formation. How do we nurture Christian relationships in our parish:
 - Between each person and God?
 - Among families?
 - Between children and adults?
 - Between youth and adults?
 - Among fellow parishioners?
 - Between senior or elderly persons and the parish as a whole?
 - Between parishioners and our local community (neighborhood)?
2. How does our parish's effort compare to the goals of Christian education presented in the essay?
 - Is it for children? youth? college students? married couples? seniors?
 - Besides basic knowledge, does it assist in understanding how one practices stewardship, mission, lay ministry, etc.? How does it try to do that?
 - What resources, programs, workshops, retreats, and training could help us enhance the educational ministry in our parish?
3. Who in our parish, in addition to the priest and church school teachers, could we say is involved in Christian education and formation (nurture)? How are they trained? How are they involved?
4. What tools, resources, training, ideas do parents need to carry out Christian education in and through their own families? In and through the parish?
5. When the essay suggests that Christian formation requires an "integrated approach where the content of the Faith...is related to life," what issues come to mind that we think it should address?
 - What are the "life issues" that our parishioners are facing (aging, work ethics, marriage, parenting, divorce, death of a spouse, drug use, moral issues, finances, etc.)?
 - How are we, as a parish, helping people to relate the teachings of the Faith to these issues? How can we enhance these efforts?
 - What resources and training could help us accomplish this?
6. According to the essay, effective Christian education goes beyond academic learning and, like a "spiritual workshop," provides opportunities to practice what we preach. What opportunities do and could we provide in the following areas: community service, community witness, support of families, eldercare, other relative areas?
 - What resources and training could help us accomplish this?

EDUCATION and COMMUNITY LIFE

Church-wide Activities

To assist your parish in assessing its needs, as well as those of your deanery, diocese and the church as a whole, the following section summarizes what is being done church-wide regarding education and community life ministries. Also included are relevant decisions of recent All-American Councils.

The Education and Community Life Church Ministries Unit focuses on the following areas of ministry: religious education (for all ages), youth and young adult ministries, lay ministries and outreach, seniors, women, family life, parish and community life. The established principle of the Unit is its expressed intention to address and coordinate all of these elements, whenever and wherever possible, within the context of education and service. The model for this coordination is the integration of worship, teaching and practice in the life of each parish community.

Since its inception, the Unit has been restricted by budgetary limitations (approximately \$7–8,000 per year, exclusive of a more substantial budget for youth and young adult ministries). Nevertheless, it has accomplished the following tasks:

1. Introduced a series of short 5–7 lesson study units produced for group-graded programs. Published in black and white booklets for 2–3 age groupings (primary, middle school and teens), the materials consist of teacher's guides with presentation and activity suggestions. An average of 2 study units have been produced each year. As of 1999, these include the following themes:
 - **The Earth is the Lord's**—a study unit for children and youth on ecology and our responsibility for God's creation,
 - **Hidden Treasures**—a study unit for children on the use of our talents,
 - **God is Calling You**—a study unit for children and teens on their personal calling and church vocations,
 - **Teach All Nations** (expanded and revised 1998)—a study unit for children and youth on mission and our missionary responsibilities,
 - **Reaching Out: Our Call to Minister**—a study unit for teens on lay ministries and community outreach, based upon articles in the *Resource Handbook*,
 - **What's Love Got to Do with It? Everything!**—a study unit for teens about our relationships and choices, and
 - **Yours, Mine, and Ours** (forthcoming 1999)—a study unit for children and youth on being Orthodox in

The All-American Council resolves

On Education

- that evangelization be emphasized within Department of Religious Education programs, and that new resources, especially audiovisual ones, be developed for these programs.

—8th All-American Council

- that appropriate departments of the Church be requested to prepare materials useful to the faithful regarding topics such as AIDS, medical ethics, drug abuse, homelessness, race relations, and other contemporary issues.

—10th All-American Council

- that the Department of Religious Education have as its priorities:

- to promote the study of Holy Scripture;

- to design and promote curricula for church schools of limited size;

- to develop adult catechetical materials;

- to produce video materials concerning Orthodox worship, doctrine, and Church history; and

- particularly to develop and provide materials for all ages about the Synodal Affirmations on Marriage Sexuality and Family Life.

10th All-American Council

- that the Department of Religious Education work with the seminaries and monasteries to develop and publish devotional materials that support spiritual life and growth and promote an Orthodox Christian lifestyle based on the teachings of Scripture and Tradition.

—10th All-American Council

On Youth and Young Adult Ministry

- [that] our Church's Central Administration...furnish lists of Orthodox Christian Fellowships and college

America (first in a series on Orthodox Identity in North America).

These study units have been sent free of charge to all OCA parishes for use in church schools, camps and youth programs. They are in partial fulfillment of the mandate passed at the 10th All-American Council to prepare materials for small church schools. The Unit plans to expand the series and develop these thematic units more fully into complete educational packages for all ages, including adults. Each package would contain resource materials, multimedia aids such as cassette tapes/CDs of liturgical hymns, icons, reproducible illustrations and activities, handouts, suggestions for Internet use and other resources.

2. Continued the development of the Lay Ministries **Resource Handbook**, with 2 installment packages distributed free of charge per year. In addition, articles from past issues of the previous 17 years of the Handbook are being collected by themes and published in book format for wider distribution. The following titles are in print or in development:

- **Eldercare: the Church's Ministry with Seniors,**
- **Family Life: Christian Family in Today's World,**
- **Outreach: Helping Hands for the Needy,**
- **Parish Life: Basics for Church Life and Growth** (forthcoming 1999),
- **Education: Growth in Faith and Christian Life** (forthcoming 1999), and
- **Lifelines: Outreach II** (forthcoming 1999).

Each of these books may be used personally or in small discussion groups in the parish to help parents and other adults cope with daily family problems, aged parents, and issues that affect parish life and the life of the wider communities in which we live.

3. Expanded the development of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries with a Youth Leadership Fellowship Program. In 1998, 2 seminarians were engaged as interns and assisted in OCA camping programs, retreats, and publications. The Office is also engaged in a YO-Mail program on the Internet, an Internet pen pal network, a cooperative program with the Juniors of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America. Other programs include the St. Peter the Aleut Youth Service Award, Leadership Training, Camp Consultation for Camp Personnel, development of OCF's around the country and the maintenance and publication of the North America OCF Directory, the North American Pan-Orthodox Youth Workers Conferences, the European Youth Cultural Exchange Program, SYNDESMOS participation, and Orthodox Scouting Awards.

chaplains to our parishes and calls on Orthodox pastors and parents to inform college-bound students of opportunities to continue living their Orthodox faith...[and] recognizes the responsibility of priests to take initiative [to] involve themselves as fully as necessary in ministry at nearby colleges and universities where such ministry does not already exist.

7th All-American Council

- that the Department of Youth Ministry be revitalized by appointing a Central Chairperson who will be appropriately funded in order to be responsible to reinforce a broader Youth Ministry, part of which would be:

- developing and implementing a system of information exchange among clergy and lay youth workers in every diocese;
- expanding the youth section of the *Resource Handbook*...with updates on a regular and frequent basis;
- the exchange of Youth Ministry resources with other Orthodox jurisdictions and organizations;
- coordinating intensive training seminars for parish and diocesan Youth Directors;
- the development of new Youth Ministry materials;
- the inclusion of our young people in the development and implementation of these programs;
- developing and implementing a network of cooperation between individual dioceses.

8th All-American Council

- that the Department of Youth and Campus Ministry develop training programs for youth leaders within the dioceses and parishes, and coordinate and support local initiatives for youth and campus ministry.

10th All-American Council

4. Convened the first OCA Parish Ministries Conference that drew over 180 priests and lay participants. The impact of this first conference was of inestimable value to the work of the Unit. The Conference provided
 - the first opportunity in nearly three decades to gather people from throughout the Church to address issues of Education, Youth, Seniors, Family and Parish Life, and Lay Ministries and Outreach;
 - the means to identify professionals and leaders in our parishes who are actively involved in parish ministries, to have the opportunity to share ideas with them, and to explore means of integrating them into the work and programs of the Unit;
 - an opportunity to identify problem areas and issues that need to be addressed in the area of Education and Community Life Ministries, such as curriculum development, publications, preparation of persons for Youth Ministries, Family Life, Outreach, etc.;
 - a forum for people to speak out and to feel they are (or can become) a part of the work of the Church on a wider scale, and to become informed of programs and resources available to them from both church-wide and local sources; and
 - a unique opportunity for the Education and Community Life Unit to hear the concerns of leaders in the parishes, which will help us to develop more specific and concrete goals for our work in the future.
5. Planned an initial OCA Parish Education Curriculum Conference for June 1999 for professionals in the fields of curriculum, religious education, youth leadership, family and community life. The Consultation will focus on the development of thematic programs for parish-wide education, from preschool through adulthood, which will include educational preparation for lay involvement in mission, stewardship, witness and community outreach ministries.

