

## **Youth Statements and Presentations**

*Offered at the Closing Plenary Session, Friday, July 22, 2005 of the  
14th All-American Council*

During the final plenary session on Friday, the Youth Observers of the 14<sup>th</sup> All-American Council presented what they learned and experienced during the week as they explored the theme “Our Church and the Future: Become What You Are.”

Priest Michael Anderson introduced the presenters emphasizing how the All-American Council over the past several years has become a place where the Church’s youth are challenged “to have something to say about their faith and are heard” in response to the Our Dream of the Church statement made by the youth observers of the 10<sup>th</sup> All-American Council.

### **7 to 9 Year-Old Presentation**

*Representatives from the 7 to 9 year old youth read a poem that summarized their experience of the  
14<sup>th</sup> All-American Council.*

The Life of the Church was our theme this week  
Of God’s love daily did we talk  
The life of the Church shields us from sin  
To help us in our walk.

St. Tikhon’s father was a priest  
Just like some of us.  
He encourages us to be a lighthouse of our Faith  
And be in unity in the Americas.

When you are a healthy Orthodox Christian  
In five areas you must grow  
You need to pray, to talk to God,  
and to confession you must go.

You come to Liturgy, the people’s work  
And of His Body and Blood partake  
You bind yourself to all of God  
A healthy body this will make.

Study God’s Word, the Bible  
And how the saints have lived  
Serve others and deny yourself  
To keep your soul well fed.

Too much fellowship will make you fat  
But don’t let it be  
For we have learned a lot this week  
Together at the AAC!

### **10 to 12 Year-Old Presentation**

*The 10 to 12 year olds had four presenters. Each participant presented what occurred on each day with his or her religious education class along with the outings of the day.*

Day 1 – **Who am I?** - The participants discussed God's creation and why we were created. They showed a puzzle they created with the words from Genesis: "God saw what He created, and behold it was very good." Our field trip was to the Ontario Science Centre

Day 2 – **What is the Church?** – Each participant was given an individual poster which was designed as a newspaper, and each person was responsible for filling in the information about themselves and their life in the Church. All created prayer ropes and prayer books. We visited a park called Ontario Place.

Day 3 – **What are my spiritual gifts?** – Participants created gift coupons after studying the lessons in Galatians about the fruits of the spirit. We traveled to Ontario Wonderland.

Day 4 – **Am I spiritually fit?** – Spiritual pyramids were created after a discussion about what we need to be spiritually fit, and we completed the Church poster that was presented to the Council with the quote from 1 Corinthians – "There are many members but only one body."

The group then showed a sample of a newspaper that each participant had made, outlining things that made him/her - and his/her parish - unique.

They also presented and explained a puzzle they created of the Orthodox Church in America's logo, with each piece representing a participant and his/her parish.

### **Teens Presentation**

*Ben Safchuk and Michael Zebrun spoke on behalf of the teens.*

"The opportunities that are provided by the All-American Council continue to bring the future priests, deacons, and parishioners of the Church together. The friendships and relationships that are formed within the teen group will help us to become the stronger stewards of our faith that Metropolitan Herman stressed the need for in his sermon at Thursday's Liturgy. The discussions that were held every day proved to be a guiding light to the path that we must follow. The Council is not just about theme parks, water rides, and waterfalls, but more importantly the need to become stronger beacons of our one true faith."

They then showed a Power Point presentation that outlined what the teens had discussed and agreed upon during their sessions each day. The text of the presentation follows.

We become what we are by

- Striving to be inwardly and outwardly beautiful to God
- Being good stewards of God's Creation
- Witnessing to our faith

Inner and Outer Beauty

Together we realized that beauty can be achieved by...

- Striving to attain God's perfection and beauty in our souls
- Having compassion, kindness, and understanding
- Helping people in need and reaching out to others
- Being selfless and giving of ourselves
- Becoming obedient and humble

We define beauty as...

- how we show that God is inside of us
- the ability to see Christ in every person
- the true presentation of ourselves without any outer influences and being in tune with God
- everything God originally created us to be
- a selfless, Christ-like state of being in which one has acquired a spirit of peace, love, and purity

Together we realized that good stewardship involves

- Understanding that there is a connection with all aspects of God's creation
- Becoming aware of how our wants and desires can inadvertently affect others in the world
- Striving to utilize our resources (water, food, shelter, and clothing) more wisely

When it comes to witness, we want the world to...

- believe in one God, creator of all, who gave up His only Son for our salvation.
- share the fullness of the Christian faith in which the love of God is seen in each member
- understand that we are the oldest Christian Church that is pure, everlasting, and filled with the light of God leading to ultimate salvation

In Conclusion

- Despite our differences, we are all one in the Church
- Here at the AAC we come together as one body in Christ where all boundaries are transcended.
- We become who we are in communion with our fellow believers as members of the Body of Christ.

Fr. Michael Anderson then acknowledged all the work of the youth activities staff and volunteers and asked for a round of applause for their commitment to our Church and its youth.