



DELEGATE HANDBOOK

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This Handbook has been prepared to briefly introduce the role, structure, and special features of the Fourteenth All-American Council of The Orthodox Church in America, to be held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada from July 17-22, 2005. It also outlines your responsibilities as a delegate and the procedures related to your preparation for, and in, the 14th All-American Council.

Thank you for your participation in this year's Council, and may the blessings of the All-Holy Trinity be with you during your time in Toronto!

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Introduction

Every three years, the bishops, clergy and lay delegates of The Orthodox Church in America gather together in council. The Church assembles to deliberate and to make decisions affecting her life. Historically, the Church gathers to elect the primate, revise the statutes, hear reports on all aspects of the Church's life and work and thus set priorities for that work. Just as importantly, we gather to pray, to learn from one another and have fellowship, while at the same time our youth learn that there is more to the Church than the local parish as they engage in special programs for young people of all ages.



Clearly, some Councils have very particular tasks to perform, as was the case in Orlando in 2002 when we nominated and elected a new Metropolitan. Other councils may not have such particular tasks but nevertheless are as important, for they give us the opportunity to reflect together about the life of our Church. Councils give us the opportunity to gather, as the local Orthodox Church in America, to affirm what we are called to be here in North America. Thus, the very act of gathering together every three years is an essential aspect of what it means to be the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.

We gather in Toronto to reflect together on our common task: how are we to live out our life as the Church in North America in the 21st century? We will do this in a conciliar way. The Statute of the Orthodox Church in America assigns a role in the conciliar process to every member of the council, no matter his/her ecclesiastical rank. The Orthodox Church in America is unique in the Orthodox world in that we have such a conciliar structure. This is a great blessing and a great responsibility, and it must not be taken lightly. This was the vision expressed by Archbishop (St.) Tikhon of North America a century ago and implemented by the founding fathers of the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America some thirty-five years ago. Every three years, we gather in council to reflect together on whether we are living up to this vision, to support one another in keeping this vision alive, to pray together, and to work together for the future of our Church.

Role of the All-American Council

According to the Statutes of The Orthodox Church in America, "the highest legislative and administrative authority within the Church is the All-American Council" (Art. III, Sec. 1). All parishes are required to send delegates to the All-American Council. Composed of the bishops, the parish clergy and an equal number of lay delegates, with limited provision for representation from church-related institutions, the purpose of the Council is to represent, to make present the local Orthodox church, which is in communion with other local churches worldwide.

The Holy Synod approved goals of the 14th All-American Council are:

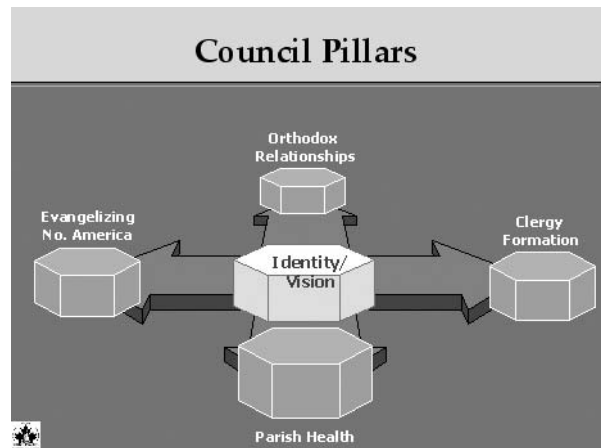
- **IMPROVE IDENTITY** - Make progress toward a better collective understanding of our identity as The Orthodox Church in America.
- **DISCERN PRIORITIES** - Define the top priorities the Church is facing in the next 10 years that impact our growth and mission.
- **ALIGN THE CHURCH'S PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, GOALS** - Propose two Holy Synod approved major actions for each Diocese, Parish, Seminary, and reportable Church institution.
- **IMPROVE OUR ABILITY TO DIALOGUE** - Respectfully explore multiple perspectives in our common work to better serve Christ and the Church.

Features and Structure of the 14th All-American Council

The work of the 14th All-American Council will be structured around five key aspects of our Church life, referred to as "pillars." These pillars include:

- **Our vision and identity as The Orthodox Church in America;**
- **Evangelizing North America;**
- **Clergy formation and development;**
- **Orthodox Relations (both with Orthodox and non-Orthodox);**
- **Parish health.**

The Preconciliar Commission identified these as fundamental components of a healthy Church life, and therefore as key elements requiring the attention of the entire Church. In order to spark the discussion, some forty persons from all walks of life - including bishops, priests, and laypersons - were asked to contribute their thoughts on specific issues that were brought together in the pre-Council papers. These papers will serve as the "spring-board" for the Council's plenary sessions, workshops and luncheon forums.