The follow-up to the Conference will involve the establishment of

- regional writing teams for the development of study unit drafts and related resources, and
- local training programs for teachers and writers of new study materials.

On Community Life

- that all parishes of the Orthodox Church in America consider it their obligation to contact the Seniors Ministry section of the Department of Stewardship and Lay Ministries, to establish a permanent link through a specially assigned liaison person of the parish to deal with all local problems of senior citizens and in this way to increase Church Growth in this area.

7th All-American Council

- that each parish in the Orthodox Church in America be encouraged to set up a committee that will examine parish facilities and evaluate their accessibility to the elderly and disabled.

8th All-American Council

- that the Department of Senior Life and Ministry continue to recommend ways in which parishes might consider the special needs of seniors, assessing the physical and financial limitations that often interfere with their full participation in church life, worship and social activities.

10th All-American Council

On Family Life

- that the Holy Synod...form a Department of Family and Family Ministry...[whose] objectives are to
 - identify and evaluate existing networks, resources, programs and materials focused on Christian family development for use and/or adaptation by our parish families;
 - recommend ways in which parishes may meet the special needs of families in their spiritual struggle in their daily lives;
 - organize family retreats centered on spiritual growth of the entire family.

10th All-American Council

Parish Reflection & Discussion

1. Before we develop our parish's proposal for a Church-wide initiative we should consider the effectiveness of the existing programs and initiatives throughout the Church.
 - Prior to reading the report, were we aware of the programs and initiatives contained in the report? Did we think more or less was being done?
 - Based upon the resolutions of past All-American Councils, and our parish's involvement in its work, how would we rate the various Church-wide efforts? Are these efforts meeting our needs and those of our deanery and our diocese? Why (e.g., the initiatives were relevant to our needs, they were well planned and well publicized, etc.)? Why not (e.g., the initiatives did not meet our needs, we were unaware of them)?
 - To what extent has our parish, deanery, or diocese used and participated in the various initiatives on all levels (deanery, diocese, Church-wide) regarding education and community life? Why?
 - Based upon the Mission Statement of the Orthodox Church in America, is there something not being done which we believe should be? Why?
2. Are there any initiatives relating to education and community life in our parish, deanery or diocese that might be useful to the whole Church?
3. Given our previous discussion about education and community life issues in our parish, what are some concrete examples of how we might describe an ideal Christian education and formation effort for our parish?
 - What type of and how many leaders/teachers/facilitators would we need?
 - Where would we find them?
 - What type of training would they need?
 - What type of materials and resources would these efforts require?
 - What type of funding might this require (e.g., development and production of materials, staffing—full- and part-time)?
 - What type of training and resources would our priest need to carry out or participate in these efforts?
 - What kind of program or scheduling factors would need to be considered?
4. Given our experience and perceptions of the issues facing the Church as a whole (as well as our "ideal" effort discussed above), what one thing should be accomplished in the next three years to enhance education and community ministry in the Church?

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Church-wide Initiative Proposal Form

In developing and preparing your parish's proposal for a Church-wide initiative in education and community life ministries, consider the following.

- If the OCA could spend \$50,000 in each of the next three years (\$150,000 total) to enhance education and community life in the Church and her dioceses and parishes, how would you recommend this money be spent?
- On what particular problem/issue/ opportunity would you focus this expenditure?
- What would be the desired outcome from this initiative (i.e., the benefits)? How might you measure the results?
- In what way would you spend the money? (Consider percentages of the \$50,000.)
 - Salaries for increased staff?
 - Program dollars to cover expenses of travel or creation of training materials, or to conduct specific events, workshops, retreats, road shows?
 - Pilot projects to be executed by individual parishes or a deanery?
 - Grants for local parishes to try out ideas?
- What specific steps or tasks might be part of your proposed approach to this effort?
- What concerns or risks would need to be considered in developing a plan for this project?
- Whom within the Orthodox Church in America would you recommend to participate in further developing this idea?

Please type or print; use additional paper if necessary.

Parish _____ City/State, Province _____

Diocese _____

Proposal Summary *(Provides an overview of the total proposal including a brief summary.)*

Statement of Condition/Problem *(Describes the focus of the proposal in terms of the existing condition and characteristics.)*

Statement of Goal/Objectives *(Describes how the Church will be affected if the proposed initiative is successful.)*

Proposal Plan *(Describes the activities that will occur during the proposed project: e.g., the length of time needed to address the condition.)*

Proposal Evaluation *(Describes how the Church will evaluate the outcome of the initiative.)*

Proposal Expenditures *(Describes briefly those items that would require expenditures.)*

Return by May 28, 1999 to the Preconciliar Commission:
PO box 675, Syosset, NY 11791-0675; fax: 516-922-0954; e-mail: pcc@oca.org

MISSION & STEWARDSHIP

The Changing Ideal of Parish Church Life

When you travel to Pittsburgh for the All-American Council you may meet a waiter at the restaurant in the Doubletree Hotel who has a dream. His name is Randy Gilson. Unlike others with a dream, however, Randy is more than happy to share with you his vision and mission to make his dream become a reality.

For several years Randy has undertaken a personal campaign to beautify the city of Pittsburgh. His “Old Allegheny Garden Society” has put out over 800 street planters and developed 50 vegetable gardens and 8 mini-parks in the city. The founder of the garden club soon plans to open his own coffee house, dedicated to the greening of Pittsburgh, and already has the building. Randy is a person excited and enthused; he is committed “to show how a neighborhood can be changed by love” and is willing to share his dream and his mission with others.

Whether you share Randy’s dream, his dedication to achieve that dream can illustrate an important lesson for us. Like Randy’s commitment to change, we in the Church are committed to change: changing ourselves, our friends, our neighbors, and indeed, the whole world. While Randy and his Garden Society hope to transform Pittsburgh with beauty, we are called to transform the entire world and each person through the salvation of all. As the OCA Mission Statement declares, we want “to reveal Christ’s way of sanctification and eternal salvation to all.” In short, we intend to show how the world is being transformed by God’s love.

The OCA’s present challenge is to refocus itself totally on this mission within the next two All-American Councils. To achieve this means reorienting parishes, and their priests and leaders, on which our OCA mission depends. Earlier this century our immigrant forebearers struggled to build their churches in America, and for this we owe them a great debt of gratitude. In establishing their parishes, they created a model of the local community of faith based upon their particular context and needs. Parishes served as the spiritual, social, cultural, linguistic, and patriotic foci of their communities. The result was the volunteer parish organization with its “parish program” focused only on its own internal parish life and parishioners.

However, it is now becoming clear that this type of unique American local church structure based on a particular context can (and has) become absorbed with perpetuating itself and will not last beyond the first decade of the 21st Century.

NOTES

The costs of maintaining its building, priest, and program will be too great for the limited numbers it serves.

An analysis of OCA parish statistics indicates that a significant number of parishes based upon this model are rapidly declining in membership. Moreover, the weakness of the old model can also be inferred from such statements as the one His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius made in 1995:

Is the community in which we gather a faith community, a gathering of the People of God, a living organism that “builds itself up in love”? Or is the Church only for “our group” and those few who stumble across it? We often are too satisfied when our Church increases by a few converts. But what about the millions who are not being reached and do not know where to look? Are we truly being faithful to our calling?

The local Eucharistic community, the parish, is the divine instrument for manifesting the Kingdom, the Holy Spirit’s tool for revealing the way of salvation to all. The present challenge before us is to develop viable and vibrant forms of Eucharistic community where there is now no Orthodox presence. It is also to redevelop this Body of Christ, but according to a new model, in those places where Orthodox parishes already are established.

To respond to His Beatitude’s challenge, to broaden the scope of our parishes’ mission, we might see why Randy’s efforts have been successful:

- He is wholeheartedly committed to his mission.
- He is telling his story out in public to everyone he meets.
- He is making it his business to get to know people.
- He is winning people over to his cause by his enthusiasm.

