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The Church as Mission: Spirituality Leading to Evangelism  
Resulting in Church Growth

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Barry University

The Church as Mission:

Spirituality

Leading to Evangelism

Resulting in Church Growth

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**Dedication**

**Dr. Mary Jo Iozzio**

## Abstract

*The Church as Mission: Spirituality, Leading to Evangelism, Resulting in Church Growth* recognizes a lacuna in strategic planning of the Orthodox Church in America, explores the theological resources that address the need for strategy, and proposes fundamental first steps that respond to the need.

The critical areas addressed in the thesis in need of OCA attention are:

- 1) Handbook on mission planting
- 2) Seminary classes on missiology
- 3) Rules for starting a mission
- 4) Mentoring mission priests

The practical theology methodology of James D. and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead in *Method in Ministry, Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry* informs the work and uses the three stages of theological reflection: attending, assertion and pastoral response. These stages were used to meet the challenge that the Jupiter, Florida mission experienced and which can be used as a sourcebook for future mission planting.

Suggestions are offered on how to transform the mission into a spiritual base of power, mission start-up strategies and the development of effective evangelism.

The need for a full time priest and the effects of his presence are also explored. Until a full time priest is assigned there is a need for a strong base of lay people to take up the task of evangelization.

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## **Introduction**

This thesis-project purposes to study and evaluate theories concerning the foundation of a new mission within the Orthodox Church in America (OCA). The praxis application explores the steps to make the mission a success. The project will focus on the inclusion, appreciation and celebration of all ethnic Orthodox Christian cultures and others as members of a community of faith.

The first audience of this project will be the congregation of Saint Peter the Apostle Orthodox Mission in Jupiter, Florida, the site of the new mission.

The second audience will include his Imminence Archbishop Dmitri, Archbishop of Dallas and the South and also the clergy of the OCA.

The third beneficiary of this study will be the OCA administration which will hopefully use this work as a guide in establishing steps to found new missions. Also it is hoped that the seminaries of the OCA will use this thesis-project to incorporate seminary classes in missionology.

His eminence Archbishop Dmitri assigned me to start this mission in Jupiter, Florida, in 2004. There was a request to the Archbishop from several Orthodox Christians who live in northern Palm Beach and southern Martin counties to start a mission in Jupiter as there was not another Orthodox Church in this area. From the beginning number of ten people the mission has now grown to thirty-five members in three years.

This thesis-project will explore and evaluate how I discovered and implemented steps to make this mission a success. The project will describe the steps in a logical sequence from beginning to end, making it a useful guide for any mission priest to follow.

This thesis-project has affected me as a minister as I have been inculturated into a mission setting made up of different ethnic groups. By learning the historical cultures I have become a better witness to members of this mission. I have also made the members of this mission aware that the OCA is committed to minister to them in their own cultural contexts.

This project has helped me to grow spiritually. The research for this thesis and having applied it to my ministry has informed me of the need for this work to be made available to other priests and those involved in mission work. It is my personal contention that the establishment of this mission has the potential to become a powerful means of evangelization and will result in church growth in this area and elsewhere.

The theological questions raised by this project focus on how I and the OCA may inspire conversion, how I and the OCA may communicate a word to heal, and how I and the OCA may direct the growth of virtue in this mission and future missions established by the OCA.

The theological perspective that grounds this thesis-project addresses the adequacy and effectiveness of the current practices of mission planting in general within the OCA. This thesis-project calls for a paradigm shift in the ministry of missionology. It calls for a new praxis of ministry within the jurisdiction of the OCA. This thesis-

project uses a theology of conversion rooted in spirituality, evangelism and church growth. I use the insights I have learned from the model of James D. and Evelyn E. Whitehead,<sup>1</sup> a theological reflection on ministry. This model uses three sources or poles of information that are relevant to the context of this thesis-project: Christian tradition, personal experience and cultural resources. The method for this tripolar model also has three elements: attention, assertion and pastoral response. Attention is listening to input from the three poles on the assumption that God is present in all three and that the religious information available in all three is partial. This attention requires openness to new ideas and the development of listening skills. Assertion is not unlike the interdependent correlation between existential questions and theological answers; however, it is more like a vigorous conversation among equals with the possibilities for interruption, disagreement, surprise and even ongoing ambiguity. This kind of vigor can certainly be anticipated in the conversations between Archbishop Dmitri and the clergy of the diocese; between those who desire this paradigm shift and those who oppose such a shift; also it can be anticipated between the mission counsel and me as the priest, as we take up the venture of establishing this mission. Pastoral outcome is a reminder that the process, rather than merely creating deeper religious insight, is meant to generate insightful religious action. This outcome, something that the thesis-project proposes, instigates not only a deeper religious insight, it is meant also to generate a response to the insight: to take action, to utilize a paradigm shift in regards to the OCA's response to the ministry of mission foundation.

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<sup>1</sup> James D. and Evelyn Whitehead. *Methods in Ministry: Theological Reflections and Christian Ministry*. Franklin, Wisconsin: Sheed and Ward, 1999.



There is no task more crucial for anyone working with adults in the church today than helping them to think theologically. Without this skill, Christians lack the conscious and critical access to the resources of their tradition that both the church and the world desperately need.<sup>2</sup>

The outcome of this thesis-project is a new proposal for guidelines on establishing mission churches of the OCA and new praxis for the ministry to the congregation of Saint Peter the Apostle Orthodox Mission in Jupiter, Florida. This outcome responds to issues of concern for contemporary ministry by offering a new praxis for ministry that can be used when other missions are founded.

## **Methodology**

In chapter I, I discuss the history of mission activity in the Orthodox Church and contemporary conditions of starting a mission. I begin with the foundation of the church by Christ and His giving the apostles the great commission. Then I present how Christianity spread throughout the Mediterranean. Following the establishment of the church in Greece, Greek missionaries traveled to what is now present day Russia bringing Christianity to the Slavic peoples. It was from Russia that the first Orthodox missionaries traveled to Alaska to bring Orthodox Christianity to North America.

Chapter II is the first movement of a three part methodology of practical theology consisting of praxis, theory, praxis investigations. In this chapter the foundations of mission are explored. Spiritual and Church growth are the important issues. The foundation of spiritual growth is the first praxis.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 103.

Chapter III concerns evangelism and catechesis.

Chapter IV explores the second praxis; the outcome of planting this mission in Jupiter, Florida. The Whitehead's model of ministry will be used to describe how I and the mission council of St. Peter the Apostle Orthodox Mission engaged in conversations that allowed us to gain insight through rigorous conversations as we formed the core of the mission. I critique the give and take that was needed on the part of each and every one of us to complete the task God has set before us. Also in chapter IV the actual steps taken to establish this mission are a guide for other missionary priests who may be in need of such guidance in their work.

Chapter V is the new praxis of founding a mission.

## Chapter I

### **History of Mission Activity and Contemporary Conditions for Starting a Mission**

Just before His ascension our Lord commanded His disciples (and therewith the whole Church) to spread the gospel to all peoples.<sup>3</sup> Historically, this command has been implemented through an ever-expanding network of mission stations, monasteries and ecclesia.<sup>4</sup> Existing parishes pooled their resources (physical, financial, clergy) in order to establish and/or expand networks of new parishes/missions which carried with them the gospel. In most cases, clergy were sent by the existing network and unconditionally supported. The assumption was that the clergy would need to have adequate resources, both for their own livelihood and the needs of the mission, in order to succeed. During the early phases of the mission, that support would have to be supplied by existing parishes. As each new group was transformed into a fully functioning mission/parish, it gradually assumed financial responsibility for itself. Thus, it was added to the pool of established parishes/missions, whose combined resources fueled even more expansion.<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately this model has fallen into disuse in the modern era. In some parts of the world government opposition has prevented the Church from expanding its network. In other places, persecution has robbed the Church of the resources for expansion. However, in many cases the difficulty seems to be a lack of vision or, worse, lack of obedience to Christ's command. This lack of obedience to Christ's command

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 28:19. *The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible, King James Version*. Word Publishers, Inc., 1984, 191, will be used for all Biblical quotes in this thesis.

<sup>4</sup> See Raymond E. Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1984); Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1991); Joseph F. Kelly, *The World of the Early Christians*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1997)

<sup>5</sup> A monk of St. Tikhon's Monastery. *These Truths we Hold*, (South Canaan, Pennsylvania: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1986), pages xi-7.

has led to a myopic self centered mindset that is reluctant to offer support outside of the local parish/mission. This lack of obedience is often true even when a parish/mission has acquired adequate funding for local operations. Any additional funding is used to upgrade facilities, increase clergy salaries, etc., but almost never for evangelistic mission work especially of a regional nature. Sadly disobedience leads to a lack of growth, i.e., the network does not expand, the gospel is not spread, and spiritual stagnation sets in. We are robbed of the vitalizing experience of participating in mission work.

### **Analysis of the lack of a “mission planting strategy” in the OCA**

In my research I found that the OCA does not have a mission planting strategy. The new mission receives no financial assistance from the national church or any sister churches in the area. The mission is required to find their own funds from the small core group and from donations. Also there are no well thought out plans for where to start a mission. In the case of St. Peter the Apostle Mission in Jupiter, Florida, the reason for starting this mission was because a group of 10 people wanted a mission in Jupiter so that they did not have to drive to other Orthodox churches in the area. There are four Orthodox churches within driving distance in the area, one being an OCA church. It would be highly unlikely for these Orthodox to change churches.

At our seminary, St Vladimir’s in New York, there are no classes offered at this time on practical theology of missiology. Graduates from the seminary have no training on how to start a mission. A large majority of the graduates’ first assignments are to start up missions.

There is in each diocese a Mission coordinator and the Dean of the area where the mission is located. These two priests have their own parishes. In the case of South

Florida, that Dean is the priest of the Cathedral in Miami. The mission coordinator is the coordinator of all the missions in the Diocese of the South while pasturing a large congregation in northern Florida. Both priests are already overwhelmed by the administration of their own churches so they have little time to address a mission's needs. There should be a priest who acts as the mission coordinator for the whole diocese without having a parish to run.

There is a critical need in the OCA to have a practical handbook for mission priests. There are few books written for Orthodox priests. While some of the information in these books is relevant to an Orthodox mission, there are many areas that are not addressed.<sup>6</sup>

### **How to use this work**

The information contained in this work is intended to help and inspire anyone interested in or involved in starting an Orthodox mission. It can also be helpful for individuals in established parishes as they are called to evangelize likewise.

### **Foundations**

The foundations that will be considered in the work of mission evangelization include:

1. Church as Mission
2. Spiritual Growth
3. Theology of Growth

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<sup>6</sup> George Barna. *Evangelism That Works*. (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1995).

## **Mission Start-Up Strategy**

The mission start-up strategy has four stages in the life cycle of a mission. They are the:

- Preparatory Period
- Pioneer Period
- Period of Growth and Organization
- Period of Evangelizing Mission

## **How-To**

In the how-to of mission planting there are ten different aspects. None of this material is claimed as normative. Rather, it is intended to provide examples that may be adapted for use at almost any stage of mission development—from initial mission outreach to full parish.<sup>7</sup>

- Facilities
- Catechism
- Support
- Evangelism
- Legal
- Stewardship
- Training
- Liturgics
- Stores
- Finances
- Development

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<sup>7</sup> Steven G. Pappas. *Church Development and Operating Process*. (Scottsdale, Arizona: Home Orthodox Mission Endowment, Inc, 1987).

## 1) The Church as Mission

The key to understanding the Church as mission is found in Christ's identification of the mission of the Apostles with His own. "As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you."<sup>8</sup> The Lord's specific commandment defines this mission:

*Go therefore 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 that I have commanded you and lo I am with you always even to the close of the age.*<sup>9</sup>

The Apostles understood that the work of sanctification<sup>10</sup>, the forgiveness of sins<sup>11</sup>, and the reconciliation with God<sup>12</sup> was committed to them after they were *clothed with power from on high*.<sup>13</sup> This commission is obvious from the record of their missionary activity in the Acts of the Apostles and from the whole missionary career of St. Paul.

Not only was the Church intended to be catholic, that is for all people,<sup>14</sup> it was to transcend narrow nationalism and, in fact, rise above all exclusiveness. *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free: but Christ is all and in all.*<sup>15</sup> As proof of this and of the universality of their mission, the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost provided the Apostles immediately with the capacity to tell the good news in all languages: *...we hear them telling in our*

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<sup>8</sup> John 20: 21.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 28: 19-20

<sup>10</sup> Hebrews 13:12

<sup>11</sup> Acts 13:38

<sup>12</sup> Colossians 1:21,22

<sup>13</sup> Luke 24:49

<sup>14</sup> I Timothy 4:10; II Peter 3:9

<sup>15</sup> Colossians 3:11

*tongues the mighty works of God.*<sup>16</sup> Thus they baptized and incorporated into the Church all those who received their teachings and desired to be saved.<sup>17</sup>

In conveying the gospel to the people of every nation the motivation of the Church of the Apostles and subsequently of the Church of all ages was the conviction that the message of Christ was necessary for the life of the world and for its salvation. *And there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*<sup>18</sup> Every segment of the Church has in its turn inherited its own area of responsibility and the mission to bring all people to Christ through His Church has never been thought to be someone else's responsibility.

Once the faith has been planted in any area of the world the Church has an obligatory concern for the salvation of all who inhabit that area. In no sense has the Church been content to be understood as simply a part of the cultural heritage of a people or of a nation. The Orthodox Church has sometimes been wrongly and inappropriately described as non-missionary and non-proselytizing. Both the missions of the Orthodox Church to non-Christian peoples and the willingness of the Church to encourage individual conversions from the non-Orthodox Churches serve to contradict this erroneous characterization.<sup>19</sup>

Being convinced that those who *do not abide in the doctrine of Christ do not have God,*<sup>20</sup> that Christ is as He said, the truth, and that no one comes to the Father

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<sup>16</sup> Acts 2:11

<sup>17</sup> Acts 2:41,47

<sup>18</sup> Acts 4:12

<sup>19</sup> Theodore Picharnik. *Coworkers With Christ*, a thesis for St. Vladimir's Seminary, pages 5-6.

<sup>20</sup> II John 14:6



except by Him,<sup>21</sup> the Church naturally must desire that all know Christ and follow Him. This desire means of course that our doors must be open and that we must be zealous about bringing all to Christ and Christ to all. In addition, it is equally a part of the Church's vocation to pass judgment on explanations of the meaning and purpose of life, especially those that may be in conflict with Christ's revelation. This vocation also provides society with an authentically Christian reaction to all its social trends and movements. This vocation is especially important both because of the pluralism of contemporary society and of the increased secularization of religion in recent times. Not only have traditional Christian values been abandoned by the world but even by religious groups themselves. We witness the outright adoption of new moralities and attitudes toward human relations that are in direct conflict with Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Church. The Orthodox Church can no longer depend on the religious community or any religious agency to give a real Christian answer to life's problems but must itself take the lead in pointing to God's absolute and unchangeable truth.<sup>22</sup>

The next section, will present a survey of the Church as a society conscious of its mission to unite within its fold all people and to outline the Church's responsibility to proclaim the gospel and evangelize in whatever places the Holy Spirit may lead us.