Like the pre-Council papers, which expressed the many voices in our Church, we hope that your reading of the papers will prepare you to add your voice and ideas to the Council deliberations.

Each pillar has three aspects to it - past, present, and future. For us to do our common work as we move together into the future, we must have an appreciation of where we came from and where we are today. This includes an honest appraisal of our efforts: what has worked, what has not. We ask ourselves, how we can learn from our shared experiences, our strengths and our weaknesses, so that we may do better in the future, for the glory of God and His Church.



Some plenary sessions will break out into separate workshops; other plenary sessions will work as a "committee of the whole." Some plenary sessions will have individual speakers; others will have panels to introduce the pillar as part of the Council theme. A diversity of presentations has been developed to assist you in your work as a delegate. As in past councils, luncheon forums, (small groups) will meet in informal settings to exchange ideas and building skills that can help

in practical ways to enhance the theme of the Council, the pillar areas, and most importantly your work in the parish.

A unique feature of this Council will be the work of a Summary Team. The Summary Team is a group of people - clergy and laity - who have been asked by the Holy Synod and the Preconciliar Commission to gather in a systematic way the daily work of the council delegates as they work on each pillar. The Summary Team will capture the many priorities stated by the delegates in the plenary sessions and workshops. The goal of the Summary Team will be to meet each evening of the Council and discern the day's work, then prepare a summary of that work and its top priorities and report this to the Holy Synod each morning of the Council. The Holy Synod will then deliberate on the Summary Team's report and offer back its guidance and conclusions.

On the last day of the Council, the Summary Team will report back to the entire Council. The Summary Team will propose the top priorities facing the Church and how the Church may begin to focus its work in the next ten years to address these priorities.

From this list of priorities, the Holy Synod at its fall 2005 meeting will give further direction and guidance on how the work of The Orthodox Church in America Church Ministries, along with the respective diocesan departments, parishes and faithful of each diocese can do their part to meet the priorities of The Orthodox Church in America.

As you can conclude, our work will be serious and important. But there will also be time for fellowship as we meet old friends, make new ones, and come closer together in our common bond of love in Christ our Lord.

Parish Participation

The parish makes a commitment to support the unity and conciliarity of the Church by sending delegates to the All-American Council. A productive Council depends on the willingness of participants to come prepared by reading and studying the materials that have been sent prior to the Council and to fully participate in the Council. Although there is a limit to the number of delegates a parish or institution may send to the Council, there is no limit to the number of observers. Delegates should report back to the parish after the Council in order to promote continuity and accountability between Councils.

Delegate Participation and Credentials at the Council

In order to have delegates seated at the Council, parishes must have:

- remitted all financial obligations to The Orthodox Church in America, including the All-American Council assessment, and
- filed the necessary credential information.

When you arrive at the Council, you must register to verify that your credentials are in order. You will receive voting cards, an official folder for your Council papers, and other information. There are daily worship services in the morning and evening. As a delegate you are expected to be present at all plenary sessions of the Council and participate in as many workshops and luncheon discussion forums as you can. In addition, there are Church Ministries' displays, diocesan displays, bookstores, vendors and fellowship activities for you to take part in.



Plenary Sessions and Consideration of Resolutions

The presiding officer of the Council—the Metropolitan—is assisted by two vice-chairpersons, one from the clergy and one from the laity, to conduct the proceedings of the Council in an orderly manner. A parliamentarian clarifies rules of order and matters pertaining to the Statutes.

While the above-mentioned Summary Team will gather input from the delegates and present this to the Holy Synod and then back to the entire Council, there will also be a more formal Resolution process.

As provided for by statute, a simple majority vote shall determine most decisions of the All-American Council. Voting is usually done by a show of cards, but certain matters, including elections, will be decided by secret ballot.

Both "round table" discussion and floor debate can be employed during plenary sessions. With such a large number of people participating, round table discussion enables everyone to speak freely, while floor debate moves a resolution to a decision. For obvious reasons, floor debate must be fair but focused. If necessary the following guidelines for consideration of a resolution will be used:

Delegates to the Council may submit resolutions prior to the Council or at the Council. A resolution must be submitted in writing and must first go to the Resolutions Committee. The Resolutions Committee will judge the merits of the resolution and if they deem it appropriate will recommend it to the Holy Synod. The Resolutions Committee may also deem it appropriate to consolidate resolutions and redraft them if necessary. If the Holy Synod deems the resolution appropriate for consideration by the Council, it will be brought to the floor of the Council.