The concept of “program” as we use it for the parish does not apply to Randy. He has not divided his “parish,” his Allegheny Garden Society, or its work into categories. If you would ask him about his evangelism or stewardship program, he would say that he simply puts his heart, soul, and pocketbook into the work at hand, and he hopes others would catch his vision and do the same. Randy does not need or want an office, committee structure, or fancy high-tech program resources to get the job done.

The way he says he operates calls to mind the life of some of our communities. In these lively congregations, the coffee hour is crowded, there are people of all ages, and everyone lingers so long on Sunday that they often don’t get home until late in the afternoon. It’s not the building, the program, the location, or the publicity that is making these parishes

go. Animating everything is the expectation that everyone should participate in the essential things of the life of the Kingdom.

The elements that make these emerging parishes effective in mission are:

- Commitment to the mission of the salvation of souls
- Visibility of public witness and community service
- Friendliness aimed at getting to know others and their needs
- Enthusiasm for what is happening in the lives of persons.

These parishes are developing a form that fits their particular context. For example, the leaders of some of our suburban communities are well aware of the consistent findings of religious surveys that Americans seek three major things from their churches: 1) religious education for their children, 2) personal belonging, and, 3) spiritual guidance. They spend their time and energy on these things, without wasting time on meetings or processes that take people away from direct involvement in them. Thus, all the dimensions that were part of the old parish structure are there: worship, education, witness, stewardship, pastoral care, service in the community, and fellowship. The difference is that these aspects of their community life make sense for their particular context and mission outreach. All fit together organically as natural parts of the community without being separated into committees.

Throughout our Church there are leaders in parishes which are declining who keep asking, “How can we get our lapsed members to come back, our youth to keep coming, and newcomers just to come?” Perhaps we can learn a lesson from Randy Gilson, his dream and his mission. The Church needs priests and leaders who are willing and able to phase in a new form of the local Eucharistic community across the OCA. Are you willing to lend your heart and your hands? ▲

Parish Reflection & Discussion

1. The introductory essay lists four things that parishes need for growth:
 - Commitment to the mission of the salvation of souls.
 - Visibility of public witness and community service
 - Friendliness with the aim of getting to know others and their needs
 - Enthusiasm and interest about what is happening in the lives of people.
 - On a scale of 1(lowest) to 10 (highest) how would we rate our parish in terms of each of these elements?
2. What are some other elements that we should think about evaluating which either help or hinder our parish's growth? How would we rate our parish in terms of:
 - Overall attitude toward and frequency confession?
 - Overall attitude toward and frequency of receiving Holy Communion?
 - Commitment to and participation in ongoing education about the Faith?
 - Attitude toward and commitment to giving time, talents, and finances to the Church?
 - The perception of our community as a group committed to manifesting our Christian life?
 - Other?
3. The essay talks about minimizing the emphasis of Church growth “programs” and committees. How does this relate to and what would be the benefits/drawbacks of established and consistent approaches to:
 - Encouraging people to come to our parish?
 - Greeting newcomers (e.g., visitors, seekers, other Orthodox Christians)?
 - Integrating converts into the life of our parish?
 - Reaching out to parishioners who no longer come to church?
4. How do we help people feel welcome and part of our parish and the Church? How could we do this even better?
 - Are there things we are doing that we should stop doing? What? How?
 - What are some things we should start doing?
 - What positive things are we already doing that we should continue to do and, in fact, do more?
5. Having reviewed all these aspects of our parish's health, potential for growth, and growth efforts, what should we as a parish concentrate on first?
 - What steps could we take this year to address this?
 - What training and resources could assist us and our priest to “reach out” and revitalize our parish's commitment to Church growth?

MISSION and STEWARDSHIP

Church-wide Activities

To assist your parish in assessing its needs, as well as those of your deanery, diocese and the Church as a whole, the following section summarizes what is being done Church-wide regarding mission and stewardship ministries, especially those enacted since the 11th All-American Council. Also included are the decisions of recent All-American Councils pertaining to mission and stewardship.

The Missions and Stewardship Ministries Unit consists of six general areas of work: Mission, Stewardship Education, Church Growth and Evangelism, Humanitarian Aid and Community Outreach, and Financial Development. Guided by the resolutions of previous All-American Councils, the Holy Synod, and the Metropolitan Council, the Unit addresses their mandates in the six areas.

Mission

- Courses at St. Tikhon's and St. Vladimir's Seminaries discuss mission-related subjects. Members of our Unit have assisted and encouraged the seminaries in their efforts.
- Regular communication has been established and is being maintained by our Unit Coordinator among Diocesan Mission Directors and Mission Deans to share information and methodology. In an ongoing and cooperative way, experiences are reviewed and guidelines are adjusted periodically to reflect these findings.
- The Unit participates in the Orthodox Christian Mission Center—the official mission project of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America.
- While much remains to be done to link established parishes to specific mission parishes across diocesan boundaries, diocesan budgets include some money derived from the Annual OCA Mission Appeal and an even greater amount from diocesan sources. Financial support for missions has continued to increase regularly over the past decade.
- The Unit, working in conjunction with legal counsel, is addressing bylaws and incorporation issues relating both to established parishes and mission communities. The Unit is also conducting research into leadership and organizational issues, the results of which are being presented to groups of mission clergy and laity in two dioceses as a pilot program.
- Diocesan hierarchs are providing mentors for all missions within their respective dioceses. In most cases, the Diocesan Missions Director is responsible for this work. Mission or Dis-

The All-American Council resolves

On Mission

- [that] in order to better serve the needs encountered in mission activity, [there be] supervised training and course work in the field of missiology within the curriculum of our seminaries.

8th All-American Council

- that reports from each diocese be published on the evangelization theme so that sharing and cooperation among dioceses may be encouraged and facilitated.

8th All-American Council

- that the Church's departments pay special attention to educational materials for the development of missions.

10th All-American Council

- that the Holy Synod of Bishops formulate a plan of action to lay the groundwork for administrative unity in North America, which plan would include...the avoidance of duplication in the establishment of new missions.

10th All-American Council

- that the department of Missions set up a program by which established parishes can support mission parishes in an organized manner and provide information and guidance on administrative, organizational, and financial matters.

10th All-American Council

- that those missions which are not beneficiaries of a planting grant ...be [assigned] a mentor.

11th All-American Council

On Financial Stewardship

- that a program of financial stewardship education be developed.

10th All-American Council

trict Deans provide additional support. In addition, a clergy member of the Unit mentors all missions receiving a Planting Grant.

Stewardship Education

- The Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards offers parishes the **Stewardship Orientation Workshop**, a scripture based program for parishes teaching personal spiritual growth and commitment to Jesus Christ.
- A subcommittee of the Unit is developing new materials for general stewardship education.

Church Growth and Evangelism

- The **Office of Church Growth and Evangelism** provides assistance to pastors and laity in churches where there is a desire and commitment to church growth. This assistance takes the form of workshops, seminars, and consultations. The **Turn-Around Ministry project** assists parishes experiencing significant decline in membership.
- The Office sponsors a “Boot Camp”—a week-long training seminar for pastors and laity on the practical application of church growth principles.

Humanitarian Aid and Community Outreach

- The Office of Humanitarian Aid coordinates the OCA’s aid and relief efforts. It also organizes the annual Christmas Stocking Project and an adoption program coordinated with the Orthodox Christian Adoption Referral Service. The Office also represents the OCA’s involvement in Church World Service and other local humanitarian initiatives.
- In 1991, the OCA served as the catalyst for the establishment of the IOCC. Support for the IOCC both locally and regionally continues to increase.

Financial Development

- Since the 10th All-American Council, freewill giving to the OCA is the fastest growing segment of the income for the budget of the Church. Voluntary gifts to the OCA have increased by 43% since 1995. This includes freewill gifts from persons and parishes to fund the outreach ministries of the Church (mandated by the 10th All-American Council) through the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards. FOS income has grown by 45% over the same time period.
- New gifts to the OCA Endowments totaled \$161,097, and bequests to the OCA totaled \$110,000.
- Since 1995, planned or deferred gifts to the OCA (Charitable Trusts and Annuities) have shown a 586% increase (\$104,000 to \$714,000). Of this total, \$125,000 of present value is earmarked to assist the work of various parishes and affiliated organizations of the Church.