## **2) The Historical Background**

The missionary activities of the Orthodox Church are rooted in the experience of the Apostolic Age after which Christianity proceeded to convert the populations of Asia Minor, Northern Africa, and Europe. When the Byzantine missionaries undertook the

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<sup>21</sup> John 14:6

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Hopko. *Speaking the Truth in Love: Education, Mission, and Witness in Contemporary Orthodoxy* (New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press. 2004), 67-69.

conversion of the Slavic people they understood well that the most effective missionary method was to preach, teach, and worship in the language of the people.<sup>23</sup>

The accomplishments of the Russian Church in the mission field in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries are now generally known.<sup>24</sup> The vast territory of Russia, especially Siberia with its hundreds of different peoples, was the primary mission field of the Russian Church. Many missionaries devoted their lives to teaching the people and to studying languages in order to provide translations of the Scriptures and the service books so that all could hear of the wonderful works of God in their own tongues. Most people in the Western world would have probably never heard of these languages and dialects, Kirghiz, Telengut, Yakut and Zyrian to mention only four, the study of which absorbed the time and efforts and even the whole lives of the Russian missionaries.

When the opportunity arose, the missionaries extended their activity beyond the borders of the Byzantine Empire into China, Korea, Japan and Alaska. The same zeal for giving all people the gospel in their own language also characterized this period of missionary activity. As an example, the Japanese Autonomous Orthodox Church today has the Scriptures and almost all the service books of the Church available in Japanese.

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<sup>23</sup> A monk of Saint Tikhon Monastery, *These Truths We Hold* (South Canaan, Pennsylvania: St. Tikhon Press, 1992).

<sup>24</sup> See A monk of Saint Tikhon Monastery, *These Truths We Hold* (South Canaan, Pennsylvania: St. Tikhon Press, 1992); Paul D. Garrett, *St. Innocent Apostle to America*, (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979); John H. Erickson, *Orthodox Christians in America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Alexander Bogolepov, *Toward an American Orthodox Church, The Establishment of an Autocephalous Orthodox Church*, (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1963); Michael Oleksa, *Orthodox Alaska a Theology of Mission*, Crestwood, New York, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991).

The great lesson to be learned from the Russian Church, insofar as mission is concerned, is that in all circumstances the Church always considered it her obligation to bring the message of Christ to all people wherever she had the opportunity to do so.

### **Our Responsibility**

The presence of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America is no accident but rather the result of missionary activity begun in 1794 and fulfilled in 1970 with the granting of permanent canonical status by the Patriarch of Moscow to the OCA as an autocephalous Church. By virtue of her autocephaly, the OCA is the local Church whose mission in North America is to bring all persons to salvation. It is through her that all may come to the knowledge of the truth and to be partakers of life everlasting.<sup>25</sup>

It is our task to present the Christian view of human life and in so doing develop a lifestyle consistent with that view. The Church must preach the gospel in an unadulterated manner. It must not adjust its doctrine and ethics to the values of the world but must present its doctrine and clearly provide guidance in leading a Christian life.<sup>26</sup>

In order to be effective among the unchurched, Orthodox and non-Orthodox missionaries must be fully or at minimum supported by the Church. It is necessary therefore that the Orthodox faithful reevaluate the whole question of material wealth in the Christian perspective. As the faithful open their hearts to the Lord's commandment to evangelize there is no reason in this land of abundance why the OCA could not raise

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<sup>25</sup> Mark Stokoe and Leonid Kishkovsky, *Orthodox Christians in North America 1794-1994*, (Orthodox Christian Publications Center, 1995).

<sup>26</sup> Dumitru Staniloae, *Orthodox Spirituality*, (South Canaan, PA: St.Tikhon Orthodox Theological Press, 2002)

funds in the coming years to sustain missionaries, establish mission centers, and fund the printing of literature.

## Chapter II

### Spiritual Growth

*Illumine our hearts, O Master who lovest humankind with the pure light of Thy divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our minds to the understanding of Thy Gospel teachings...So that trampling down all carnal desires we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto Thee. Grant also...O God growth in life and faith and spiritual understanding...*<sup>27</sup>

We generally think of growth as a physical and material process. Plants, animals and people come into being, grow and mature. But the Christian idea of growth refers to a process of the human heart, mind and spirit. It stresses the need for spiritual, emotional, moral, and intellectual growth. It forbids the Christian to remain a spiritual baby and a moral infant. It calls Christians and expects them to grow in Godly truth and devotion in virtuous character and behavior in divine knowledge and wisdom, in spiritual insight, and intelligence.<sup>28</sup>

#### Development of Spiritual Growth

Spiritual growth is the development of one's inner being, the internal change of the human heart, mind and spirit. It is progress from a lower quality of life to a higher one; by spiritual growth we grow in love and mercy, in knowledge and understanding, in

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<sup>27</sup> Prayer before the Reading of the Gospel and the Second Prayer of the Faithful, Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.

<sup>28</sup> Staniloae, Ibid. page 21.

James Keenan. *Virtues for Ordinary Christians*. (Kansas City, Mo: Sheed and Ward, 1996) pages 20.

goodness and holiness. Such growth is evident even in the life of our Lord: *And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.*<sup>29</sup>

### **Church Growth**

The Church is not simply a building or edifice nor is it by first definition an organization or institutional structure. It is essentially a community of people who are supposed to be of God and imbued with the Holy Spirit. In the words of St. John Chrysostom, “The Church is a community made up of the souls of us men and women and cannot be built by stone and mortar but must be built by the spiritual growth of its members into the full reality of Jesus Christ.”<sup>30</sup> This community building is what Church growth is all about and, for it to be efficacious, we must understand it.

After years of teaching and ministering, St. John Chrysostom saw very little spiritual growth in the members of the Church, and, disillusioned, he was ready to give up in his preaching and pastoral endeavors. He writes, “It is better to serve the Liturgy with only two or three who keep God’s law than to have a multitude of transgressors brought together.”<sup>31</sup> For while he saw magnificent Church buildings and properties, flourishing congregations, a multitude of members and large attendance at all the services, he said that growth of the Church could not be judged solely by any of these things. Instead, he judged the Church by the quality of Godliness and spiritual life. Since he saw little or none of this quality he viewed the Church as dead:

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<sup>29</sup> Luke 2:40

<sup>30</sup> Philip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol 12, Chrysostom: Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthian, Homily 27, II Corinthians, (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), 403-407.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

*Now I behold the whole Church prostrate as though it were a corpse. And as one may see eyes and hands and feet and neck and head in a newly dead body and yet find not one limb performing its proper function so it is the same here with the Church also. Truly all who are here are faithful members but their faith is not living and active. And so we have made the Body of Christ a corpse: we have quenched its life. Now if this appears awful when said just think how much more awful it is when it actually appears in reality.<sup>32</sup>*

### **The Orthodox View of Church Growth**

Following John Chrysostom, Church growth must be determined first by the quality of the spiritual life of its members individually and as a community. It is self-evident that the Church must consciously strive to add members. Christ's command to go and make disciples prompts the Church to evangelical efforts but the addition of members does not necessarily mean that the Church is growing spiritually. It may be growing only in an external superficial way. Both the Scriptures and the traditions of our Church see Church growth as inward spiritual growth. If the Church is a community of spiritual beings then the Church must embody a quality of life that is Godlike since it must be the Body of Christ.

The Church therefore must be more than a fellowship with common human, social and religious interests. To be a Church, in the true and fullest sense, the members of the community must first know God. If they do they will be a community of love dedicated to proclaiming the word of God and serving Christ on earth. These three

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<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

qualities—knowledge of God, love of Christ and each other, and dedication to His service—are fundamental to the Orthodox concept of a Christian community.<sup>33</sup>

### **The First Priority of Spiritual Growth—Knowing God**

For the Church to grow there are certain priorities or prerequisites that must be met. The first of these is not acquisitions of new members. That comes later and only if other spiritual conditions are met by the existing members. The first and most important priority is for each and every member to know God. The First Commandment is to love God with our whole being. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind and with all your strength.”<sup>34</sup> This love means giving ourselves completely over to unification with God and to the arduous work of developing our interior being. Christ affirms this priority of loving God by telling us to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our first task in helping the Church to grow is to enter into the reality of God and to be in personal communion with God. We must strive to enter into the realm of God and to experience coexistence with God—our deification.<sup>35</sup> The essential meaning of our faith is integration with the Divine. Realization of that divine fullness purifies and frees us from the state of our own sinfulness.

The first step in this journey is Baptism where we are welcomed into the Church and invited to know the One True God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This means more than having thoughts, ideas, and information about God; it means having actual spiritual

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<sup>33</sup> Hopko. *Ibid.* pages 67-69.

<sup>34</sup> Luke 10:27

<sup>35</sup> Theosis (deification) is the grace of God through which believers grow to become like God and enjoy intimate communion with the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. It is union with God; the final destination and ultimate home of the human soul. Kyriacos C. Markides, *The Mountain of Silence: A Search for Orthodox Spirituality*, (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 252.



contact with God's own nature. The spiritual directives of our theological traditions show us how such spiritual knowledge can be actualized in our life. Essentially what our theologians say is this: There is a spiritual method which requires spiritual works if we are to grow spiritually. The key to this growth is the attention of the mind. The spiritual life begins by immersing the mind in the Word of God and by withdrawing it from worldly occupations in order to focus its attention on God. The focus of the mind determines our spiritual condition and affects our spiritual quality of life. The mind that is fragmented and dissipated by the world can never know God and therefore can never grow spiritually.

This growth can only come about when the mind is quiet. In silence the quieted mind frees itself from all material attachments, passions and thoughts and is thereby able to be in communion with the ultimate spiritual reality. Thus the activity of the mind becomes a crucial factor in the development of our spiritual life and growth. *You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on (God).*<sup>36</sup>

### **The Second Priority of Spiritual Growth—A Communion of Love<sup>37</sup>**

The second priority is to build and to manifest a spiritual quality of life throughout the whole community. We must love one another in Christ and strive to become one undivided body in Him. St. Paul writes that we are not spiritual beings if jealousy and strife are operating among us but are people of the flesh.<sup>38</sup> Where there is hatred, bitterness, resentment and hostility the community of love is destroyed and without love the spiritual character of the Church is destroyed likewise.

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<sup>36</sup> Isaiah 26:3

<sup>37</sup> See Henri J.M, Nouwen, *Matthew the Poor: The Communion of Love*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1984

<sup>38</sup> I Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 3.

There are two ways of dismemberment and separation from the Church: when we grow cold in love and when we do things that are impure, unworthy, and that contradict the body. Either way we destroy the fellowship or community that must contain the fullness of Christ and with destruction we inhibit the community's growth.

The term salvation refers to the fulfillment of humanity in Christ, through deliverance from the curse of sin and death, to union with God through Christ the Savior. Salvation includes a process of growth of the whole person whereby the sinner is changed into the image and likeness of God. One is saved by faith through grace. However, saving faith is more than mere belief. It must be a living faith manifested by works of righteousness, whereby we cooperate with God to do God's will. We receive the grace of God for salvation through participation in the sacramental life of the Church. Salvation is not an automatic fact wrought by the sacraments but a grace that is made manifest more as we grow in the knowledge and love of God.

*You have been born anew not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and abiding Word of God...Like newborn babes long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up to salvation...Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.<sup>39</sup>*

Baptism calls us to become new creatures and to begin a new life. However, the divine quality of life while given in baptism is not complete. Rather it is something that we have to develop and that must come to fruition. Spiritual birth must always be followed by spiritual growth, otherwise baptism is meaningless.

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<sup>39</sup> I Peter 1: 23, I Peter 2: 2

The idea is very simple. The person who is truly born from above must come to embody and manifest a whole new lifestyle and being that reflects the nature of God. Without such a change of nature a person remains outside the realm and spirit of God. A person remains alien to the godly character of life even though one has been baptized and still continues to be a member of the Church.

This newness of life transcends all distinction of race and culture because God is beyond all these things. Any identification with such things contradicts the meaning of Christ for all such associations are part of the old nature of humankind. We are expected to *have put off the old nature with its practices and to have put on the new nature which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free men, but Christ is all and in all.*<sup>40</sup> Both the individual and the community must be transformed in order to reflect the mind of Christ. There is no room for any classification of gender, race, social status, nationality, or ethnic attachment. Any such fragmentation destroys the fundamental unity of human beings in Christ.

How is it possible for individuals and groups in the Church to hate other groups and individuals, even nurturing this hate in their children, and yet know the love of God? How can a person say, “I cannot accept the idea that I must love the enemy and yet have the spirit of God within me?” Jesus said, *A new commandment I give you that you love one another even as I have loved you that you also love one another. By this all will know you are my disciples: if you love one another.*<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Colossians 3:11

<sup>41</sup> John 13:34

### **The Third Priority of Spiritual Growth—Proclaiming and Serving**

The third priority is to go out into the world proclaiming the message of the gospel and leading all to its truth through incorporation into the Church. This aspect of growth must also concern itself with serving human beings in their distress and providing for their essential needs in this world. The Church grows by manifesting sacrificial love which gives freely, expecting nothing in return. The light of God must be allowed to shine through us and God's goodness must be made to season our lives by our activity. To make disciples, to baptize and to teach is God's command and these activities are an integral part of Church growth.

If one actually has a personal experience of the illumination, beauty, and goodness of God then surely they will want to let others know about it. If one has truly tasted the peace, joy and love of God then they will want to share those things with others. Awakenning the interest of others to the message and person of Christ is thus essential to Church growth. Leading others to see and experience God personally is a spiritual work required of every member. This work is why Jesus said, *Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven but he who does the will of my Father who is in Heaven. On that day many will say to me, Lord did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many other mighty works in your name? and then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me you evildoers.*<sup>42</sup>

The way to make the Divine Nature known is not simply to talk about it but to live a life of character and behavior that truly reflects the reality of the Divine Nature.

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<sup>42</sup> Matthew 7:22ff

In all relationships our personal and communal life must reveal the Divine in our actions and thoughts. These actions and thoughts are done by serving others as if we were serving Christ Himself. We must manifest the sacrificial love that seeks only to relieve the sufferings of others, expecting nothing in return. Such love is divine and gives human life the divine ingredient that is otherwise missing in the world. The Church grows in this way because God's love is growing and being manifested in the world.<sup>43</sup>

Although we are commanded to make disciples we must never forget the nature of true discipleship. Who is the disciple? Is it those who are merely incorporated into the social fabric of a congregation? Or is it those who are also imbued with God's love? Disciples are not made simply by adding names to a list or by designating them as such. Disciples are made from those who assimilate and become the recipients of God's love. Christ defined the disciples as the ones who love as He loved--with a love that gives of itself even unto death. Such love is sustained in a state of being and not merely an occasional good deed or an isolated act of charity.