During the appropriate Plenary Session, the Resolutions Committee will present the proposed resolution(s), which is related to the topic of that session. The introduction will serve to give background information, to explain the development of the resolution, and formally to place the resolution before the Council.

- Once before the Council, all resolutions will be open for general debate and possible amendment. Amendments must be presented to the chair in writing but need not be submitted to the Resolutions Committee in advance; they must be germane.
- The debate on the resolution shall be limited to no more than six speakers, three in favor, and three in opposition, speaking alternately, as recognized by the Chair. Each speaker shall have up to three minutes to discuss the resolution.
- Debate on any amendments to resolutions shall be subject to the same limitations as for resolutions; when an amendment is the pending order of business, the delegates shall speak to the merits of the amendment only.
- A delegate may speak only once on any pending matter.
- If, during the consideration of a resolution or an amendment, it appears to the Chair that a period of informal discussion would be appropriate, he may propose such. If the Council verbally agrees, then a five-minute period of round table discussions will take place.
- Once an amendment has been disposed of (i.e., adopted or rejected) debate shall resume where it left off on the proposed resolution, as (possibly) amended.
- If appropriate, the Chair may call upon qualified persons to speak to technical points of a resolution or amendment; these interjections shall not be considered as part of the six-person debate.
- In compliance with the Statutes, the resolutions of each session are examined by the Holy Synod at the end of the session and voted upon. No resolution shall be valid unless approved by a vote of at least a majority of the bishops attending the Council. Their approval, or reason for disapproval, is then reported to the Council at the beginning of the following plenary session.



New Business

Any other matters may be brought up to the assembly during the time allotted for "New Business." However, these matters will not be resolved by the enactment of impromptu resolutions. The concerns will be minuted and referred to the appropriate office or department for further study or action.

Nominations to Church-wide Positions

In accordance with the Statute and resolutions of the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth All-American Councils, delegates of the Fourteenth All-American Council will elect people to positions on the:

- Metropolitan Council (2 members from the clergy and 2 members from the laity)
- Pension Board (2 members from the clergy and 2 members from the laity)

One priest and one layperson are elected for a six-year term; and one priest and one layperson are elected for a three-year term. The priest and layperson receiving the most votes will receive six-year terms.

In addition, the Council will elect members of the Audit Committee (2 members, either clergy or laity) for six- and three-year terms. The person with the highest vote total will receive a six-year term.

Only delegates to the All-American Council may be nominated for election.

During Plenary Session IV on Tuesday afternoon, nominations will be received from the floor for possible candidates (who are Council delegates) for Church-wide positions. If the nominee accepts the nomination, he or she will complete and submit a biographical information form to the Nominations Committee by the end Wednesday.



The Nomination Committee will meet Wednesday evening and/or Thursday morning and review the resumes of the nominees. Based upon this review, the Committee will then prepare a slate of candidates and present the slate to the Council during Plenary Session VI to be held on Thursday morning.

During this plenary session, each delegate will receive a voting form. This form will include the names and resumes of all those who were nominated by the end of day on Wednesday. Election results will be announced at Plenary Session VII on Thursday afternoon, with the installation of members to the Metropolitan Council, Audit Committee and Pension Board at Plenary Session VIII on Friday morning.

After the Council

As a delegate to the All-American Council, you represent your parish to the entire body of the Orthodox Church in America—giving account for your parish's life and witness, its stewardship of resources and vision for the future—and you represent the Orthodox Church in America to your parish. Most of your fellow parishioners will never have the opportunity to witness a Council at work. Your impressions, as much as the details of the decisions and resolutions, are important to share with others when you return home.

Set aside some time when parishioners can look over your materials, can hear about the Council actions which affect them, can even re-debate some of the issues based on the direction decided upon at the Council. Help your parishioners understand the implications of the Council's decisions for their own spiritual life and ministry, and for the parish community's life and witness. Bring home the message that the diocesan and The Orthodox Church in America church administrations exist to support the mission of the parish. Continue to call attention to the fruitfulness of the Council as you see articles that indicate progress and accountability in The Orthodox Church and other publications. Your positive attitude can serve as an example to others and help The Orthodox Church in America fulfill its mission.

Not only do you have the responsibility to share what you have seen and heard and done at the Council, but having participated in the passage of the All-American Council decisions, you also bear some responsibility for their being understood and implemented by your parish. Whether you personally voted for or against a matter, once it is enacted by the Council and approved by the bishops, it represents the "mind of the Church" on the matter and thus deserves your support as you present it to your parish and follow its implementation. At that point you are, in effect, a spokesperson for The Orthodox Church in America to your parish, bearing witness to its conciliar decision-making process.