On Church Growth and Evangelism

- that the Holy Synod establish a program to promote Church Growth and Evangelization through existing Departments, using adequate reporting and follow-up procedures to monitor input from the Parish and Diocesan levels of the Church.
7th All-American Council

- that the Orthodox Church in America develop, by all necessary means available, a program for Church Growth and evangelization and .
7th All-American Council

On Humanitarian Aid and Community Outreach

- [that the] dioceses and parishes of the Orthodox Church in America to participate more fully in the work of Church World Service and locally in such ecumenical events as “CROP Walks” for hunger.
8th All-American Council

- that the Orthodox Church in America endorse the establishment of International Orthodox Christian Charities, and call all Orthodox parishes, missions, and institutions to develop local charitable initiatives to support a united Orthodox witness.
10th All-American Council

On Financial Development and Stewardship

- that parishes capable and willing to give beyond their parish per capita assessment practice stewardship by becoming a parish participant in FOS
10th All-American Council

- that a General Purpose Endowment Program be established, soliciting contributions through the Office of Planned Giving, maintaining the principal and using dividends and interest for the administrative and program budget of the Orthodox Church in America.
10th All-American Council

Parish Reflection & Discussion

1. Before we develop our parish's proposal for a Church-wide initiative we should consider the effectiveness of the existing mission and stewardship programs and initiatives throughout the Church.
 - Prior to reading the report, were we aware of the programs and initiatives contained in the report? Did we think more or less was being done?
 - Based upon the resolutions of past All-American Councils, and our parish's involvement in its work, how would we rate the various Church-wide efforts? Are these efforts meeting our needs and those of our deanery and our diocese? Why (e.g., the initiatives were relevant to our needs, they were well planned and well publicized, etc.)? Why not (e.g., the initiatives did not meet our needs, we were unaware of them)?
 - To what extent has our parish, deanery, or diocese used and participated in the various initiatives on all levels (deanery, diocese, Church-wide) regarding mission and stewardship? Why?
 - Based upon the Mission Statement of the Orthodox Church in America, is there something not being done which we believe should be? Why?
2. Are there any initiatives relating to mission and stewardship in our parish, deanery or diocese that might be useful to the whole Church?
3. Given our previous discussion about mission and stewardship issues in our parish, what are some concrete examples of how we might describe an ideal mission (church growth) and stewardship effort for our parish?
 - What type of and how many leaders/teachers/facilitators would we need?
 - Where would we find them?
 - What type of training would they need?
 - What type of materials and resources would these efforts require?
 - What type of funding might this require (e.g., development and production of materials, staffing—full- and part-time)?
 - What type of training and resources would our priest need to carry out or participate in these efforts?
 - What kind of program or scheduling factors would need to be considered?
4. Given our experience and perceptions of the issues facing the Church as a whole (as well as our "ideal" effort discussed above), what one thing should be accomplished in the next three years to enhance mission and stewardship in the Church?

MISSION and STEWARDSHIP

Church-wide Initiative Proposal Form

In developing and preparing your parish's proposal for a Church-wide initiative in mission and stewardship ministries, consider the following.

- If the OCA could spend \$50,000 in each of the next three years (\$150,000 total) to enhance mission and stewardship in the Church and her dioceses and parishes, how would you recommend this money be spent?
- On what particular problem/issue/ opportunity would you focus this expenditure?
- What would be the desired outcome from this initiative (i.e., the benefits)? How might you measure the results?
- In what way would you spend the money? (Consider percentages of the \$50,000.)
 - Salaries for increased staff?
 - Program dollars to cover expenses of travel or creation of training materials, or to conduct specific events, workshops, retreats, road shows?
 - Pilot projects to be executed by individual parishes or a deanery?
 - Grants for local parishes to try out ideas?
- What specific steps or tasks might be part of your proposed approach to this effort?
- What concerns or risks would need to be considered in developing a plan for this project?
- Whom within the Orthodox Church in America would you recommend to participate in further developing this idea?

Please type or print; use additional paper if necessary.

Parish _____ City/State, Province _____

Diocese _____

Proposal Summary *(Provides an overview of the total proposal including a brief summary.)*

Statement of Condition/Problem *(Describes the focus of the proposal in terms of the existing condition and characteristics.)*

Statement of Goal/Objectives *(Describes how the Church will be affected if the proposed initiative is successful.)*

Proposal Plan *(Describes the activities that will occur during the proposed project: e.g., the length of time needed to address the condition.)*

Proposal Evaluation *(Describes how the Church will determine it has accomplished the initiative.)*

Proposal Expenditures *(Describes briefly those items that would require expenditures.)*

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PASTORAL LIFE

Pastoral Life: A Life of Service "On Behalf of All and for All"

A pastor is a servant within a servant-community. The joyful calling—the shared vocation—of the parish family is to be God's own "special people"—the "People of God" (1 Pet 2:9–10) who share the saving life of service:

- Service of worship
- Service of teaching and learning
- Service of Stewardship
- Service of mission and outreach
- Service of care-giving within and beyond the parish.

We All Share in Pastoral Responsibility

Each of us is called personally by name as "the servant of God." The primary service of the priest is to enable all members of the community to be servants of God, servants one to another (Jn 13:13–17; 1 Cor 4:1–2). We must rediscover the primary paradigm of the pastor as the servant working toward the formation of a community of servants. We are called to rediscover a parish life of "service" shared by each and all, on behalf of all and for all, reaching out beyond ourselves, joyfully working out our salvation in Christ (Phil 12:12–13).

In parish life, pastoral vocations encompass our entire life span: they may lead to the priesthood, to monasticism, to becoming choir directors and singers, teachers, administrators, counselors, caregivers, and the countless services needed to build up Christ's Body, the Church. Vocations are rooted in the calling first to be the "laity" (*laos* = laity, "the people"), that "special People of God" called to be members of one another, in Christ, within the local parish. It is here that vocations must be nurtured from the earliest age. It is here that the search begins for vocations. This nurture and search requires active support both from the parishioners and from the priest, but pastoral resources of the whole Church are necessary as well.

The Priest as Pastor

The pastoral development of the priest never ceases. Just like all Christians, the priest must never stop learning. Thus the pastor should not only have adequate means by which to live, but also the means by which to grow. Particularly during the first years of his pastoral practice, the priest needs "pastoral support" resources—counseling, guidance, advice, the sharing of experience. At one time, this was found naturally in the "council of presbyters," in the brotherhood of pas-

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tors—the elders sharing with the less experienced. Pastors need each other as much as ever—for mentoring, for advice, for encouragement. If a pastor is to lead, he must be supported (1 Cor 9:7–9).

In pastoral life, the priest's primary task is to enable the whole of the *laos* to play its important role in maintaining the health of the whole body as the People of God. Persons exist in relation to one another—we need others, and others need us. This applies equally at all levels of the Church's life. The pastor is the key to maintaining these relationships on all levels—in the parish, the diocese, the Church as whole, as well as in outreach. How he relates to persons as an Orthodox priest is an outgrowth of his genuine love of people and, in some measure, the "people-skills" he has acquired in loving pastoral practice.

The Church and the World

All who share in pastoral ministry, whether clergy or lay, must understand the society and culture in which they are called to exercise their ministry, for this culture influences and shapes all aspects of life. As Orthodox Christians in this world, we are called not to protect ourselves from our social milieu, but to transform it. Surely we must resist the destructive aspects of our contemporary culture, but we cannot escape it. In fact, our Orthodox "witness" is made possible precisely because we are in the middle of the American mainstream, free to worship, to learn and to teach our faith to those around us.

The servant-community of Orthodox Christians, with the pastor at its head, must reach out—stretch out—to discover the real place and function of the Church in our world, for the life of the world and its salvation, on behalf of all and for all. ▴

Parish Reflection & Discussion

1. The introductory essay notes that the primary purpose of the priest is “to enable all members of the community to serve as servants of God, as servants one to another.”
 - How does this compare to other perceptions of the priestly ministry?
 - Ask your priest to describe his vision of the priestly ministry.
 - Are there misconceptions we have about the role of the priesthood?
 - To what might we contribute these misconceptions? How can we overcome them?
2. If a young man from our parish were to say that he wanted to be a priest, what advice would we offer him? Why?
 - Would the advice be the same for a young man or woman who said he or she wanted to be a monastic? Why?
 - How does this characterize our opinions about Church vocations (pastoral and other)?
 - What can our parish and the Church as a whole do to encourage and nurture pastoral vocations?
3. What areas of study do we believe are necessary for training effective pastors?
 - How long should their initial education be?
 - How can we integrate “how-to” training into the extensive theological training they receive?
4. What could we do to strengthen the pastoral ministry in our parish?
 - In what ways does and could our parish encourage and support our pastor’s continued education and ongoing development?
 - In what areas would he like to further his education?
 - In what ways are the laity involved? How can we appropriately involve more people?
5. What factors might limit our priest’s ability to carry out his ministry effectively?
 - What can be done to change these factors?
 - What role, if any, do we think finances play?
 - What role does the OCA Clergy Compensation Guidelines have in how we compensate our priest?
 - What one factor should we focus on first if we are to help our pastor?
6. What training and resources are necessary to enhance the formation of effective leadership among the clergy and laity in our Church?
 - What are the leadership positions in our parish?
 - How might we as a Church better prepare them for their tasks and responsibilities?