Furthermore we must never reduce God, salvation and truth to packaged commodities that can be commercialized, advertised and sold in the marketplace like any other product. As St. Paul said, *We are not...peddlers of God's word*<sup>44</sup> who huckster and sell without any reservations. Rather, sincerely we call others to a deep organic spiritual and ontological relationship with God and to renewal in the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>43</sup> Staniloae, *Ibid*, pages 20-21.

<sup>44</sup> II Corinthians 2:17

## **Ways and Means of Spiritual Nurture for Church Growth**

To grow from and in every perspective the Church must establish systematic ways and means of spiritual nurture. It must set up procedures to promote and nourish spiritual growth in the personal and communal life of the Church. The whole teaching effort of our Church must be directed toward the inner person and must concern itself with the self-knowledge and understanding that enables one to deal with the interior condition of people's hearts and minds. This effort will be supported by the actual practices of self-knowledge; ascesis of fasting, silence, prayer, almsgiving, and lectio divina.<sup>45</sup>

### Self-knowledge

Our teaching must not be limited to conveying ideas and information; it must enable the listener to truly understand the condition of the inner being. The listener must develop an introspective, self-awareness directed toward the internal life of thoughts, desires, feelings, motivations and attitudes. For example, a Christmas lesson could discuss the greed and self-indulgence of both children and adults during the various activities of the holiday celebration; or the subject of thankful prayer for the Nativity of Christ could be addressed more deeply.<sup>46</sup>

The presence of God is realized in and through the human person. Thus the individual's most central aim is to work for and realize that holy endowment within. This is accomplished only by opening up to the power and energy that emanates from God. In this regard the ascetical activities or training exercises of our spiritual tradition are crucially important. They allow us to receive that presence, to realize God and to

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<sup>45</sup> Staniloae. *Ibid.* pages 69-73.

<sup>46</sup> Tomas Spidlik, *The Spirituality of the Christian East* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1986) pages 87-88.

embody the Divine Nature. Our relationship with God and our spiritual life are nurtured by such things as fasting, vigilance, silence of mind, prayer, almsgiving and the knowledge of God's Word.<sup>47</sup>

Ascetic training is important precisely because there is a tendency today to confuse spirituality with participation in Church-sponsored activities such as singing, dinners, bazaars, picnics, and youth and adult groups. There is an inclination in the Christian world to equate spirituality with almost every kind of human social activity both religious and worldly. Spirituality has been reduced to an external activity ranging from putting up buildings and organizing cultural festivals to going on a tourist pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

### Fasting

Fasting and abstaining from various worldly activities have an effect on our conscious being. The ancient ascetic practices of fasting, silence, prayer, almsgiving and *lectio divina* are the best activities of the spiritual life. By negating our continual self-indulgence we become more aware of the divine reality and more accepting of its influence. The spiritual dimension in us is also enhanced by watching the inner and outer being by keeping attentive to our nature as well as our behavior. Such attention generates a change of the mind and transforms our inner being.<sup>48</sup>

### Silence

Silence and quietness of the mind are also conditions of spiritual being. Silence is the beginning of the purification of the soul. The peace of God which passes all

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<sup>48</sup> Spidlik, *Ibid*, pages 223-224.

understanding comes only when the inner conflict of the mind is stilled. This peace is why the palmist directs us to *be still and know God*. Mental turmoil, noise, conflict and activity tend to disrupt spirituality and to promote sin. This possibility is why silence is absolutely necessary for the spiritual life. Only a tranquil mind, where all thoughts, desires, and sensations have been stilled, can nurture spiritual growth. Silence means setting aside all thoughts and things whether induced by the senses or the mind. Silence frees us and disconnects us from all things and thereby enables us to be attuned to God. In fact silence is an integral condition of the spiritual life and growth.<sup>49</sup>

### Prayer

The true aim of prayer is communion of the mind with God. Without such prayer of the mind the spiritual life cannot flourish. Prayer means giving oneself without word, thought or desire simply to be alone with the Divine Presence. Such prayer comes about by reaching out with the consciousness and centering the mind in the reality of God. Prayer of the mind is true prayer: A mind not dispersed among external objects and not carried about through the world by the senses recollects itself and rises to God. Such prayer actually implants the mindfulness of God in the soul. The dwelling of God in the inner being means to have God actually present in oneself by being mindful of God.<sup>50</sup>

### Almsgiving

Almsgiving is also an essential factor in our spiritual life and growth. It must be an expression of sincere thanksgiving and love and not merely an outward mechanical act. Here is its meaning for our spiritual life for its value is not found in giving something

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<sup>49</sup> *The Philokalia*, page 155.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 237, 238



that is external to us such as money or possessions but in the condition of the heart that prompts that giving. Spiritual charity is not found in a good deed done with reluctance or resentment but in a good and loving disposition of the heart. True almsgiving comes when we give for the well-being of another with no consideration for ourselves. It is the offering of our very selves in a humble spirit of compassion, mercy and goodness. Almsgiving of this sort is the extension of Christ's own mercy and love.<sup>51</sup>

### God's Word/lectio divina

God's Word is the seed by which we live and grow. This growth though is not brought about by simply reading the words of the Bible but rather by digesting and assimilating them to the spiritual reality to which the words point. Communion with the Word entails being in contact with the reality that the words represent. Only by understanding the Word of God in depth can the mind of God be implanted in our hearts and result in spiritual growth.<sup>52</sup>

### **Evangelism: Spiritual Basis of Mission**

Throughout history the successful mission of the Church has always been centered in Spirituality. Spiritual centers of the Church are:

- Monasteries: where monastics devote themselves to the ascetic labor of prayer for the salvation of the world.
- Mother Churches: which practiced evangelization and were willing to share their own resources with others.
- Family Units: which willingly left the world behind and devoted themselves to the spiritual work of missions.
- Individuals: lay people, clergy and monastics that through prayer and holy living attracted those around them to faith in Christ.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 49, 50, 51.

<sup>52</sup> Staniloae, Ibid. pages 255-261.

In every case there was recognition of the fact that the most effective means of proclaiming the Gospel came through living Christ-centered lives. No mission work is possible without a vibrant spiritual base.

Mission is often thought of as having passive (spiritual base) and active (proclamation) components—centrifugal versus centripetal aspects. However, this distinction, while descriptively useful, tends to obscure the fact that it is impossible to do mission work without a vibrant spiritual base from which a proclamation of the Gospel emanates. In other words there is only one task/aspect/component—true spirituality—that fully occupies the faithful and naturally radiates the life of the Gospel.

Evangelism then is first and foremost a spiritual activity. For that reason it cannot simply be organized, marketed, managed or resourced into being. If the spiritual context is ignored or divorced from the presentation of the Gospel that proclamation devolves into a purely human enterprise. Thus, we must carefully examine 1) the nature of fallen human beings and their culture 2) the nature of the Gospel (the message we intend to communicate) and 3) the divine resources for evangelism (the role of the Holy Spirit). Once completed we may well be in a position to suggest a practical course of action.<sup>53</sup>

### **Nature of Fallen Human Beings and Their Culture**

Much has been written on the state of modern or post-modern society. Most observers point to a few basic characteristics:

- Secularization (drift or separation from the sacred to the secular)
- Absence of any life integrating an ethical system

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<sup>53</sup> Barna. Ibid. pages 13-31.

- Privatization of Religion (The one thing you can not talk about)
- Narcissism/Consumerism (The bottom line: What is in it for me?)

Each one of these cultural characteristics inhibits evangelism perhaps even to the point of rendering it nearly impossible and causing a sense of helplessness among Christians. Many appear to have come to the end of their mission-strategic ropes. They are convinced that they have tried almost everything to little or no avail. As a result they feel powerless and helpless.

However, the prevailing world-view of the West seems to have undergone one significant change that could provide an opening. The modern nationalistic godless orientation appears to be crumbling. Many are no longer so sure that the supernatural and God can be denied. In fact the bankruptcy of our social and intellectual programs have left us without answers and reception to whatever might be out there. This openness is expressed among other ways in the renewed interest in the occult, Eastern mysticism and New Age. These trends can be seen in films, literature and even music.<sup>54</sup>

### **The Nature of Salvation and the Gospel**

Soteriology (salvation) in Eastern Christian thought has been developed in a broad context defined by creation and deification. The basis of the Church's teaching on salvation can be summarized as follows:

- Humankind was created in God's image and called to become like God.
- Humankind by virtue of having been created in God's image has a free will and used that freedom of choice to turn away from God to reject communion with God and the potential of deification.
- As a result human nature was corrupted, which lead to death.

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<sup>54</sup> Stanley S. Harakas. *Living The Faith-The Praxis of Eastern Orthodox Ethics*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Light and Life Publishing Company 1993).

- Although the image of God informing human beings was not destroyed by sin it was distorted.
- That distortion is expressed in a continuous misuse of humanity's free will.
- In order to save humankind two things were necessary:
  - a) restoration of human nature and
  - b) a healing of human will.
- The Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of the Son of God effectively addressed these needs.
- In the Incarnation the divine and the human natures were perfectly united.
- In the Death of Christ our sins were assumed and the fundamental consequence, death itself, was defeated.
- In the Resurrection we have the actualization of the defeat of death and the healing of human nature.
- Salvation then consists of a recapitulation, i.e., a restoration of human nature and a healing of human will as well as a forgiveness of sin. Restored to the position Adam and Eve had before the fall we have been given a second chance to accept God's plan and to move toward God—deification.
- Salvation is not an instant once-and-for-all never-to-be-lost change of status but the culmination of a lifelong struggle to become more and more like God.

The Gospel then can be defined as the good news of the incarnate Christ's work which had defeated death and restored to the forgiven, justified and sanctified believer the potential of becoming like God.<sup>55</sup>

### **The Nature of the Missionary Task**

To evangelize is to proclaim the Good News of the risen Christ, to announce that the Gospel of salvation and eternal life in God's Kingdom is truly with us here and now in the life of the world. In essence, evangelization is the act of proclaiming the Truth. It affirms that the knowledge of God through the only-begotten Son Jesus Christ is not only possible but is in fact the very essence of human life. *This is eternal life*, the Lord

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<sup>55</sup> Metropolitan Emilianos Timiadis. *Towards Authentic Christian Spirituality* (Brookline, Mass: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998) pages 133-134.

prayed in the midst of His disciples, *that they know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*<sup>56</sup>

The key to the understanding of the Church as mission is to be found in Christ's identification of the mission of the Apostles with His own. *As my Father has sent me, so I send you.*<sup>57</sup> The Lord's specific commandment (often called the Divine or Great Commission) defines this mission: *Go ye therefore and teach 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 whatsoever I have commanded you and lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen.*<sup>58</sup>

That the Apostles understood that the work of sanctification,<sup>59</sup> the forgiveness of sins<sup>60</sup> and of reconciliation with God<sup>61</sup> was committed to them after they were *clothed with power from on high*<sup>62</sup> is obvious from the record of their missionary activity in the Acts of the Apostles and from the whole missionary career of St. Paul.

Not only was the Church intended to be catholic, i.e., for all men and women (universal) and for the whole man and woman (holistic and complete)<sup>63</sup>, the Church was to rise above all narrow nationalisms and above all exclusiveness. *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all.*<sup>64</sup> As proof of this and the universality of their mission, the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost provided the Apostles immediately with the

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<sup>56</sup> John 17:3.

<sup>57</sup> John 20:21.

<sup>58</sup> Matthew 28:19-20.

<sup>59</sup> Hebrews 13:12.

<sup>60</sup> Acts 13:38.

<sup>61</sup> Colossians 1:21-22.

<sup>62</sup> Luke 24:49.

<sup>63</sup> I Timothy 4:10, II Peter 3:9.

<sup>64</sup> Colossians 3:11.

capacity to tell the Good News in all languages. *...we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.*<sup>65</sup> Thus they baptized and incorporated into the Church all those who accepted their teachings and desired to be saved.<sup>66</sup>

Thus the motivation of the Church throughout history in conveying the Gospel to the people of every nation was the conviction that the message of Christ was necessary for the life of the world and for its salvation. *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*<sup>67</sup>

God has not left the Church without the resources to do this work. Matthew 10:20 gives us an early indication of this Divine resource. When Jesus sent out His disciples He told them not to be concerned about what to say because the “Spirit of your Father” would speak in them. Later He promised them the fullness of the Holy Spirit Who gave them the power to be His witnesses in the entire world.<sup>68</sup> A quick review of the expansion of the early Church as described in the Book of Acts clearly points to the Holy Spirit as the primary ally. On the Day of Pentecost it was the Holy Spirit who made the message of the Gospel understandable to all; the Spirit filled St. Stephen and empowered and led Philip. It is the Spirit of God who led Peter to Cornelius and moved the Christians at Antioch to send out missionaries.<sup>69</sup> This activity can be summarized as follows:

#### The Spirit Awakens a Missionary Spirit Within Believers:

- Willingness to Sacrifice: (Acts 13:3) to give up valuable resources and to invest their lives (Acts 15:26)

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<sup>65</sup> Acts 2:11.

<sup>66</sup> Acts 2:41, 47.

<sup>67</sup> Acts 4:12.

<sup>68</sup> Acts 1:8.

<sup>69</sup> Acts 2 and Acts 10.

- Courage: (Acts 4:13, 31; 21:3)
- Love: (I Timothy 1:5)

The Spirit Guides the Work of Evangelism;

- Initiates: (Acts 13:1-3)
- Inspires their speech: (Matthews 10:19-20) convincing others (Acts 2:4)
- Establishes contacts/links with those He has already prepared for the Gospel: (Philippians 8:2)

The Spirit of God Achieves the Results (Conversion)

- Opens the eyes of the sinners enabling them to see their need of repentance and salvation (John 16:8)
- Validates the proclamation of the Word

The clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures then is a) that we have a specific message to proclaim to the world (Christ's Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension into heaven and Second Coming, b) that prior to evangelism the messengers have to be transformed and sanctified by Christ, and c) that the only way to effectively communicate that message is with the help of the Holy Spirit Who guides, empowers and inspires

### **Summary**

The spiritual life is essentially a union of the interior being with the Divine Spirit through silent prayerful awareness. It is the experience of communion with the Incomprehensible, a communion that is beyond the senses and beyond what is intellectual and emotional. It is a discerning mindfulness of the Invisible and a perception of the Inconceivable that transcends our own human reason. It is a direct intuitive union of the disciple with God through love and attention.