PASTORAL LIFE

Church-wide Activities

To assist your parish in assessing its needs, as well as those of your deanery, diocese and the church as a whole, the following section summarizes what is being done Church-wide regarding pastoral life ministries, especially those enacted since the 11th All-American Council. Also included are the decisions of recent All-American Councils pertaining to pastoral life and ministry.

The Pastoral Life Ministries Unit deals with the life and work of the clergy of the Orthodox Church in America. The Unit's work is multifaceted, and therefore cannot easily be circumscribed. Pastoral work is multidimensional. Pastoral work cannot be conveniently characterized because pastors work with people at many different levels and in different circumstances. Conditions vary from region to region, and from one ethnic tradition to another. At the dawn of a new millennium, our complex American society makes pastoral work particularly challenging.

Many issues facing the parish priest today are uniquely modern, with no convenient precedents in Church tradition. In addition to the complexities of parish life, the priest also faces challenges in his personal or family life which have a direct impact on his pastoral work. The primary aim of the Unit is to provide priests with access to resources and people who can help them.

The Unit cannot adequately address all of these issues. A lack of funds precludes the development of a comprehensive Pastoral Ministries department. No full-time Pastoral Ministry Office exists at this time, though its creation is under discussion. But the Unit does function in several areas, and some accomplishments can be reported.

Clergy Care and Development

- The Unit publishes a regular newsletter, *Pastors to Pastors*. It discusses selective pastoral issues, reports on current OCA pastoral projects, and occasionally includes book reviews. A short focus piece on a senior OCA pastor is a regular feature.
- The Unit coordinates the **Pastoral Assistance Program**, a professional and confidential support and assistance service available to all OCA clergyman and their families.
- The **Pastoral Ministries Conference** held at St. Tikhon's Monastery in June 1998, was a great success. Almost two hundred participants, hierarchs and clergy, gathered for three days to pray, to discuss, to learn, and to share. The Unit, which coordinated the Conference, has received numerous requests to turn this into a regular event, perhaps, like the All-American Council, held every three years. The benefit of

The All-American Council resolves

On Clergy Care

- that the Orthodox Church in America establish an assistance program for clergy and church workers...;
 - that clergy who are overwhelmed by their pastoral responsibilities... be offered support in a timely and confidential manner;
 - that the Orthodox Church in America coordinate and publicize programs and services for clergy spiritual renewal;
 - that the diocesan bishop convoke his clergy at least annually to discuss pastoral, vocational and personal concerns and aspirations;
 - that the diocesan bishop assign mentors to priests newly assigned to parishes, particularly the newly ordained;
 - that the parishes support their clergy morally and materially in their obligatory participation in deanery, diocesan and All-American Councils, and in other continuing education and spiritual renewal programs; and
 - that the Department of Pastoral Life and Ministry, in cooperation with the Metropolitan as primate of the Church, examine existing procedures and make recommendations for resolving disputes between priests and their diocesan bishops, and between laity and clergy.

10th All-American Council

On Clergy Guidelines and Liturgical Practice

- that the Orthodox Church in America support the initiative of its Holy Synod of Bishops for the establishment of guidelines for our clergy on pastoral, administrative, educational, and liturgical matters and that the Department of Pastoral Life and Ministry prepare these guidelines in consul-

bringing together clergy from across the country, from all dioceses and geographic regions, is of great value for everyone—priests, parishes, dioceses, and the OCA.

- In association with the Pastoral Ministries Conference, the Unit conducted a survey among all OCA priests. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain for how the pastors of the OCA feel about themselves and their ministry in the Church. The results of the survey were discussed during the Conference. The survey results showed that despite various factors that impede the ministry of OCA pastors, a majority of respondents found their work meaningful and fulfilling, and at the end of their working lives they see the time they have been allowed to spend in pastoral ministry as a reason for gratitude.
- The **Office of Chaplaincies** recruits, directs and assists OCA clergy in the US military. The Office also coordinates meetings and events that involve the chaplains.
- The **Pension Board** is elected by the All-American Council to manage and implement the Pension Plan of the OCA. Based upon the Board's investment strategy, benefits have been increased for retirees and their families.
- The **Medical-Ethics section** of the Unit works together with the Holy Synod of Bishops and the Church Administration to address the intricate and delicate challenges posed by modern science and society.

Liturgical Ministries

- Liturgical issues are always “on the agenda” of the Unit, and several projects are in the final stages of completion. The preparation of liturgical texts, translations, and musical settings is clearly a priority for pastors as well as for the Church at large. Recently, the Holy Synod of Bishops, with input from the Unit, has looked seriously at translation issues. The Holy Synod asked the Unit to review and comment on the *Clergy Guidelines*. The recent publication of these Guidelines was met with general approval.

Theological Education

- The **Board of Theological Education** oversees the formation and education of candidates for holy orders. This includes review of the three OCA seminaries, the quality of the education, and the standards for graduation. Under the supervision of the Board, the **Office of Late Vocations** accepts, coordinates, examines, and recommends older candidates for ordination.

Pastoral Vocations

The Unit worked together with the Education and Community Life Ministries Unit to produce a vocations video, together with an accompanying Study Guide. The video examined the nature of vocation, both with respect to or-

tation with appropriate departments and commissions and publish them in this triennium; and that these guidelines be used in seminary and continuing education courses.

10th All-American Council

- that the Metropolitan Council give support [to] the continued development of materials and training for leaders of liturgical singing and, specifically, the allocation of additional funds for the work of the Department of Liturgical Music.

8th All-American Council

- that the Department of Worship, with the approval of the Holy Synod of Bishops, develop the necessary guidelines for liturgical practices in the Church...that the publication of liturgical books and music be made a priority...

10th All-American Council

On Theological Education

- [that] seminaries coordinate] their theological curriculum and other programs of study.

7th All-American Council

- that the Orthodox Church in America support the special commission recently appointed by the Holy Synod of Bishops to study all aspects of theological education in the Church...to propose a unified system of theological education that best utilizes existing resources and serves the needs of the church, particularly the training and selection of future clergy.

10th All-American Council

On Clergy Compensation

- that the entire system of clergy compensation be carefully reviewed [and] that all parishes be sent two copies of the recently revised, regionally adjusted Orthodox Church in America Clergy Compensation Guidelines to be used immediately to determine clergy salaries; [and] that all parishes in the Orthodox Church in America follow the lead of several dioceses in improv-

dained ministry and to the ministry of all the baptized members of the Church. The Holy Synod of Bishops designated 1996 as a “Year of Vocations” to underscore the magnitude of the issue. Developing and nurturing vocations is an essential aspect of Church life. And the looming shortage of clergy makes it an urgent necessity. The Unit has therefore resolved to keep this “burning issue” constantly before the eyes of the entire Church

Clergy Compensation

The issue of clergy compensation has been a recurring item on the agendas of All-American Councils and Diocesan Assemblies for many years. The 11th All-American Council resolved once again to address this important topic and charged the Pastoral Life Unit with developing a “systematic plan of action.” The Unit is now preparing a presentation to the 12th All-American Council about Clergy Compensation. While the production of a video dealing with clergy compensation, which was also resolved by the 11th All-American Council, may not be technically possible at this time, the issue remains very much “on the front burner” at every level within the OCA. The possible future expansion of the Unit would certainly help to ensure that the question of clergy compensation would be addressed adequately.

* * *

The Unit, charged with concentrating on pastoral issues and the welfare of the clergy, is “at the core” of Church life. The Church cannot survive or grow without a stable and robust pastoral base. Working together with the dioceses and parishes of the OCA, the Unit seeks to ensure the welfare of the laborers, and thus the welfare of the Church. ▴

ing the level of clergy compensation.
10th All-American Council

that all Deans be reminded of their obligation, mandated by the 10th All American Council, to visit the parishes in their Deaneries to determine compliance with the Clergy Compensation Guidelines, and to take appropriate action where these guidelines are not being implemented; [and] that parishes present a written report of their compliance with the guidelines to their Dean and Bishop...presenting in their report their plan of action for complying with the guidelines where this is not the case [and] that a systematic plan of action by the Pastoral Life Ministries Unit for implementing the Guidelines be prepared for debate and adopted at the 12th All American Council [and] that a video of about 30 minutes be produced under the direction of the Unit on Pastoral Life Ministries. The video, involving Bishops, Priests, and lay people, would explain all aspects of the issue of clergy compensation.

11th All-American Council

Parish Reflection & Discussion

1. Before we develop our parish's proposal for a Church-wide initiative in pastoral life we should consider the effectiveness of the existing programs and initiatives throughout the Church.
 - Prior to reading the report, were we aware of the programs and initiatives contained in the report? Did we think more or less was being done?
 - Based upon the resolutions of past All-American Councils, and our parish's involvement in its work, how would we rate the various Church-wide efforts? Are these efforts meeting our needs and those of our deanery and our diocese? Why (e.g., the initiatives were relevant to our needs, they were well planned and well publicized, etc.)? Why not (e.g., the initiatives did not meet our needs, we were unaware of them)?
 - To what extent has our parish, deanery, or diocese used and participated in the various initiatives on all levels (deanery, diocese, Church-wide) regarding pastoral life ministries? Why?
 - Based upon the Mission Statement of the Orthodox Church in America, is there something not being done which we believe should be? Why?
2. Are there any initiatives relating to pastoral life (e.g., clergy development, nurturing vocations, theological education, leadership training) in our parish, deanery or diocese that might be useful to the whole Church?
3. Given our previous discussion about pastoral life issues in our parish, what are some concrete examples of how we might describe an ideal effort for clergy development, and/or nurturing vocations for our parish?
 - What type of and how many leaders/teachers/facilitators would we need?
 - Where would we find them?
 - What type of training would they need?
 - What type of materials and resources would these efforts require?
 - What type of funding might this require (e.g., development and production of materials, staffing—full- and part-time)?
 - What type of training and resources would our priest need to carry out or participate in these efforts?
 - What kind of program or scheduling factors would need to be considered?
4. Given our experience and perceptions of the issues facing the Church as a whole (as well as our "ideal" effort discussed above), what one thing should be accomplished in the next three years to enhance pastoral life in the Church?

PASTORAL LIFE

Church-wide Initiative Proposal Form

In developing and preparing your parish's proposal for a Church-wide initiative in pastoral life ministries, consider the following.

- If the OCA could spend \$50,000 in each of the next three years (\$150,000 total) to enhance pastoral life in the Church and her dioceses and parishes, how would you recommend this money be spent?
- On what particular problem/issue/ opportunity would you focus this expenditure?
- What would be the desired outcome from this initiative (i.e., the benefits)? How might you measure the results?
- In what way would you spend the money? (Consider percentages of the \$50,000.)
 - Salaries for increased staff?
 - Program dollars to cover expenses of travel or creation of training materials, or to conduct specific events, workshops, retreats, road shows?
 - Pilot projects to be executed by individual parishes or a deanery?
 - Grants for local parishes to try out ideas?
- What specific steps or tasks might be part of your proposed approach to this effort?
- What concerns or risks would need to be considered in developing a plan for this project?
- Whom within the Orthodox Church in America would you recommend to participate in further developing this idea?

Please type or print; use additional paper if necessary.

Parish _____ City/State, Province _____

Diocese _____

Proposal Summary *(Provides an overview of the total proposal including a brief summary.)*

Statement of Condition/Problem *(Describes the focus of the proposal in terms of the existing condition and characteristics.)*

Statement of Goal/Objectives *(Describes how the Church will be affected if the proposed initiative is successful.)*

Proposal Plan *(Describes the activities that will occur during the proposed project: e.g., the length of time needed to address the condition.)*

Proposal Evaluation *(Describes how the Church will determine it has accomplished the initiative.)*

Proposal Expenditures *(Describes briefly those items that would require expenditures.)*

Return by May 28, 1999 to the Preconciliar Commission:
PO box 675, Syosset, NY 11791-0675; fax: 516-922-0954; e-mail: pcc@oca.org

WITNESS and COMMUNICATION

A Light to the World: The Witness of the Parish

The Incarnation was God's ultimate revelation of Himself to humanity. In the Person of His "Eternal Word," God communicated His life and love to all of creation in unmistakable fashion. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Jn 3:16). Christ came not merely to teach us but to show us The Way. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jn 14:6).

It remains for His Church, empowered and guided by the Comforter, to be the living continuity of this Divine witness of God to the world. This is clearly expressed in the Mission Statement of the OCA: "to witness to the truth, and by God's grace and in the power of the Holy Spirit, to reveal Christ's way of sanctification and eternal salvation to all." There are a myriad of ways in which the Church can and does communicate this mission in contemporary America, our "mission field."

It begins, primarily, within the heart of each baptized member of the Body of Christ; the conscious fulfillment of the pledge to be "no more a child of the body but a child of the Kingdom," "a consecrated vessel," "an invincible warrior of Christ." This divine life is nurtured and nourished through the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. We joyously sing, "We have seen the True Light. We have received the Heavenly Spirit. We have found the True Faith, worshipping the Undivided Trinity Who has saved us!" To think that our repeated rediscovery of this faith and life at every Liturgy is without implications for our personal witness to those outside the Church is ludicrous!

It is the witness of our parishes — the local expression of our collective "Amen" to the Liturgy — that is our present consideration. How can a parish communicate this revelation of God to its neighbors? How can the church walls be expanded to encompass those searching for The Way that is manifested among us whenever we gather for worship? What would be an effective "program" of witness within a parish's geographical area?

Opportunities for Witness

We may begin very simply by determining and utilizing existing avenues in which to carry out our task. This requires prayerful and inspired parish leadership. Surrounding most parishes are agencies and institutions wherein the witness of the Church may be accomplished with little effort (and mini-

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mal cost!). Hospitals, nursing facilities, colleges, and prisons should be viewed as extensions of every parish. In most instances, these institutions already include Orthodox Christians to whom we should be 'ministering' in any case. But they also serve as environments conducive to our witness to those seeking The Way.

Local ecumenical agencies and those offering interfaith humanitarian services, provide similar opportunities for Orthodox witness. It is not a compromise of our faith to join others in the Name of Christ to fulfill our Lord's mandate to feed the hungry, provide for strangers, and clothe the naked. We need not adopt ecumenical "agendas" to join others in ministering to "the least of the brethren." The same holds true for pro-life organizations. Lacking Orthodox agencies to express our faith in the sanctity of human life, why not tie in to existing ones?

Communicating the Message

The media, in spite of its shortcomings, should not be overlooked. Parishes do not hesitate to publicize and advertise fund-raising events, frequently at considerable expense. But when it comes to communicating the central task of the Church, often there is not only hesitation but hostile rejection! The realm of public relations, especially in our advanced technological age, should be viewed as a means by which our identity as a Church is presented and reinforced within our local communities. Special opportunities for the general population to "come and see" should be scheduled and announced publicly through the media. No existing avenue for such communication should be overlooked. (If St Paul was on the Internet, we'd probably have a hundred letters to the Corinthians!)

Finally, where such avenues are lacking, parishes could consider creating them! This requires careful planning and, above all, vision. It responds to the question: "what can our parish do best to communicate the task of the Church to our community?" Here is perhaps where our national church can provide resources through pilot projects and financial support.

Smaller parishes may determine that a massive advertising campaign to identify them within a community would be most beneficial. Aging parishes might decide to sponsor an Orthodox "road-show;" to bring in a dynamic team to "stir the water," revitalize community leaders, and generate some enthusiasm. Larger parishes may discern a call to establish schools, soup kitchens or other works of mercy to address local needs. The possibilities are many!

In any case, the mere consideration of such initiatives would enliven and awaken our parishes to the central task of the Church. And the national church could support such ambitious undertakings through internal communications or seed grants to those parishes striving to "make a difference" within their communities. Not only would this demonstrate the good will of the whole Church toward her "constituents," but it would further bear wit-

ness to our unity as the Body of Christ in North America! It would engage the Church, challenging our faithful “to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called” (Eph 4:1).