The essential point is that spiritual life and growth in the individual and the Christian community are prerequisites for true Church growth. This growth must be continuous, ever expanding, and seeking new horizons. We can never be fully satisfied with our lives and community and at no point can we say either individually or communally that we have grown enough. We must realize that we can always change and move ahead to other and better things. We can always come closer to God, we can always deepen our understanding and we can always increase in love. As Christ says even when we have done everything expected of us we should still realize that *we are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.*<sup>70</sup>

How is such growth nourished and realized? First of all, by God's gracious power and energy. God is the supreme and ultimate source of our spiritual growth. As St. Paul writes, *Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything but only God who gives the growth.*<sup>71</sup> It is God Who provides us with the ability to grow into something that transcends our sinful way of life and being. Thus we must open ourselves to the Spirit of God for it is that Divine Spirit working in our human hearts that can make us spiritual beings.<sup>72</sup>

Basically our task as disciples and pilgrims on the way of the Lord is to prepare and dispose ourselves so that God can stimulate this process of spiritual growth within us. We can be successful only by giving ourselves to being with God by submitting to the operation of the Holy Spirit and by living in the reality of Jesus Christ, God's Son and our Lord. The goal of spiritual and Church growth is nothing less than the fullness

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<sup>70</sup> Luke 17:10

<sup>71</sup> I Corinthians 3:7

<sup>72</sup> Harakas, *Ibid*, Pages 88-89.



of being as found in the nature and character of God and as manifested in the person and life of Jesus Christ.

The Church must grow and function in the world just as Christ did. He brought everyone who has ears to hear into a relationship with God. To accomplish this same relationship and to encourage others, the Church must establish efficient procedures for acquiring new members, establishing new parishes and providing for the people's essential needs in this world. The Church must have precise, systematic and planned methods with specified objectives and goals and ways to measure ongoing activities and results. There must be an honest evaluation of conditions, possibilities, resources and experience through research and consultation. The Church cannot grow by chance or haphazard methods; rather there must be a planned and coordinated effort if it is to succeed.

The practical details of how this can be accomplished are addressed in the following chapter which deals with the parish as a Christian community and the role of the laity in Church growth. The point that is emphasized here and that should be borne in mind while reading is this: Church growth must begin with and be founded on the spiritual life and growth of its members individually and collectively. Planning and organization are important but unless the entire effort is rooted in a deep and spiritual union with God it can produce no real or lasting results.

## Chapter III

### Evangelism and Catechesis: Theology of Church Growth

It is the purpose of this chapter to set forth a practical theology of Church growth under the classical headings of evangelism and catechesis. For complicated historical reasons we Orthodox have allowed the development of a blind side regarding Church growth in our own Tradition with consequences that need to be reversed. Our Orthodox Church will experience healthy growth only on the foundation of its own traditional theology of evangelism and catechesis. In this chapter, I will present a historical overview of evangelism and catechesis, how humanity is alienated from God, the impact of the Kingdom, the network of communication and the two ways<sup>73</sup> in Scripture and in early Christian writings.

#### Historical Overview

Evangelism and catechesis, preaching and teaching, are inseparable. This point is not an obvious one and has frequently been violated. For example modern “media evangelism” employs individuals who only preach and takes on educational, not to mention liturgical and pastoral responsibility, for those to whom they have preached. A statistical analysis of people who have “made a decision for Christ” during a “crusade” reveals that less than 1% remain active Christians. Contrast this failure to teach with the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself the Evangel or Gospel of the Church, and rabbi (teacher). He told the apostles to *Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...teaching them...*<sup>74</sup> and after Pentecost the disciples *were teaching the people and*

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<sup>73</sup> The Way of the Lord and The Way of evil.

<sup>74</sup> Matthew 28:16ff.

*proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.*<sup>75</sup> No one can teach about the Kingdom of God without evangelizing and no one can properly evangelize without teaching.

### **The Alienation of Humanity from God**

Both John the Baptist and Jesus preached that people should repent and be baptized. In this preaching of repentance, as in the whole of the Old Testament, each human being is characterized as being alienated from God and in need of returning to God. The word for “sin” in both Hebrew and Greek means “to miss the mark,” that “mark” being God. The word “repent” in Hebrew literally means “to turn” and in Greek “to change the mind” *metanoia*. We remember the many parables and stories Jesus told about lost people and things.<sup>76</sup> All were told of humanity’s alienation and its absolute need to return to God. For our part we must realize that to turn away from God without repentance is to create a hell for ourselves in which we are eternally lost. This awareness is the fundamental insight that prepares us for Christ and His Kingdom.

North American society is generally indifferent to the content of a person’s belief, all religions being viewed as having more or less equal value.<sup>77</sup> But inasmuch as the Orthodox Church has always affirmed the necessity of Christian faith and membership in the one, true Church, the Orthodox in this country need to examine their own attitudes toward those outside the Church lest religious critics undermine the Church’s evangelistic mission among the non-Orthodox.

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<sup>75</sup> Acts 4:2.

<sup>76</sup> Luke chapter 5.

<sup>77</sup> Barna. Ibid. pages 33-45

The primary proclamation and teaching of Jesus Christ was the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is a present reality. It is within each of us. It is the true Paradise and more valuable than any other gift that God has prepared for us. Jesus had a ministry that was native to those He met. After Pentecost the Church proclaimed Jesus as Lord, crucified and resurrected, and His divine Message as the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Faith in the Resurrection gives insight into who Jesus was and is. The three synoptic gospels<sup>78</sup> have as their turning point the Transfiguration, before which Peter answers Jesus' question *Who do you say that I am?* By stating that *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*, Peter not knowing the depth of truth to his words, then witnessed in the Transfiguration where indeed Jesus is revealed as the Son of God in all His glory. The Gospel of John does not have the same structure but John continually turns the question "Who do you say that I am?" back to the listener/reader of his Gospel awaiting an answer coming from faith.<sup>79</sup>

Contrast the above teaching on the Kingdom of God and faith with the temptation of our society's religious indifferentism. We Orthodox Christians are tempted to believe that while we may foster our beliefs in our own church communities as much as we desire, we must agree that these beliefs are exclusively our own and not intended for all people, in all times and in all places. On the contrary true religion is not a matter of individual choice but the revelation of God. As Orthodox Christians we must never have any other gods than the one true and living God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and we must proclaim the revelation to all.

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<sup>78</sup> Matthew, Mark and Luke.

<sup>79</sup> See *The Orthodox Study Bible*, page 48, an explanation of the Transfiguration.

## The Impact of the Kingdom

At a certain point if we call ourselves Christians we have to decide whether the teaching of His Kingdom and the resurrection of Jesus, really make a difference. For St. Paul they certainly did. In Acts, Luke portrays Paul as making three intentional missionary journeys in order to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ from Jerusalem to Rome. No one would doubt that Paul saw evangelism as a necessity. He evaluated his resources, set his goals and created an intentional program to realize them.

Let us take one example from St. Paul and describe it in modern terminology. We must remember that St. Paul is speaking about just a few people who were not ordained clergy.<sup>80</sup> St. Paul had the ability to:

- Identify and select those who would be effective evangelists
- Recruit them to work with him
- Train them when necessary
- Send them to the areas where they would be effective

Many contemporary Orthodox Christians on the other hand might describe their evangelism with the following four claims:

- We are not making an impact on non-Christians
- We are planning to make an impact on non-Christians
- It's OK if we do; and
- It's OK if we don't

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<sup>80</sup> See *Acts* chapters 13-19. The missionary journeys of Paul and others that went out to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.

We can imagine St. Paul's reaction to that attitude! Such a lukewarm, casual attitude might be brought on by relativism, secularism, or liberalism, but in any case, that attitude is simply unthinkable for Paul or for that matter for any committed Christian.

### **The Networks of Communication**

The single most comprehensive, contemporary lesson in Church growth can be learned by standing in any Orthodox church on the first Sunday of Great Lent and listening to the Gospel reading of John:

*And the two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned and saw them following and saith unto them, What seek ye?...One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him was Andrew...He first findeth his own brother Simon and said unto him, We have found the Messiah which is to be interpreted, the Christ...And he brought him to Jesus...The following day Jesus would go forth into Galilee and findeth Philip...Philip findeth Nathaniel.<sup>81</sup>*

A paraphrase of the events in this passage is as follows:

- Jesus told Andrew, *Come and see*, and he did.
- Because it was important, Andrew went and found his brother Simon Peter and brought him to Jesus.
- Jesus told Philip, *Follow Me*, and he did.
- Because it was important, Philip went and found his friend Nathaniel and told him and Nathaniel came to Jesus.

Anyone who can fully grasp the implications of this narrative and is willing to apply it actively, is on the way to successful evangelism in the local mission.

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<sup>81</sup> John 1: 37-45.

The following statistics on recruited membership were given at a Mission Retreat for priests.<sup>82</sup> Typically, members of any mission have joined because of:

- Visitations by priest or member of parish 1-2%
- Walked in off the street 2-3%
- Special need met by mission 2-3%
- Program offered by mission 3-4 %
- Sunday School 3-5%
- Clergy 3-5%
- “Crusade/special event/guest speaker” .001%
- A relative or friend 70-90%

Chances are very great that if you are reading this text you are a baptized Christian because a relative or a friend brought you to the Church. It would be strange to expect anything else. Further analysis of the 70-90% in the last category is illuminating: If a majority of the people were brought by relatives, then the mission is more static; if they were brought by friends the mission is more dynamic.<sup>83</sup>

A principle related to the family-friends phenomenon illustrated above is found in the New Testament emphasis on evangelism through households. The calling of Zacchaeus and the bringing of salvation to him and to all his house is not coincidentally the Gospel reading that alerts us to preparation for Great Lent, the time of the catechumenate. Similarly we note the same paradigm in Acts when Paul evangelizes Lydia and her house,<sup>84</sup> the jailer and his house,<sup>85</sup> and the leader of the synagogue and his

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<sup>82</sup> Information given at OCA, Diocese of the West, Mission Deanery Retreat, Las Vegas, NV, 2/14-2/16, 2006, source unknown.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Acts 16: 14, 15.

<sup>85</sup> Acts 16: 30-34.

house<sup>86</sup>, to mention a few. Our Church normally appoints the Zacchaeus passage for the prayer and blessing of a new house, recognizing the principle of the natural growth of the Church through the family and the associations of the household.

Throughout the New Testament it is assumed that the primary mode of Church growth is evangelism. Sometimes individuals from native Orthodox cultures lose sight of this reality because of their native situation. There are only three means whereby people become members of missions: birth, transfer from another Orthodox Church to the mission and evangelism. Christian parenting cannot be expected to be the process by which the entire world becomes Christian. Likewise transfer of membership to the “new” mission means that an “old” mission has lost a member, so the process is a “wash.” The icon or image that we are given to imitate is that of evangelism, the draught of fishes, the making of disciples. Individuals who hear the Gospel are expected to proclaim the Gospel.

### **The Way (or the Two Ways) in Scripture**

According to the Scriptures participation in the Kingdom of God and salvation are tied to ethical and mission-oriented action. This action is symbolically described as “The Way of the Lord.” For the Christian this simple expression can have a profound, even mystical context. Let us take a deeper look at “The Way of the Lord” as we find it in Scripture. There are for men and women two ways:

- 1) **The Way of the Lord**, or the good and right way (Genesis 18:19; Psalm 18:21, 25:9; I Samuel 12:23); and

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<sup>86</sup> Acts 18: 8



- 2) **The way of evil**, that of sinners and the wicked (Psalm 1:1, Proverbs 2:12; Jeremiah 18:11; Ezekiel 3:18).

Although a person's way may be either good or evil (I King 8:36; Genesis 6:12) depending on free will, the Way of the Lord is always right, perfect, just and true. As we often repeat in the prayers that quote the Old Testament texts, the Lord desires not the death of the sinner but that the sinner turns from evil ways and lives. This repentance is necessitated by the fact that of the two ways described above only one leads to peace and life while the other leads to misery and death. Everyone's ways are known and seen by God and each is rewarded according to the way chosen. When God began to teach and lead the people under the Old Covenant the Way of the Lord was identified with the Mosaic Law.

Jesus talks about the Way in His teaching ministry: *Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and those who find it are few.*<sup>87</sup> The New Testament writers saw the Way of the Lord as it was proclaimed by the prophets completed and fulfilled in Christ.<sup>88</sup> In John's Gospel<sup>89</sup> Jesus says to the disciples: *and where I go you know the way...I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me. The new and living way*<sup>90</sup> to God as

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<sup>87</sup> Matthew 7:13-14.

<sup>88</sup> Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:2-3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23; I Corinthians 12:31.

<sup>89</sup> John 14:4ff.

<sup>90</sup> Hebrews 10:20.

made possible by Christ as the path of salvation, truth and peace. Thus Luke rightly identifies Christianity as “the Way” and emphasizes this repeatedly.<sup>91</sup>

### **The Two Ways in Early Christian Writings**

The Christian Church took root when believers passed on their faith in Christ to other faithful believers. In this way Jesus’ original followers evangelized others, and the church maintained continuity from age to age; those who evangelized others, wrote, passed on the Scriptures, taught the traditions and guided the flock.

Impossible as it seems, given the turmoil and distress of the second century A.D. we do have some writings from the early Christian community<sup>92</sup>. As these authors preserved, copied, and passed on the Scriptures, they also wrote letters, instructions and homilies. Out of all that must have been written, we have only a small portion. We have a letter from one church to another; the impassionate letters of a beleaguered bishop on his way to martyrdom; one letter from another bishop, along with an account of his martyrdom; two homilies, passed on to us in the form of letters; a church manual from some unknown place or places; and a set of visions and parables by an unknown author.<sup>93</sup>

That does not sound like much today. Still, those earliest Christian writings outside Scripture are more valuable to the church than we can possibly imagine. Implicit on every page is the assurance of evangel truth: that God is, that Jesus Christ is, and that our salvation is real.

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<sup>91</sup> Jack N. Sparks, editor. *The Apostolic Fathers*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Light and Life Publishing Company 1978, pages 308-315.

<sup>92</sup> See writings of Barnabas, Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp, as well as The Didache and the Shepherd of Hermas found in Jack N. Sparks, ed. *The Apostolic Fathers*. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Light and Life Publishing Company, 1978).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

Remember, too, that there is authority behind what these authors have to say to Christians today—particularly Clement, bishop of Rome at the end of the first century; Ignatius, bishop of Antioch from the latter part of the first century through about a decade of the second; and Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna for about half of the second century. These leaders had direct connection with the apostles and others who knew the Lord in the flesh. They also held responsible and honored positions in early Christian communities. And need we add that they stood firmly under persecution and died martyr's deaths? Should we not therefore pay close attention to what they write?<sup>94</sup>

Let us turn to three examples of the teaching of the Two Ways in early Christian writings. This exercise is designed to acquaint us with useful literature for the teaching of ethics, which historically is the first step in evangelism.

### **The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (Didache)<sup>95</sup>**

The first six chapters of the Teaching tell of the Way of Life (I-IV) and the Way of Death (V-VI) but also make an important shift into the familiar Gospel idiom: *First you shall love the God who made you; secondly you shall love your neighbor as yourself.* Love of neighbor is later equated with showing others the love that God has shown; for *the Father's will is that we give to all from the gifts we have received.* When each individual accepts the Teaching personally it prepares that person as an ambassador for God's Kingdom. At that point the catechumen becomes an evangelist, the recipient becomes an ambassador.