What good is a light under a bushel or salt that has lost its flavor? Witness and communication are essential to the re-discovery that we are to be “the light of the world” and “the salt of the earth.” May our parishes make a conscious effort to truly become “cities set on a hill that cannot be hidden”!▲

Parish Reflection & Discussion

1. There is an old saying: “You can’t share what you don’t have.”
 - How does this apply to our ability personally and as a parish to share the Faith with others in our area?
2. What is the image of our parish in the local community?
 - How might the following people describe it:
 - A person in school or at work?
 - Your local politicians?
 - Someone of a different racial and/or cultural background than your own?
 - A person from a historically Orthodox country?
 - A homeless person?
3. What are the agencies, institutions, organizations, and programs in our area in which we could have some type of witness and involvement?
 - How would we describe our current involvement in these?
 - What factors might limit our parish’s involvement?
4. How do we, as a parish, utilize the media to increase the visibility of our parish and share the Faith with others?
 - To what extent do we use local cable television channels? radio? newspapers? billboards?
 - Is our parish listed with the local Chamber of Commerce? in the local yellow pages?
 - To what extent do we use the Internet? For example, a webpage with contact information, directions, schedule of services, and explanations of ministry efforts, or an on-line bible study in a chatroom for parishioners and seekers.
 - What results did we have with the kinds of media we did utilize?
5. What root causes limit our parish’s ability to effectively witness to our area?
 - How might we benefit from training in the use of media?
 - Are we clear on what we want to say and the image we want to impress?
6. How might we appropriately improve our parish’s visibility in our area?
 - How can we as a parish work more closely with other Orthodox parishes in the area to communicate the revelation of God to our neighbors?
7. How can we describe our parish’s internal communication?
 - How effective is our parish community’s internal communication?
 - What are the major communication vehicles within our parish?
 - What concrete steps can we take to improve communication within our parish?
 - How would we answer these questions in terms of our deanery and our diocese?

WITNESS and COMMUNICATIONS

Church-wide Activities

To assist your parish in assessing its needs, as well as those of your deanery, diocese and the church as a whole, the following section summarizes what is being done Church-wide regarding witness and communication ministries, especially those enacted since the 11th All-American Council. Also included are the decisions of recent All-American Councils pertaining to witness and communication.

The Witness and Communications Unit is responsible for

- coordinating the Church's relations with sister Orthodox Churches as well as with other religious bodies and governmental agencies,
- fostering communication within the Orthodox Church in America,
- increasing the visibility of the Orthodox Church in America, and
- preserving the Church's historical documents and resources and promoting historical research.

The Unit fulfills these general responsibilities through its component agencies: the Office of Inter-Church Relations and Ecumenical Witness, the Office of Communication, the Office of History and Church Archives, and the Orthodox Christian Publications Center. Unlike other Church Ministries Units whose primary activities directly relate to parishes (e.g., education and community life, mission and stewardship), some of the activities carried on by the Witness and Communications Unit relate to the broader mission of the Church as a whole.

Inter-Church Relations, Ecumenical Witness and Liaison with Government Agencies

The **Office of Inter-Church Relations and Ecumenical Witness** assists the Primate and the Holy Synod in coordinating the OCA's relations with sister Orthodox Churches, religious and ecumenical bodies, and various governmental and non-governmental agencies. In carrying out these responsibilities, the Office did the following:

- Planned and coordinated official exchanges of delegations between the OCA and sister Churches to provide visiting hierarchs and church dignitaries firsthand experience of the life of our own and other churches. Since 1995 this included official exchanges and meetings with the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Church of Georgia, the Church of Russia, the Church of Ukraine, and the Church of Finland.

The All-American Council resolves

On Inter-Orthodox Activity

• that the Orthodox Church in America reaffirm the necessity for full administrative unity of all Orthodox ecclesiastical jurisdictions in North America....and that the Holy Synod of Bishops formulate a plan of action to lay the groundwork for administrative unity in North America, which plan would include the following elements:

- common action in the areas of ecumenical activity, media and public relations, chaplaincy, charity, and campus ministry;
- the listing of desirable projects which could be conducted jointly, or sponsored by one particular jurisdiction for the benefit of all;
- the formal support of joint efforts already being conducted in local areas such as common building projects for senior citizens, common counseling centers, common educational and charitable activities, etc.;
- the call for the annual adoption of at least one local inter-Orthodox project or event to be announced and inaugurated at the Sunday of Orthodoxy service in each local area as a concrete witness of the unity of faith, which project or event is to be publicized in local church and secular media;
- the expectation that all Orthodox bishops and clergy of a region meet regularly for fellowship, prayer, and discussion, and for planning and undertaking activities which promote Orthodox unity.

10th All-American Council

- Participated in meetings and activities of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), the leading agency for inter-Orthodox cooperation in America.
- Represented the OCA in several inter-Orthodox agencies and organizations, including the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), Orthodox Christian Missions Center (OCMC), and SYNDESMOS. In some cases OCA representatives serve on the board of directors and in other leading administrative positions in these organizations.
- Represented the OCA in various commissions, and agencies of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCUSA), and through the Archdiocese of Canada, the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC). In view of the recent reassessment of Orthodox participation in the WCC and similar ecumenical organizations, OCA representatives have also participated in renewing and restructuring the WCC and the NCC in their quest to be servants of Christian unity and enhance more effective Orthodox participation in these bodies.
- Among initiatives to enhance relations with other Christian communities, the Office coordinated the historic meeting between Patriarch Ilia of Georgia and Catholicos Karakin of All Armenians in May 1998. The OCA also cosponsored a roundtable discussion with these leaders on issues and developments in Georgia, Armenia and the Caucasus region.
- The Office coordinated OCA participation as fully as possible in theological dialogues in the United States with the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church, and renewed with the Episcopal Church. The Orthodox Church in America is represented at meetings of Religion in American Life (RIAL), the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, the American Bible Society, and several other agencies and organizations.
- Members of the Office also met regularly with government officials in the US State Department by participating in several task forces on religious liberty.

Communications

At present, a twofold communications ministry exists within the Orthodox Church in America: internal and external. As an autocephalous Church spanning an entire continent, internal communications provide a means of cohesiveness between our dioceses, deaneries, and parishes; disseminates information on the life of the Church throughout the world; and provides and shares information and resources on every level of the Church's life. The Church's communications ministries are coordinated by an **Office of Communications**. In carrying out its responsibilities the Office completed the following.

On Oriental Orthodox Churches

- that the Orthodox Church in America endorse and support initiatives to heal an ancient schism between the Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodox Churches, and request the Department of External Affairs to prepare education materials for distribution to the faithful explaining the nature of the schism, its historical developments, and recent agreements between the Orthodox and Oriental Churches.

10th All-American Council

On Communication

- that an exploration of electronic communication systems be developed within the Orthodox Church in America—to be included are fax machine capabilities, electronic mail capabilities and video-teleconferencing capabilities at all diocesan centers with the North American church offices.

10th All-American Council

On Information and Public Relations

- that the Department of Information and Public Relations be assigned a priority of the highest order, both organizationally and financially, and that the scope of the Department be expanded fully and professionally to utilize all methods of communications available to us in circulating information to Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike.

7th All-American Council

- that information and public relations be viewed as a high priority by the Metropolitan Council and the Church Administration and that budgetary and organizational provisions be made for the professional use of all available communication methods in order to inform Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike through the media.

8th All-American Council

- that the Orthodox Church in America develop a media resource guide for parish use.

8th All-American Council

- Published *The Orthodox Church* newspaper, the primary means of internal communication for the clergy, laity and communities of the Orthodox Church in America distributed to over 40,000 households. In December 1998 the contents of *The Orthodox Church* began appearing on the OCA web site.
- Published the *OCA News*, an internal informational bulletin sent to all clergyman on a periodic basis which provides updates and bulletins on domestic and international news stories, texts of significant documents, and a variety of resources not readily available elsewhere.
- Published the annual *Sourcebook and Church Directory*, which includes a complete directory of all OCA communities, personnel, and church-wide ministries.
- In December 1995, the OCA web site made its debut and is a major internal and external communication resource. In addition to providing news on the life of the Church at home and abroad, a directory of all OCA dioceses, parishes, clergy, monasteries, and institutions, and other information on the life, vision, and structure of the Orthodox Church in America, the web site also communicates information on the doctrine, worship, history, and life of Orthodox Christianity.
- A major enhancement to the OCA's external communications efforts has been the ability to receive e-mails through the web site. Interested individuals may send e-mails directly to Church's offices using the info@oca.org address or may send directly to specific Chancery personnel.
- The Office of Communications disseminates official statements of the Primate, the Holy Synod, and the All-American Council through a variety of media and plans to make all of them accessible from the OCA website.