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., ix-x.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 305-320.

### **The Epistle of Barnabas<sup>96</sup>**

This epistle was considered as part of the New Testament in Alexandria for some time. In its concluding chapters, 18-21, the Way of Light and the Way of Darkness are described. Barnabas identifies the Way of Light with Christianity and expects his readers to be good lawgivers and advisers to one another as well as to those who still need to be brought into the Way.

### **The Shepherd of Hermas<sup>97</sup>**

With the recent increased fascination for apocalypses it would be natural for this book to become popular reading today. It is an apocalypse consisting of a series of revelations made to Hermas. Although the book is apocalyptic its purpose is ethical and practical. For every revelation there is an accompanying ethical explanation. The fascination that the second century readers had for apocalypses was used by the Shepherd to teach those ethics and practical Christianity. The chapters of the book called Mandates 6-8 speak of the righteous way which is straight and level and the unrighteous way which is crooked and rough. He explains simply that there is an objective right and wrong for the Christian.

In summary we see from the above that it is necessary for the community to first follow the way of spirituality before evangelism can even begin. Once the community has reached this state where each member has begun to follow the way of the Lord then evangelism can begin and church growth will begin.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 263-304.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. pages 155-262.

## Chapter IV

### Outcome of Planting This Mission

The mission in Jupiter that is the focus of this thesis was immediately in trouble. The congregation was bent on acquiring new members and acquiring their own property.

They put the horse before the cart. For the Church to grow there are certain priorities or prerequisites that must be met. The first of these is not the acquisitions of new members. That comes later and only later and only if other spiritual conditions are met by the existing members. The first and most important priority is for each and every member to know the Lord in a special way.

Our first task in helping the Church to grow is to enter into the reality of God and to be in personal communion with God. We must strive to enter into the realm of God and to experience coexistence with God. The essential meaning of our faith is integration with the Divine and realization of that divine fullness which purifies and frees us from the state of our sinfulness.

There are three priorities, one of which is to know God. The second priority is to have spiritual growth and a communion of love throughout the whole community. The third priority is to proclaim and serve, to go out into the world proclaiming the message of the gospel and leading all to its truth and manifesting sacrificial love expecting nothing in return.

Unfortunately, the original core members of the mission did not understand these priorities. Therefore, the priest had to teach them that without these priorities in place there would be no growth in the mission. James D. and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead's book

Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry<sup>98</sup> helped greatly for the priest to deal with this problem. In the Whitehead's book there is a three stage method of theological reflection in ministry.<sup>99</sup>

The first stage is attending. We are seeking out the information on a particular pastoral concern that is available in personal experience, Christian tradition, and cultural resources. A necessary ingredient in effective listening to each of the sources is the ability to suspend premature judgment. Suspending judgment is, of course, a threatening venture. Opening ourselves to new information leaves us vulnerable to challenge and change. Yet the effectiveness of this first stage of theological reflection depends on the ability to explore honestly the information available in the three sources. A tendency to make a quick evaluation will cut short this exploration and lessen the chance of coming to new insight that may lead to creative pastoral response.<sup>100</sup>

The second stage is assertion. All three sources of information described in the model contribute to theological reflection in ministry. The contribution of each is not made in isolation, but in an assertive relationship, of challenge and confirmation. There are two stages: conversation and crucible. The challenge here is to bring these separate and often conflicting voices into contact. In the metaphor of conversation, the over assertive person dominates the discussion; the insufficiently assertive person withdraws and does not participate. Therefore communal effort is defeated.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> James D. and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead. *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry*. Franklin, Wisconsin: Sheed and Ward, 1999.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. p13

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p14

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, p15

The third stage is Pastoral Response. The information gained by listening we bring into the interplay of assertion, with the hope that this dynamic interaction will generate insight on how we should respond. The challenge of the third movement of the method is to translate insight into action. The effectiveness of this stage depends on the quality of the earlier reflection. The choices available to the community now arise from insights clarified in the assertive stage. Integral pastoral decisions are expressive of and in continuity with these insights.<sup>102</sup>

There was a strong give and take relationship between the priest and a core group of the mission. The group is made up of four women and two men. The men contribute almost nothing to the conversations. Of the four women, two are very aggressive and the other two passive. When there is a discussion of a task that is brought forth immediately, the aggressive ones take control of the meeting. The priest can contribute but not vote. There is a give and take scenario as the passive try to let their voice be heard over the aggressive members. There is often many hot voices and unkind things said. They have to be reminded by the priest of the mission and the situation we are in. It is difficult but order is restored.

The main disagreement is that there are no members coming into the mission at this time and they blame many things on this fact. They blame the priest as “that is his job.” They say if we move into a permanent building that would bring in new members. The solution to this dilemma is that spiritual growth has to come first; however, the core group is not able to hear this from the priest. His sermons are constantly about the need for individual member’s spiritual lives.

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid. 16-17

Christ's command to go and make disciples prompts the Church to evangelical efforts but an addition of members does not necessarily mean that the Church is growing spiritually. It may be growing only in an external superficial way. Both the Scriptures and the traditions of our Church see Church growth as inward spiritual growth. If the Church is a community of spiritual beings then the Church must focus on growth as the spiritual Body of Christ. This is the message that the priest was trying to convey to the core group. This message fell on some deaf ears. The group's only concern was to move into a permanent place of worship in order to attract people to become members.

The outcome of this situation is that the priest was put on a leave of absence. A retired priest who is only able to come on Sunday mornings to do Liturgy has taken over the ministry to the mission. The mission priest continues to develop a practical plan for mission development that will, hopefully, standardize OCA mission foundations and avoid this problematic outcome.

The mission at the beginning had ten members and now there are twenty-five members. There is growth but is it quality growth that will touch the lives of people in a spiritual way? That remains to be seen.



## Chapter V

### A New Praxis: Founding a Mission

This concluding chapter presents 9 practical concerns when founding mission: strategic plan, facilities, effective evangelization, finances, legal matters, insurance, taxes, development, and stewardship. Each of these concerns may be encountered in any mission foundation. Strategies for each are offered here as a guide.<sup>103</sup>

#### Mission Start-up Strategy

The long-term development of a mission can be viewed in terms of a cycle with four distinct periods of growth:

1. Preparatory Period - can be done by several visiting clergy
2. Pioneer Period - should ideally have a full-time resident clergy
3. Period of Growth and Organization – requires full-time resident clergy
4. Period of Reproduction – may require additional clergy

Each stage involves a series of significant events and the progress of a planting project can be measured in terms of these events, i.e., when and if they are implemented as well as the degree of success they meet.

What is presented here focuses on the first two stages and is only an overview of basic patterns and possibilities. Each new mission planted, while guided by this basic outline, will have to include details specific to its own location, personnel and resources. In other words, before a new mission planting project is actually initiated the planting team should develop its own site-specific strategy.

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<sup>103</sup> Pappas, Ibid, pages 51-67.

### **Preparatory Period**

Most of what is done during this first stage is developed and put into place before the new mission planting actually begins. Giving proper attention to these initial steps will help the clergy and the initiating groups launch the new project effectively and may minimize or even eliminate some of the conflicts and setbacks often experienced during the early years of a mission's life.

### **Desire/Vision for New Missions**

All mission plantings begin with a basic desire to proclaim the Gospel and expand the Church, i.e., with a spontaneous inner drive necessitated by our faith. In Acts 8:4 we read that the Christians scattered by persecution *went everywhere preaching the word*. If that desire is nurtured in our parishes, deliberately taught at our seminaries and actively envisioned by our leadership many mission planting opportunities will arise. Priests will provide parishioners with outreach opportunities, our seminaries will supplement their curriculum with courses on mission planting and evangelism, and our leaders will continue to seek opportunities for new growth.

### **Decision to start a Mission**

Often the decision to start a new mission results when a group of Orthodox faithful, a priest or the Church hierarchy recognizes the planting potential of a particular situation. In other words we need to develop an "eye" for mission planting opportunities.

What then should we be looking for? An existing parish might have a number of its members living in a particular area and decide with the help of the diocese to commission the establishment of a "daughter" mission. This is what occurred to cause

the founding of Saint Peter the Apostle Orthodox Mission in Jupiter, Florida; the founding members all lived long driving distances from existing Orthodox parishes in Palm Beach and Martin Counties.

An established parish could, with the support of the Diocese, adopt an existing mission effort and provide support and resources.

Several parishes could, under the direction of the Diocese, initiate outreach in a non-churched area. That should lead to the formation of a local core group which could become the foundation of a new mission.

These are but a few examples of potential mission planting scenarios. Whenever we recognize a possibility we should secure appropriate support from the diocesan bishop and the dean in whose deanery the new mission will be located before any further work on a strategy is undertaken.

### **Choose Target Area**

The next logical step is to select a site for the new mission. The preliminary decisions which may have already been made during the preceding step are now formalized. In addition to choosing the actual geographic location developing a strategy for the new mission will involve:

- Locating OCA parishes/missions willing to support the new effort
- Identifying and contacting potential mission members
- Gathering detailed demographic information on the target area
- Analyzing the status and disposition of existing ministries

## **Assess Mission Planting Potential**

One of the most important aspects of the preparatory stage is the assessment of the mission planting potential of the target area as well as of the initiating group.

**The Target Area:** Most of the information needed for this step has already been gathered during the demographic and socio-religious analysis of the target area. Some of the questions that need to be answered are:

- Is the area growing?
- Is the area's economic situation stable or growing?
- Is there new residential construction in the area?
- Are there other Orthodox parishes/missions in the area?
- Do we really need another Orthodox mission in this area?

**The Initiating/Core Group:** It is absolutely essential to establish a level of commitment that will provide the planting project with adequate local support and resources. Unfortunately many Orthodox do not realize that starting a mission will require much more of them than does participating in an established parish. In a mission setting members of the core group may well have to give more, attend services more regularly, support and participate in outreach efforts, etc.

For that reason it is important to make sure the mission priest and the initiating group:

- Share a common vision including goals and definition of key terms
- Share a common understanding of the type and level of commitment that will be required
- Share a realistic understanding of financial requirements

### **Establish Initial Organizational Structures**

Another important aspect of the preparatory stage is the establishment of adequate organizational structures and resources. These include things like:

- Establishing a local leadership team
- Choosing and assigning clergy whose background, personality, education and talents match both the ecclesio-cultural environment of the target area and the makeup of the initiating group
- Establishing a preliminary budget. This not only helps the core group plan for anticipated expenses but also encourages a sacrificial approach reflective of its member's income levels.

### **Establish Liturgical Base**

With most of the preparatory work done the new mission will want to start meeting for services. In order to do so the group will have to:

- **Secure temporary meeting place.** Depending on available clergy, resources and frequency this meeting place may be a private home or rooms rented as needed (see the Facilities Checklist for additional suggestions).
- **Implement initial cycle of services.** If possible the new group should begin with an evening Vesper/morning Liturgy combination. If a priest is available the services should be on Saturday and Sunday and once started should take place regularly: monthly, bi-weekly or weekly as resources allow.

### **Develop Preliminary Outreach Strategy**

For the new mission to grow, it will need to develop appropriate outreach strategies.

The core group itself should develop and implement these strategies. It will not suffice to rely exclusively on the clergy for this aspect of the work. At least three elements need to be considered during the preparatory stage:

- Motivation and training of the initiating group. On the one hand it may be necessary to help them understand the necessity and importance of the Orthodox

mission heritage. On the other hand it will most certainly be necessary to provide them with practical instruction on how to share their faith

- Identification of potential target groups. Obviously the missionary proclamation of the Church is to be addressed to everyone. Nevertheless there may be segments of the general population that are more receptive than others.
- Appropriate methodologies. However a group chooses to proclaim the gospel, advertise or promote its services and events those efforts should be matched to the ecclesio-cultural environment of the target area.

### **Pioneer Period**

As soon as the work described above is actually initiated the new mission will enter the next stage of development. What follows is simply a “road map” that highlights the major milestones and possibilities. Once again it is important to emphasize that each mission will have to supply details specific to its site and group.

#### 1. Plan and Implement Initial Cycles of Services

- Sunday Divine Liturgy
- Saturday Vespers
- Vespers and Liturgy on major feast days
- Special services during Nativity and Great Lent
- Daily Cycle—e.g., daily Vespers on Wednesday (or as often as possible)

#### 2. Establish Liturgical Functions (esp. music, Servers, Readers)

- Obtain necessary service books: Gospel, Apostle, Horologion, etc.
- Purchase music
- Choir rehearsals
- Training of readers and servers
- Schedule of readers and servers

#### 3. Assess Need and Establish Pastoral Care

- Set up traditional form of visitation (esp. for house blessings)
- Set up visits to the hospital and the sick

- Plan social gatherings (luncheons, etc.) especially keeping in mind the needs of those whose spouses have already died, those who live alone or those who are not able to come to church often due to health, distance or other circumstances

#### 4. Assess Need and Establish Catechesis

- Mini-teaching at the end of Divine Liturgy about service, feast days, prayer, etc.
- Written teaching material in association with the monthly calendar and post-liturgical instruction, e.g., prayer booklet, invitations
- Catechumen class
- Bible Studies
- Orthodox Book Studies
- Discussion group on missions and evangelism
- Teaching of leadership team
- Church school and youth meetings

#### 5. Initial Evangelistic Outreach

- Small “introduction cards” designed to hand to people we speak with about the church.
- Follow-up with visitors: letters, phone calls, visits
- Discussion groups in homes of parishioners
- Website construction
- Public lectures offered at the church
- Mini-retreats: men, women, students, youth
- Create Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) chapter for students at local university

#### 6. Refigure Budget (Growth Oriented)

- a. New budgets developed each year
- b. Tax ID number obtained and incorporation papers filed

#### 7. Continued Search for “Permanent” Meeting Place

- Establish land/building fund

- Establish property/building needs
- Systematically review properties

### **Period of Growth and Organization**

- Implement Parish Ministry Model
- Spiritual Life
- Liturgical Life
- Member Care
- Education
- Stewardship
- Outreach
- Secure permanent Temple
- Transition from Mission to Parish

### **Church Facilities Checklist**

Church facilities are a complex issue for a new church community. A church that is in a poor location, inadequately sized, in bad condition, etc., can severely hinder growth of a fledging community. People do judge a book by its cover.

The first thing to remember is that the Church is a community not a building. Orthodox architecture is sacred but in its first days it is like the tabernacle in the wilderness<sup>104</sup> and not the Temple.<sup>105</sup> As the community grows the temple can be built in God's time with God's help.

### **How to Find the Right Facilities**

Perhaps the hardest thing to do is to find the proper building to use as a church facility. Because of high rents, zoning and lack of available/suitable facilities, facility shopping

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<sup>104</sup> Exodus 25:8ff.

<sup>105</sup> II Chronicles 2:5ff.



can be frustrating. Unlike searching for an apartment to rent or a home to buy, searching for a church location that meets all needs can take several months. You have to commit to a long and relentless search perhaps visiting 100 or more locations. This will take a lot of work, patience, and prayer.

**Suggestions:**

- Existing churches that do not have a pastor
- Seventh Day Adventists and even some liberal Jews have been known to rent space to Christian churches.
- Episcopalian and Roman Catholic parishes may have space to rent when they do not have services
- Office-warehouse space (well-designed conversions are nice)
- Storefronts
- Chapels in funeral homes and hospitals
- Veterans groups: VFW, DAV halls
- Fraternal organizations and lodges (Moose, Elks, etc.)

**Rental Agreement**

It is important to have a contractual relationship. Churches that have “free” rent often are asked to move suddenly and at the owner’s whim. This is disruptive to a young community. This rent is really not free because it causes emotional and even long-term financial loss. Think of the big picture.

**Move Frequency**

Do not move often! Unless planned, moving should be done only out of extreme necessity. Always move “up.” To “step back” and go to a smaller or poorer facility can really hurt the momentum of a new mission community.

## **First Impressions**

What does the first time visitor see? To some our appearance can be an indication of what our view of God is. Remember the importance of first impressions:

### 1) Cleanliness

- Are the bathrooms clean?
- Is the kitchen trash emptied?
- Are the floors swept and rugs vacuumed?

### 2) Aesthetics

- Neatness—is everything in place?
- Color coordination—is everything hodgepodge or do things match?
- Iconography—straightened, tops dusted, cleaned of and smudges?
- “Curb appeal”—what impression does the church give when you pull up to it? Is it inviting? Does it say “church?”

### 3) Signage

- Is the church easy to find from the highway?
- Is the church easily identifiable?
- Are the bathrooms easy to find?

## **Location**

As in any, real estate, location is critical. It does not have to be a high-profile location but one that is easily accessible. Orthodoxy tends to be a destination church not a drive-by drop-in church. The average person, generally speaking, does not drive farther to church than they do to work. Location will influence which socio-economic group is attracted to your church. A bad neighborhood will be a hindrance to those who are concerned about safety.

## **Size**

Nave: estimate 9-10 square feet per person for the nave. So for example if your nave is 1,000 square feet at 100% capacity you will fit about 100 people. To some this will feel

crowded and perhaps even present a problem for future growth. This is due to something known as the 80 percent rule. If on a Sunday morning a visitor attends church and sees it only 50 percent full the visitor may wonder what is wrong with the church. On the other hand if it is more than 80 percent full it will be perceived as being uncomfortably full and guests (thus possible new members) may think there is no room for them there. People like their space! So the above example of 1,000 square feet is actually good for only 80 people.

Fellowship Hall: 50-75% of those present at a service stay for fellowship and a minimum of 10 to 15 square feet per person is needed. A rule might be to have the fellowship hall size equal to the size of the nave. Do not neglect the importance of adequate fellowship space. A great deal of ministry is done during coffee hour. This is the time we reach out to visitors and inquirers. Also round tables if available are better for fellowship than square or rectangular tables.

### **Miscellaneous**

- In evaluating a facility, acoustics are important
- Can you “tear down” and “set up” for services if necessary?
- Are there storage possibilities?
- Can you use a censer and light candles?

### **Building Programs**

It is not the focus here to talk about how to run a building program but to suggest a few precautions. An ill timed or poorly run building program can cause a church to lose vital momentum and even divide a young and growing community. Begin your building program when you are sure it is God’s timing not your own. Building “fever” can be fatal!

### **Final Thoughts**

It can be very frustrating finding the right location. If it is God's will for your church community to exist, you will find the right location by prayer and fasting and by beseeching God. When the time is right it will be revealed to you.

### **Training**

#### **Guide for Training Altar Servers**

Altar servers play an important part in the smooth and orderly celebration of the Divine Liturgy and they help the priest in his sacred work. It is very important that they receive the proper training. This section is neither a complete manual nor does it encompass the many traditions in the Orthodox Church but is meant to be a starting point.

To begin, the altar servers should come to the sanctuary fifteen minutes before the Divine Liturgy begins. They should make the sign of the cross when they enter the altar, do a prostration and get a blessing from the priest. They need to fold their vestments with the cross facing up and ask the priest to bless them. They should be clean and neatly dressed waiting for the priest's instructions. Different tasks should be assigned to each server, whether it is carrying a candle, taking care of the censer or other duties.

Altar servers should pay attention to the service and if possible have service books. Holding classes is a good way to teach and achieve good order in the service. The order of services should follow the guidelines of the OCA and the Diocese.

Inexpensive altar server robes can be made if there are people in the mission who can sew. Material can be obtained at any local store. A suggestion would be to start

with a gold color and then later purple and other colors appropriate for the liturgical seasons can be added later. Different general sizes are best and can be adapted as servers grow or more are added. Make sure that the servers are properly instructed to clean up after the service and to take care of the robes so they will last longer.

### **Orthodox Services: Study Guide for Readers<sup>106</sup>**

The purpose of this section is to give a brief orientation to individuals who wish to know how to conduct an Orthodox Vigil service in Orthodox parishes and missions. This section is by no means a detailed manual of the church services. The main goal is to present initial information about the services and to direct readers to printed sources that can be used for planning, conducting and studying of the divine services, in the absence of a priest.

All Church services that do not involve sacraments (Eucharist, Holy unction, etc.) can be conducted with or without a priest. Therefore, those missions that do not have a permanent priest should not deprive themselves of the Divine Grace that is sent through the Church's cycle of services. In the absence of a priest a Reader Service (that omits the priest's part) can be done for Vespers, Compline, Midnight Office, Matins and the Hours. The Vigil service is usually done on Saturday evenings and on the eve of major Church feasts. All the major feasts of the Church can be found in the Church calendar published every year by various Orthodox organizations. Besides the major feasts a Vigil is also usually conducted on the feast days of various saints of the Orthodox Church. Other occasions for a Vigil can include the commemoration of a miracle connected to a particular icon, the celebration of the Church New Year on

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<sup>106</sup> This study guide can be found in the glossary of Appendix I.

September 1<sup>st</sup>, etc. If a priest is not available the members of the mission community with the blessing of the priest in charge of the mission can decide to do a Vigil service. In any case, if there is any question or confusion about church services contact the bishop or area dean and get clarification on what can be done in the absence of a priest.

Every Vigil contains the Vespers and Matins services. The main parts of these services can be found in the Horologion or Book of the Hours: the daily offices<sup>107</sup>. The basic Horologion provides the major structure of the church services for Vespers, Compline, Midnight Office, Matins and the Hours. All other parts of the services, the canons and various hymns for a commemorated Church feast (troparions, kontakions, stichera) are added to the main structure of the Horologion from other books.<sup>108</sup> These other main service books are the: Octechos, Menaion, Triodion, and Pentecostarion.

**Octoechos**<sup>109</sup> (the book of the eight tones) contains canons, troparions, kontakions and stichera divided into eight tones, one for each week in an eight-week cycle.<sup>110</sup> We start singing a section of the Octechos for Tone One on Thomas Sunday, the first Sunday after Pascha and keep rotating these sections (one through eight) throughout the whole year. Each section for each tone of the week has hymns and canons for every day of that week and a reader can include them in the appropriate places of the Horologion. A reader can usually find the tone of the week in the Rubrics Guide (published by St. Tikhon's Press). The Church week starts on Sunday. Therefore most of the calendars mention the weekly tone of that day. According to tradition, this division of the Church

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<sup>107</sup> *The Horologion or Book of the Hours the Daily Offices* translated from Church Slavonic by St. Tikhon's Seminary Press: South Canaan, Pennsylvania, 2000.

<sup>108</sup> These terms will be explained in the glossary.

<sup>109</sup> *Octoechos*. St. Tikhon's Seminary Press: South Canaan, Pennsylvania, 2000. These terms will be explained in the glossary.

hymns into eight tones was mainly accomplished by one of the greatest psalmists of the Church, St. John of Damascus, in the eight century.

**The Daily Menaion**<sup>111</sup> contains hymns, psalms and prayers in honor of a saint or commemorated church events for every day of the year. For example, on April 23, the Church always commemorates the Great Martyr George. The hymns for this commemoration are in the Daily Menaion for April 23. They should also be incorporated in the appropriate places of the Horologion.

**The Lenten Triodion**<sup>112</sup> contains parts that accompany the services in the Horologion during the season of Great Lent. We start using the Lenten Triodion a few weeks before Lent begins and finish using it on Holy Saturday.

**The Pentecostario** is a book that contains festive hymns that accompany the main structure of the Horologion during the Paschal season from Pascha to the Sunday after Pentecost (the Sunday of All Saints).

The question one might have by now is how to combine these divinely inspired prayers and hymns in order to create a harmonious service glorifying God? There is not a simple answer. However, a long detailed answer to this question is contained in the

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<sup>111</sup> *The Festal Menaion* translated from the original Greek by Mother Mary of the Orthodox Monastery of the Veil of the Mother of God, Bussy-en-Othe, France and Archimandrite Kalliston Ware, Spalding Lecturer in Eastern Orthodox Studies, University of Oxford with an introduction by Archpriest Georges Florovsky, Emeritus Professor of Eastern Church History, Harvard University, Third printing St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, South Canaan, Pennsylvania, 1998.

<sup>112</sup> *The Lenten Triodion* translated from the original Greek by Mother Mary of the Orthodox Monastery of the Veil of the Mother of God Bussy-en-Othe, France and Archimandrite Kalliston Ware, Spalding Leturer in Eastern Orthodox Studies, University of Oxford, Third printing St Tikhon's Seminary Press, South Cannna, Pennsylvania, 1994.

book called the Typikon.<sup>113</sup> Although no extant English translation for the Typikon exists there are a few very good publications containing the rubrics of the Typikon.

**The Order of Divine Services,**<sup>114</sup> what the word “Typikon” means. This publication of the OCA gives a detailed explanation of how to put together and conduct divine services for every occasion of the Church year. In the back of the book there are many commentaries on usage and reading of different parts of the services. There are chapters explaining the usage of different church books, a glossary of liturgical terminology and other very useful information. The liturgical calendar is published new for every year. It tells readers which saints or events are commemorated each day, which type of service (rank of service) needs to be conducted, and which Scripture readings are needed for that day. After the type of service and Scripture readings are determined one can refer to the Order of Divine Services which explain step by step how to conduct the service. (Both books are translated from liturgical sources used by the Russian Orthodox Church.)

These are the main books that can be used by readers to combine and conduct church services for any occasion of the year. There are many other Orthodox publications dedicated to liturgics. One excellent example is *The Law of God* by Fr. Seraphim Slobodskoy.<sup>115</sup> The chapters that explain the Church services and their conduct are wonderful. Also in the Festal Menaion and Lenten Triodion several chapters are devoted to the structure of the divine services. Readers should become

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<sup>113</sup> The Typikon is the book which contains directions for the celebration of the daily cycle of divine services (Orthors, Hours, Liturgy, Vespers, Aftersupper); for the weekly cycle (Octoechos); for the monthly services (Menaion); for the divine services of Holy Lene (Triodion and the Holy Pentecostarion); and also for the various rites when combinations are necessary as the result of the coinciding of feasts, etc.

<sup>114</sup> *The Order of Divine Services*. Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, 1971.

<sup>115</sup> An English copy can be obtained from Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, NY.



familiar with these chapters. They may also find it helpful to make copies and place them on the reader's stand as a reference.

Ultimately, the best training for readers and priests is to do the divine services as frequently as possible.

### **Education**

The life-blood of a new mission is to bring new people and to educate them in the Orthodox Faith. These people may be those raised in the Orthodox Faith or those who are seeking to enter the Church. In either case education is critical in establishing the firm foundation upon which the mission will stand.

Thankfully much educational material is available in English. This material is inexpensive and easy to obtain from many sources and it is recyclable for use year to year. Material in other languages may be harder to obtain. Various Slavic (e.g., Russian) or Balkan (e.g., Serbian or Romanian) languages can be found fairly simply with some research but translations in languages such as Spanish will take more time (the Diocese of the South and Exarchate of Mexico can help in this regard).

Finally ask around. Find out what other parishes are doing. Some have been quite creative in setting up programs and have put together solid material. Missions often have to be creative since their membership is smaller and their facilities are often limited but successful missions have made education one of their primary tasks.

### **Catechism**

The models for catechism vary from mission to mission. One thing is absolutely clear: The catechumen must be guided through an established and formal training period. This

allows the person not only to be integrated into the Church in stages but also allows time for the priest to examine the person. There are many stories about catechumens who were rushed into the Church only to leave a short time later. So ensure that your mission's catechism is complete.

Many missions follow the already established tradition of using Great Lent as a time to train catechumens and then receive them into the Church on Holy Saturday. Other missions hold sessions as the need arises. Another system is to meet individually with catechumens throughout the year as opposed to holding one large class. The mission priest should examine the different systems and find one that best fits the mission. It is important to be flexible at this stage; if one way does not work use another that will. The important goal is to successfully bring new members to the Church. This must always be kept at the forefront.

There is no single uniform catechism for the Church so it is important to talk to other priests and utilize their experience. The plan for the catechumenate needs to be explained to the person so they know exactly what to expect and what is expected of them. Do not rush them into catechumenate status. Let them come to the mission and become comfortable before starting formal classes. A catechumen can be enrolled in a formal way by doing the service of the Reception into the Catechumenate (found in Volume I of *The Great Book of Needs*<sup>116</sup>).

Make sure there is material available for both inquirers and catechumens to read. Some good introductory material is found in the Conciliar Press pamphlets covering a

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<sup>116</sup> *The Great Book of Needs, Volume I, The Holy Mysteries*, translated from Church Slavonic by St. Tikhon's Monastery, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, South Canaan, Pennsylvania, 2000.

host of areas. The Orthodox Christian Publications Center (OCPC) also publishes the “Tract Master” series which is inexpensive and easy to reproduce. A place should be set aside in the meeting space for people to get these materials and read them at home. There should also be cards available for the inquiring visitor or guest to fill out with their name, address and phone number so that the priest can contact them and put them on the mailing list.

What follows are the stages of the process of bringing a person into the Church:

### **Guest**

This is someone making his or her first visit to an Orthodox Church. Make sure they are made to feel welcome and get to meet the other members of the mission. There should be contact information for them to fill out. Put them on the mailing list. Most people will return if they feel welcome and not pressured to explore the Orthodox Faith. Personal contact will always be the key to success.