History and Church Archives

The **Office of History and Archives** maintains a vast and growing collection of documents, photographs, periodicals, and publications and other memorabilia and resources that record the history of the Church in North America. The Archives assists dioceses, institutions, parishes, and researchers in historical study and archival work.

Orthodox Christian Publications Center

• The **Orthodox Christian Publications Center** (OCPC) serves as the Church's publishing, distribution, and sales agency. OCPC distributes a wealth of educational and inspirational publications produced by the former Department of Religious Education and other ministry units. The Center has recently added an exclusive line of mounted icons, and carries materials produced by other publishers that are of interest to pastors and church workers. Plans are being considered to sell resources over the Internet. ▴

On History and Archives

• [that] all parishes and individuals possessing documents and/or personal papers of church historical interest...donate these to the Archives of the Orthodox Church in America. In addition, each diocese is asked to appoint a historical officer to coordinate this effort within the diocese.

7th All-American Council

All-American Council Affirmations and Statements

- On World Hunger (7th All-American Council)
- On The Coptic Church (Seven All-American Council)
- On Religious Rights (7th All-American Council)
- On Justice and Peace (7th All-American Council)
- On Orthodox Christians in the Middle East (7th All-American Council)
- On Human Rights (7th, 8th All-American Councils)
- On Anti-Arab Violence (8th All-American Council)
- On Moral and Social Issues (8th All-American Council)
- On the Sanctity of Human Life (8th, 9th All-American Councils)
- On Alaskan Native Rights (8th All-American Council)
- On the Death Penalty (9th All-American Council)
- On Orthodox Unity in America (9th All-American Council)
- On the Collapse of Communism (10th All-American Council)

Parish Reflection & Discussion

1. Before we develop our parish's proposal for a Church-wide initiative we should consider the effectiveness of the existing programs and initiatives throughout the Church.
 - Prior to reading the report, were we aware of the programs and initiatives contained in the report? Did we think more or less was being done?
 - Based upon the resolutions of past All-American Councils, and our parish's involvement in its work, how would we rate the various Church-wide efforts? Are these efforts meeting our needs and those of our deanery and our diocese? Why (e.g., the initiatives were relevant to our needs, they were well planned and well publicized, etc.)? Why not (e.g., the initiatives did not meet our needs, we were unaware of them)?
 - To what extent has our parish, deanery, or diocese used and participated in the various initiatives on all levels (deanery, diocese, Church-wide) regarding witness and communication? Why?
 - Based upon the Mission Statement of the Orthodox Church in America, is there something not being done which we believe should be? Why?
2. Are there any initiatives relating to witness and communication in our parish, deanery or diocese that might be useful to the whole Church?
3. Given our previous discussion about witness and communication issues in our parish, what are some concrete examples of how we might describe an ideal Christian witness and communication effort for our parish?
 - What type of and how many leaders/teachers/facilitators would we need?
 - Where would we find them?
 - What type of training would they need?
 - What type of materials and resources would these efforts require?
 - What type of funding might this require (e.g., development and production of materials, staffing—full- and part-time)?
 - What type of training and resources would our priest need to carry out or participate in these efforts?
 - What kind of program or scheduling factors would need to be considered?
4. Given our experience and perceptions of the issues facing the Church as a whole (as well as our "ideal" effort discussed above), what one thing should be accomplished in the next three years to enhance witness and communication efforts in the Church?

WITNESS and COMMUNICATION

Church-wide Initiative Proposal Form

In developing and preparing your parish's proposal for a Church-wide initiative in witness and communication ministries, consider the following.

- If the OCA could spend \$50,000 in each of the next three years (\$150,000 total) to enhance witness and communication in the Church and her dioceses and parishes, how would you recommend this money be spent?
- On what particular problem/issue/ opportunity would you focus this expenditure?
- What would be the desired outcome from this initiative (i.e., the benefits)? How might you measure the results?
- In what way would you spend the money? (Consider percentages of the \$50,000.)
 - Salaries for increased staff?
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 - Grants for local parishes to try out ideas?
- What specific steps or tasks might be part of your proposed approach to this effort?
- What concerns or risks would need to be considered in developing a plan for this project?
- Whom within the Orthodox Church in America would you recommend to participate in further developing this idea?

Please type or print; use additional paper if necessary.

Parish _____ City/State, Province _____

Diocese _____

Proposal Summary *(Provides an overview of the total proposal including a brief summary.)*

Statement of Condition/Problem *(Describes the focus of the proposal in terms of the existing condition and characteristics.)*

Statement of Goal/Objectives *(Describes how the Church will be affected if the proposed initiative is successful.)*

Proposal Plan *(Describes the activities that will occur during the proposed project: e.g., the length of time needed to address the condition.)*

Proposal Evaluation *(Describes how the Church will determine it has accomplished the initiative.)*

Proposal Expenditures *(Describes briefly those items that would require expenditures.)*

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APPENDICES

Suggestion for Discussion Leaders

As the discussion leader, you have an opportunity to help people think through and express their ideas about the All-American Council and the work of the Church. Here are some suggestions to help you.

1. Before the group meets, become thoroughly familiar with the contents and information found within the study guide. Make notes on your own thoughts and insights so that you can share them with the group.
2. Establish a beginning and ending time for your gathering, and adhere to those times. If the group wants to continue after the time allotted, you can set a second meeting time or continue your initial meeting after a short break, so that those who must leave may do so without embarrassment.
3. Try to meet in a place that is inviting and comfortable (avoid harsh light and uncomfortable folding chairs). Have paper and pencils for group members, and a chalkboard or butcher paper on an easel or wall with markers to write words or information you want the whole group to see. Arrange chairs at a table or in a semicircle, depending on group size and meeting space.
4. When the group meets, encourage everyone to take part. But be aware that some people talk more than others, which is fine. Don't be afraid of silence, or be too quick to fill a silence after a question is presented. Also be genuine in welcoming each group member's presence, opinions, and contributions.
5. Here are a few suggestions on how to address the group when one or a few participants seem to monopolize too much of the group conversation.
 - Break in politely, thank the speaker for his or her ideas, and raise a new question.
 - Don't respond to a speaker if she or he goes on too long. A response only encourages more talk.
 - Ask a question and then say, "Could we have some responses from those who haven't spoken yet?"
 - Go around the group taking turns responding to a question (but only a few times—not for every question) and end with the talkative person. Try to start with someone who has spoken at least once before, not with someone who has been silent and might be uncomfortable going first.
 - Everyone should feel free to "pass" on responding.
6. Try to maintain the delicate balance between flexibility and the need to keep the discussion on track. Always have the original question in mind. Of course, if discussion of the question leads to a topic that everyone seems eager to talk about, you should continue with it. Real irrelevancies, however, should be pulled back into line by your courteous reminder to the group to get back to the original question.
7. Remember that these sessions are designed to encourage common exploration and reflection on the theme. The leader should avoid lecturing or dominating the discussion.

What is the All-American Council?

The following is a brief description of the All-American Council. For addition information see the booklet An Introduction to the All-American Council prepared by the Preconciliar Commission It is available on the OCA's website (www.oca.org/aac) or by writing to the Preconciliar Commission, PO Box 675, Syosset, NY 11791-0675.

The All-American Council—the highest legislative and administrative authority within the Orthodox Church in America—is a dynamic gathering of God’s People who come together to share their aspirations and vision for the ongoing growth of the Orthodox Church in America. As seen in the illustration below, liturgical worship, especially the shared experience of the Eucharist, stands at the very heart of the All-American Council. Through worship, participants discover the context of the Council’s plenary sessions, discussions, hearings, and other informational forums. Decisions are made in a prayerful spirit which reflects the nature of the gathering itself. The same spirit guides Council delegates and participants as they work to build a consensus on the goals, priorities, and plans which will enable the Orthodox Church in America to continue and expand its mission.

Participants in the Council include the Metropolitan and all bishops of the Orthodox Church in America; the priests of every parish and an equal number of lay delegates; members and alternates of the Metropolitan Council, Auditing Committee, and Preconciliar Commission, and representatives of every monastic community, theological seminary, and official Church organizations. Priests without parishes, observers, and other invited guests may also attend the Council.