### **Inquirer**

When a person has come around a few times then it is time to see if they are interested in the Church. A low-key talk is often the best way to find out about them, their interests and what they think of the Church. An introduction to the Faith is often helpful. Some people feel very uncomfortable while attending their first few services because they are unfamiliar with actions that others are doing (e.g., crossing themselves, venerating icons). Be patient and explain what is happening so that they feel more at ease. Do not force them to do anything they are not ready to do (e.g., some former Protestants need time to understand the veneration of icons).

Some missions have formal inquirer's classes from time to time. You can announce these in local newspapers or by some other means and have a simple one-hour class with plenty of time for questions. This is less threatening for people as they are in a group. Festivals and other events are a good time to have shorter mini classes; make these serve as simple introductions to the Faith.

There are many books to recommend but perhaps a good start is *The Orthodox Church*.<sup>117</sup> *For the Life of the World*<sup>118</sup> is another fine educational tool. These books provide a good foundation in the Church and the sacraments. There are many other books that are focused on Protestants, Roman Catholics and general catechism. Stay away from controversial books as they may be too much for inquirers initially.

Make sure you follow up with a personal letter to every inquirer so that they feel welcome. Thank them for visiting with you and recount certain recommendations such as a reading list. At some point extend a formal invitation to them to begin classes. Make sure the person is ready and do not force the issue.

### **Church School**

One of the biggest challenges in a small mission is how to set up a church school. The school can be large with many grades and classes or simple with just one class. The Orthodox Christian Education Commission (OCEC) and OCA Department of Christian Education (FOCUS) websites<sup>119</sup> have much material to help. The most important thing is to appoint a church school coordinator who will manage the program. This person can sift through the material and make recommendations. Use the model that best fits

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<sup>117</sup> Bishop Kallistos Ware. *The Orthodox Church*. St Vladimir's Press: Crestwood, New York, 2001.

<sup>118</sup> Alexander Schmemmann. *For the Life of the World*. St Vladimir's Press: Crestwood, New York, 1998.

<sup>119</sup> [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org).

the community then recruit adults who would like to teach. They need not know everything; they simply need to be willing to be there and learn. Most teachers end up growing in their faith as they learn it so they can in turn teach others. Try to have assistants to help the teacher manage the classroom. Make sure there is a complete list of those enrolled in the classes. Parents should also be informed as to what is being taught. Enlist their support!

It is important to hold classes regularly. Only special circumstances should interrupt a class. Find appropriate spaces and try to allow the youth to decorate so that they can see the fruits of their labor. Try to follow a schedule that is similar to the normal school year. Before the new church school year do the Prayers for a Child Beginning Instruction from the *Great Book of Needs*.<sup>120</sup> At the end of the school year try to give each student a small token of completion. A CD made by the OCA Department of Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministry<sup>121</sup> has many suggestions.

You can find material in a great variety of sources such as the OCA Department of Christian Education and the OCEC, the Greek Orthodox and Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocesan departments of religious education as well as others. Look through it all and familiarize yourself with the material. Find that which best fits the circumstances. Be creative with the very young and the teens!

Times for holding classes are also important. Some missions hold classes before or after Liturgy. Never hold classes during Liturgy as it takes too many people away from the worship of the Church. Some have classes on Saturday or weekdays. Do

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<sup>120</sup> *The Great Book of Needs, Volume IV*. Translated from Church Slavonic by St Tikhon's Monastery. St Tikhon's Seminary Press, South Canaan, Pennsylvania. 1999. page 259.

<sup>121</sup> [www.yya.oca.org](http://www.yya.oca.org).

whatever works best and feel free to change the routine to find the best result. Some missions have people who live so far away that they cannot be there often. Give material to the parents so they can, in effect, home school their children. Also integrate education with other activities such as social events, working at a local soup kitchen and prayer services.

An up and coming practice is to have a “Super Saturday” every so often. On these occasions the youth gather together for a day of prayer, education and fun. Even the smallest missions can hold a summer camp. There are good materials available on how to do this. Encourage the youth to attend deanery, diocesan and church wide events. Often orthodox parishes can combine their schools and camps. Talk to other parishes and find out how to cooperate. Try to fund all of this with donations or as a line item in the mission budget. People respond greatly when the mission pays attention to their children.

Adults should also be offered continuing education. Classes can use a variety of books and material. Of course central to this education is Bible study. Hold classes at a good time and encourage people to attend. Hold classes regularly and in some cases tailor them to different groups within the mission. In time small groups form and meet regularly on their own without the priest (but with of course his blessing). This is a powerful model that augments the educational process.

Remember education is for all in the mission, the priest and laity alike. Set realistic goals within the limits of the mission. The only failure is not to do anything.

**Bookstore**

Even the smallest mission can establish a modest bookstore. It can bring some needed cash and support itself after a short time. Make sure that the inventory moves and is not gathering dust in a box. Crosses, icons, simple books, tapes, CDs, videos, as well as service books always sell well. A manager should be appointed to manage the inventory.

Remember that bookstores often get discounts from suppliers. Take advantage of their policies. Suppliers may need your Federal and State tax-exempt ID. Some allow credit or consignment accounts. Some vendors may require you to do business with them for some time before allowing special accounts.

A big question is whether to establish a separate checking account for the bookstore. Some missions find it easier to manage this way while others like to integrate the bookstore proceeds with the mission's main account. It does not matter as long as income and expenditures are reported to the mission at council and annual meetings. Items that do not sell in effect become a waste, so think out purchases wisely to get the most out of limited funds.

The bookstore can be portable and be set up each week or it can have a permanent spot. Make sure people know it is there and whom to talk to about purchases. Advertise new items that have come in. Seasonal advertising and sales can be particularly valuable; for example at Christmas and Pascha. Remember Christmas is a good time for parents to buy Orthodox items for their children. Be creative and the bookstore will be important for the mission.

**Library**

Libraries can often be a luxury for small missions but they do provide a valuable educational tool. Small portable libraries of essential books can go a long way. A library can provide books for inquirers and catechumens so they do not have to purchase lots of books. Appoint a librarian who can manage the program. A modest budget can build up some essentials.

As with the bookstore, the library can be set up weekly or be in a permanent place. Make sure everyone knows whom to see to check books out. A simple checkout system can be established with 3x5 cards with the book's name and author which the person can sign and return to a box. This is a way to keep track of the books. Many libraries lose books over time as people forget to return books or simply keep them.

Also remember that the library does not have to be just books. There are now many multimedia items available. These can be slowly integrated into the collection. Remember to have a children's section. Places like St. Vladimir's Press have package plans for establishing libraries and they are offering these materials at reduced prices. Address all audiences and include non-English materials when appropriate. Remember, however, a library should be restricted to Church material; otherwise it can lose focus and become a dumping ground for people's old books which may have nothing to do with Church.

One final note: Remember to record your own mission's history. Picture albums, news clippings and even oral history become invaluable over time. It is wonderful to be able to pull out an old picture and reminisce about the mission's past. And when anniversaries come around these "memory joggers" can be even more exciting.



Remember to leave a record of what you have done to the next generation so they can rejoice! The librarian can also be in charge of this project.

### **Liturgical Resources**

Most new missions will not be able to offer a full cycle of services. However make every effort to serve Saturday Vespers and Divine Liturgy as well as Vespers on the eve of major feasts. The Church provides adequate resources for service preparation.

### **General Resources**

All these resources can be obtained from either St. Tikhon's Seminary Press or St. Vladimir's Seminary Press. All sources are listed in Appendix II under Orthodox Church Supply Services and Sales.

- **Liturgical Calendar and Rubrics:** published annually by St. Tikhon's Seminary Press. This book provides basic information on readings, prescribed services as well as the order of services for each day of the year.
- **Festal Menaion:** provides a general overview of all Orthodox services as well as detailed information (such as readings, Troparions, etc..) for the major feasts of the Church year
- **Lenten Triodion:** similar to the Festal Menaion but covers the services throughout Great Lent.
- **Pentecostarion:** provides information for the services from Pascha through Pentecost.
- **The Great Horologion:** provides all the materials necessary for the reading of the Hours.
- **The Apostle:** contains all the Prokeimenons, Epistle texts and Alleluia verses for the year.
- **The Psalter:** contains the Psalm readings (Kathisma) used especially during Vespers.
- **The Great Book of Needs, Vol. 1-4**
  - Volume I The Holy Mysteries
  - Volume II Ecclesiastical and Liturgical Blessings
  - Volume III The Occasional Services (including funerals and memorials)

## Volume IV Services of Supplication (thanksgiving)

### Service-Specific Resources<sup>122</sup>

- **Vespers and Matins**  
The Priest's Service Book by Archbishop Dmitri
- **Divine Liturgy** (St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great)
- **Great Lent**  
The Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts
- **Holy Week**  
Holy Week Volumes 1-3  
Pascha
- **Special Music** – The following are four-part arrangements for parish choirs in several settings:
  1. The Sundays Before the Nativity of Christ
  2. The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord
  3. Forgiveness Sunday Vespers
  4. The Sunday of the Lenten Triodion
  5. Palm Sunday

### Additional Recourses

**Small Booklets** for most services are also available from St. Vladimir's Seminary Press and St. Tikhon's Seminary Press. These include:

- Orthodox Prayers (adults)/We Pray to God (children)
- Prayers for the Sick
- Panikhida (Memorial Service)
- Baptism
- Holy Matrimony
- If We Confess Our Sins (adults)/We Return to God (children)
- The service books for Holy Week and many of the Great Feasts

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<sup>122</sup> These service books can be obtained at either St. Tikhon's or St. Vladimir's

**The Menaion of the Orthodox Church** provides the movable parts (esp. the Troparions of the Saints of the Day) of most services for each day of the year.

**The Octoechos** provides the movable parts of Matins, Vespers and Divine Liturgy for all eight tones.

**The Lenten Triodion Supplementary Text** provides material for services not included in the Lenten Triodion.

**Service Book of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Church** provides material for services often not found in other sources in English.

**Metrical Books and Sacramental Certificates** used for the recording of baptisms and Chrismations, reception of converts, marriages and deaths.

### **Suggestions for the Development of Effective Evangelization**

How many pastors have been able to start from scratch and raise up mega-churches? How many missionaries have been able to penetrate the bastions of resistant peoples? In spite of the promise and potential of recent strategies few pastors and missionaries have experienced the kind of success envisioned by the proponents of these schemes.

When one set of tools or strategies prove inadequate we must seek new ones. Could it be that the frustration of disappointed pastors and missionaries should rekindle our interest in the ancient principles of the Church? Could it be that a sense of powerlessness might bring us to our knees? With the clarity of vision occasioned by humility and utter dependence on our Lord we just might discover—that is, rediscover—the very weapons we have neglected. After all St. Paul did tell us what the battle was about and what our armor should be, and it was not a marketing strategy. Does our

failure represent an opportunity? With these things in mind let us consider the following.

### **Transform the Parish into a Spiritual Base of Power**

In his work James H. Billington speaks of the 14<sup>th</sup> century revival of hesychast spirituality in Russian monasteries and likened the communities' spiritual power to a magnetic field of spiritual energy which attracted loose elements and filled the surrounding area with invisible powers that triggered one of the most remarkable missionary movements in Christian history.<sup>123</sup> There is no reason why our local missions cannot become such centers of spiritual power. There is no reason why our parishioners cannot become new monastic individuals. These are people who have little or no interest in business success or mass consumerism. They will go to school, take a secular job, pay taxes and so on but they will view all of those things as secondary as they are engaged in them only to facilitate the primary goal of becoming more like Christ and spreading the faith like living books.

In order to do this our people will have to be reintroduced to the teaching of the great masters of Orthodox spirituality and encouraged to actively participate in the sacraments and services of the Church. They must also be taught prayer of the heart, pure prayer and stillness of the mind (hesychia). This stage of evangelism must not be neglected or underestimated for it is only true communion with Christ that will shine forth in a dark and resistant world. It is only a community of truly committed God-like worshippers that will transform our missions into inviting havens of warmth and acceptance. Without that spiritual base evangelism has never succeeded and never will.

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<sup>123</sup> James H. Billington. *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretation History of Russian Culture*

### **Equipping the Saints—Our Parishioners**

Potentially our parishioners are our most valuable resources. For that reason we will need to provide them with adequate training that should focus on:

- a) understanding the teaching of the Church in particular the Gospel itself
- b) understanding the world around them
- c) the fundamentals of personal evangelism, i.e., teaching them how to recognize and take advantage of the many evangelistic opportunities we have in everyday life
- d) making every effort to capitalize on their insights, suggestions and experiences since they are living and working in the very world we seek to win

### **Outreach Opportunities**

We will also have to provide our parishioners with opportunities for outreach within the context of the mission. In light of the realities of our society we should probably concentrate on establishing small discussion groups in intimate, nonthreatening settings such as homes. Relaxed informal discussions of topics centered on the biblical texts, current events or religion and society can be combined with a social component such as a meal. Such a gathering could also be centered on an Orthodox service (Vespers, Compline) and a discussion of its structure, meaning, purpose etc.

Do not underestimate the importance of a well-planned and well-designed website! In some parts of the country priests are reporting increasing numbers who are finding their mission/parish through their mission/parish's website rather than through the Yellow Pages or other more "traditional" means. If a mission cannot afford its own website it should know that the OCA provides missions/parishes with their own pages as

part of the OCA's online parish directory. Here the new mission can list their contact information, directions, services and times and other useful information.

No mission work is possible without a vibrant spiritual base. The words of St. Seraphim of Sarov summarize our conviction: *Acquire inner peace and thousands around you will find their salvation.*

### **Mission Finances**

It should be the goal of every mission to execute its financial policies in a way that is effective and above reproach. To that end each priest in charge of a mission should designate a member of the mission council as treasurer.

### **Bank Accounts**

Setting up bank accounts: initially checking (for operating expenses) and building fund monies, then, savings or other interest-bearing accounts.

### **Collect, Record and Deposit Collections**

- Generally speaking it is prudent to have someone help the treasurer count the money from the collection and then sign off on the deposit slip (both initialing it) before the money is taken from the church. Never have the treasurer count the money alone.
- A spreadsheet (e.g. Excel) can be used along with accounting software (Quicken, MS Money, Swift Express) to keep track of donations, bank accounts and the budget.
- The collections should be deposited into the account as soon as possible.

### **Meeting Financial Obligations**

- Priest's salary, retirement, insurance, housing and travel allowance (see sample budget categories below)
- Other mission-related bills (e.g., rent, utilities)
- National assessments (\$105.00 per person per year)
- Diocesan Tithe of 10% of income

- Special Appeals such as OCA's three national appeals for Missions (February), Seminaries (June) and Charities (November)
- FOC (Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards)

## **Reporting**

The treasurer should also provide the following reports:

- Monthly Income and Expenses
- Year End/Annual Report
- Tax Statements for all contributors

## **Annual Budget**

Along with the other members of the leadership team the treasurer is to assist in establishing and monitoring the mission's annual budget. The following categories are taken from the Orthodox Cathedral of Christ the Saviour's budget and reflect the kinds of income and expenses that might incur.

### **Income**

Regular contributions

Miscellaneous Income

Restricted Gifts

Candles

Land/Building Collections

Special Appeals

### **Operating Expenses**

#### 1. Clergy Compensation Salary

Housing Allowance

Health Insurance

Travel Allowance

Pension Fund

Life Insurance

- 2. Building
  - Rent
  - Deposits
  - Electricity
  - Gas
  - Telephone
  - Insurance
  - Maintenance
  - Other Utilities
- 3. Ministry-Related Expenses
  - Advertising
  - Office Supplies
  - Copying/Postage
  - Flowers
  - Candle Expense
  - Liturgical Supplies
  - Choir
  - Education
  - Outreach Ministry
  - Youth
  - Visiting Clergy
- 4. Miscellaneous
- 5. Diocesan Tithes
- 6. National Assessment

### **Legal Matters**

New missions must understand that there are indispensable steps they must take to properly set up the new mission with the laws of each state. A systematic approach will ensure that all areas are covered. It is especially important for the new mission to have a qualified attorney involved with the process so that all issues are completely covered.



Often the diocese will have legal counsel to help review the material. Finally the approval of the diocesan bishop will be needed before any of the papers are actually filed. A good resource for information can also be the state's Secretary of State who handles and approves many of the legal procedures necessary for tax-exempt nonprofit organizations like a new mission.

The legal material can be divided into four areas:

- Bylaws
- Incorporation
- Insurance
- Taxes

Each will have subcategories that should help the mission navigate through this maze of material. Remember that legal requirements vary from state to state and it is best to contact a local attorney who is familiar with those requirements.

### **Bylaws**

An important foundation to a mission is the creation of a complete set of bylaws. It is essential that the bylaws incorporate all the elements dictated by the Statutes of the OCA and the local Diocese. This will ensure smooth operation of the mission as well as provide for proper order in conducting the life of the mission. So often problems have arisen because a mission's bylaws were not in accord with the tenets of the Church. Such conflicting procedures and instructions cause division.

When putting together a set of bylaws the mission must have a copy of the OCA Statutes, diocesan bylaws and copies of bylaws from other parishes in the diocese. These should be used for reference and as an example of proper structure. It is essential that an attorney be contacted when a mission establishes bylaws as they will be needed for

incorporation (see Incorporation below). Remember that the mission is being organized as a 501(c)3 religious nonprofit charitable organization. When the bylaws are completed, a proper diocesan authority (bishop or an appointed diocesan attorney) should review and approve them prior to presentation to the mission. A completed and approved copy should be on file at the Diocese and the Chancery of the OCA.

### **First Steps in Bylaws Development**

The first step is to obtain the information and reference material. This will include copies of the OCA Statutes, diocesan bylaws, any decision of the All-American Councils that affect the Statutes as well as samples of other parishes' bylaws. An attorney should be consulted to ensure that the state's requirements for bylaws are met.

### **Basic Elements of Bylaws**

Generally the bylaws should contain the following elements:

(1) *Preamble*

A statement that the mission is under the OCA and its local diocese

(2) *Parish Membership*

Requirements for membership and other relevant membership information

(3) *Clergy*

Job description and requirements of the clergy (Note: such a section may not be necessary. The work of the clergy is clearly defined in the Holy Traditions of the Orthodox Church including the Church's canons and synodical decrees. Care must be exercised here that tasks are not assigned to the priest that would be contrary to his priestly calling and vocation or that would inhibit him in his full exercise.)

(4) *Parish Meeting*

An explanation of how meetings are to be held and the voting requirements for passage of differing elements

Parish Council

How the council is constructed and is to meet as well as a description of the offices on the council.

(5) Parish Property

Explanation of how property is obtained and disposed of by the mission.

Other Requirements as dictated by the OCA, diocese and state.

(6) Adoption

When, where and how the bylaws were approved and adopted for use. It should be clear that they do not go into effect until the Diocesan Bishop has approved them for use.

**Review by an Attorney**

After the completion of the bylaws, they should be reviewed by an attorney. After review, they should be sent to the appropriate Diocesan authorities for review and approval. They are now ready for adoption.

**Approval**

For approval to be put into use they must be approved by a 2/3 quorum of membership at a special meeting of the whole congregation. The meeting should be announced for three consecutive Sundays from the ambo, be listed in bulletins, and be public. Copies of the bylaws should have been either mailed or made available to all members prior to the meeting so that people would have plenty of time to review them. There should be time set aside at the meeting for questions and revisions. The vote to approve the bylaws may be private or public with a 2/3 majority required for approval.

**Copies on File**

Upon approval, the meeting date, time, place and a statement that the bylaws have been approved needs to be printed on the cover. A reference copy should be put on file in the mission so that people can have easy access to it. The bylaws need to be filed with the

Chancery of the OCA, the diocese, and the attorney who is handling incorporation of the mission.

### **Elements Unique to the Orthodox Church**

There are certain elements of the bylaws that are unique to the Orthodox Church. First: the Church is hierarchical and the bishop approves all appointments of clergy. Second: the property of the mission belongs to the diocese and is held in trust on behalf of the bishop by the mission. All property reverts to the diocese if the mission is dissolved. Third: the priest is the president of the parish. Fourth: there should be a rotating council with the minimal elements of president, secretary and treasurer. Fifth: not all items are subject to a vote (e.g. morals, liturgies and doctrine). Sixth: a canonical appeal process should be put in place that follows the structure and Canons of the Orthodox Church. Finally, be clear on parish membership requirements, including new membership, transferred membership and voting requirements. For other elements of a sound set of bylaws, refer to the statutes of the OCA, resolutions of National Assemblies of the OCA, and Diocesan statutes.

### **Incorporation**

All missions and churches should be incorporated as 501(c)3 nonprofit religious organizations. This incorporation will then allow the mission to open bank accounts, receive charitable donations, rent space, and provide a host of necessary services and functions that will require documentation of the legitimacy of the mission. The articles of incorporation will also enable a mission to receive a tax-exempt ID number on the state and federal level. This will exempt the mission from paying taxes. In addition, the

OCA and the Diocese will require proof of incorporation in order for the mission to be placed on the master list and be recognized.

If a mission or church is coming into the OCA from another jurisdiction, they will be required to reincorporate as a mission of the OCA in order to protect their assets.

### **Diocesan Recognition**

First and foremost a mission must petition the diocesan bishop for recognition. This is done by filling out a petition to the bishop and having all the people in the mission sign it. Make sure that proper protocol is followed in drafting the letter. After the bishop receives the letter, he will consider its merits and decide whether to issue a letter of acceptance.

### **Letter from the Diocese**

In order to file for incorporation the mission will need a letter from the diocesan bishop formally announcing and recognizing the mission. The letter will need to be dated on official letterhead with contact information and the signature of the bishop. This is essential because it ties the mission into a recognized legal entity.

### **State's Requirements**

Next, the mission must find out the state's requirements for incorporation. This is best handled by contacting a local attorney who specializes in corporation law. The attorney will provide the mission with the necessary forms and the mission will have to pay a modest fee for filing and attorney services.

**Name**

The mission will need a name for incorporation. The process of naming the mission will vary from diocese to diocese but there are some general guidelines. First, the bishop assigns the name in a general way, e.g., City X Orthodox Mission station as in the case of the mission station in Jupiter the name was “Jupiter Orthodox Mission Station.” This identifies the mission with a specific location. When the mission station is given full mission status, often the people petition the bishop to assign a particular patron saint or feast to the mission. Some dioceses name a mission station as soon as it is founded. As in the case of the Jupiter mission station a list of suggested names were presented to Archbishop Dmitri and he selected from that list a name for this particular mission station: “St. Peter the Apostle Orthodox Mission.” Some bishops allow input on the name; others will assign one. Check with your local dean about this procedure. In the diocese of the South a mission station is eligible to become a mission once there are at least 25 members.

**Announcement**

After the diocese sends the mission a letter of establishment, it is best to announce this in a local newspaper and in other public ways. Announcing the establishment of an Orthodox mission will bring inquiries from those of the Orthodox faith or those interested in it. Make sure you list contact numbers.

**Officers**

The next step is to establish officers to be named in the articles of incorporation. Most states require that there be a president, a secretary and a treasurer. These can be selected

from among the people by any harmonious method. If there is a priest assigned to the mission, he would appoint the members until the mission is elevated to church status (when there are 50 families). The priest should be listed as the president. Officers should be of high moral character, trusted by all in the mission and dedicated to the vision of the mission.

### **Articles of Incorporation**

The next step is actually preparing articles of incorporation. An attorney who has handled the incorporation of churches can do this, with an eye to certain unique elements of the Orthodox Church. These unique elements are found in the Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America.<sup>124</sup> Have a copy of this to assist the lawyer in preparing the articles. They can be obtained from the Chancery of the OCA. It is best to obtain a copy of the Diocesan bylaws, as this document will cite elements required by the Diocese. A copy can be obtained from the bishop's office.<sup>125</sup>

### **Submission of Documents**

After the drafting and approval of bylaws, which are necessary for incorporation, the packet will be submitted by the attorney, along with the letter of establishment and other required paperwork for approval. Upon approval a notarized letter will be sent to the mission stating the approval of the mission as a nonprofit religious organization along with a copy of the approved bylaws and other paperwork. These papers should be kept safe as they are vital for legal reasons. Make sure copies are kept safe at separate

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<sup>124</sup> *The Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America*. The Chancery, Syosset, New York, 2002.

<sup>125</sup> Diocesan Chancery, PO Box 191109, Dallas, Texas 75219

locations. Also copies will need to be sent to the diocese and to the national headquarters.

### **Insurance**

Often a small mission community neglects to have insurance because either they cannot afford it or they think that since they own no property they do not need insurance. This is far from true; certain liability issues can arise very quickly (such as issues involving accidents or misconduct). In addition many landlords will not allow a mission to occupy rental space until proof of insurance is given. All parishes in the OCA are required to have insurance that covers particular areas of property and liability.

Many different companies specialize in insurance for churches. They offer packages that cover almost all areas that require coverage and they even have packages for small missions. The following are just two of those companies with OCA clients throughout North America:

1. Church Mutual Insurance Company  
3000 Schuster Lane  
Merrill, WI 54452  
Telephone: 800-542-3465
2. Insurance Systems Agency  
Michael G. Herzak, CIC, CPIA  
7000 Fitzwater Road, Suite 104  
Cleveland, OH 4414  
Telephone: 888-526-7733



### **Insurance Agent and Guidelines for Insuring a Parish**

After selecting an insurance company, the mission will need to speak with an insurance agent who handles churches. Most major insurance companies have a person designated and trained in this area who is able to guide the mission through the process. A copy of any Church guidelines for insuring a parish should be obtained from the Chancery of the OCA and provided to the mission's insurance agent.

A complete inventory of the mission's possessions should be taken with an approximate value listed next to each item. This will be required when the package is being put together to determine coverage in case of loss, theft or other cause. Remember to cover any items used by the mission but not necessarily owned by it. Also remember that if any personal items of the clergy are stored where the mission meets, this should also be covered. This list should be updated regularly and frequently and kept on file not only with the insurance company but also with the mission's records.

### **Appraisal**

If the mission owns any property, then an up-to-date appraisal of the property should be submitted to the insurance company. This will ensure coverage in case of damage to the property as well as replacement after catastrophe. This also should be kept up-to-date, filed with the insurance company, and kept with the mission's records.

### **Accusations of Sexual Misconduct**

Make sure your mission has appropriate levels of coverage for accusations of sexual misconduct. Make sure the mission meets the guidelines for working with children. This can be found through the OCA Chancery and on the OCA website (go to "Policies,

Standards and Procedures of the Orthodox Church in America on Sexual Misconduct”) and must be strictly followed. Every parish and mission is required by the OCA to sign a statement that it is in adherence with the guidelines and to provide copies of this statement to the Chancery of the OCA where they will be kept on file. A copy should also be sent to the diocese.

### **Coverage on Rental Property and Personal Transportation**

Make sure that your mission has coverage for the use of rental property (if appropriate), personal transportation (if someone uses a personal vehicle to transport people to and from church events), special events (if the mission has a church camp, for example) and any other riders that may cover events by the mission.

### **Level of Liability Coverage**

There is much debate on the suitable level of liability coverage and deductibles, since these affect the monthly insurance premium. The best advice is to consult with the insurance agent, the dean and other priests to find what best fits the mission’s circumstances. Under-coverage can be a serious problem but so can over-coverage when a mission is trying to piece together a workable budget. Don’t get caught in either situation. Remember that insurance can always be updated and changed.

### **Keep Policy on File**

Make sure that the policy is kept on file and that at least the Council is familiar with the coverage. Often missions will forget that their insurance policy may cover certain areas and can save the mission a sizable bill. Be judicious when making a claim since too many claims can cause the insurance company to cancel coverage.

## **Taxes**

This is an absolutely essential area that must be handled correctly. Missions and parishes are excluded from paying most taxes as 501(c)3 nonprofit charitable organizations. However there may be some taxes that apply especially when property is owned (e.g., taxes the city may levy). This varies from state to state and city to city. Make sure that the mission is fully aware of any taxes it may have to pay when purchasing property as that can add to monthly bills. It is best to talk to other clergy and established churches in the city to find out what they pay.

By applying for and receiving a tax-exempt letter, the mission can simply show a copy to claim exemption on certain taxes. This can help when purchasing supplies for the mission if your state or city imposes a sales tax. There are two levels of taxation: state and federal. Check with a tax attorney to learn what is exempt at each level.

## **State Tax Exemption**

This can be obtained by submitting a letter to state officials asking for a state tax ID. Usually they will require a letter with information on the mission, a copy of the articles of incorporation, bylaws and other paperwork. An attorney can help with the local requirements. After a review, a notarized letter will be issued that will give the mission a tax ID and explain how it applies. Keep this letter safe.

Copies can be made and given to those who request them when you purchase items for the mission.

## **Federal Tax Exemption**

This will enable the mission to be recognized as an entity of a larger organization and allow the mission to be exempt from certain federal taxes. This is especially needed when purchasing property and other items as well as receiving donations for federally recognized charitable organizations.

As a mission in the OCA the mission is covered under the blanket OCA Federal tax-exemption number and there is no need to apply separately. The mission simply needs to be put on the master list at the Chancery of the OCA. This is done by submitting a letter of request, the letter of establishment by the bishop, a copy of the articles of incorporation and the mission's bylaws. The OCA will review this and send a letter giving the tax exemption number, name of the mission and the purpose of the exemption. This information also should be kept and copies given out to those who request it for various purposes.

## **Other Taxes**

There are many other taxes that a mission may need to pay. These vary from state to state and community to community. While many do not apply until property is obtained, other, such as worker's compensation tax, may be necessary from the start. It is best to check a local accountant or tax attorney to find out what may apply to the missions.

## **Development**

This section will deal with the health of a mission which depends on a strong structure that will enable the mission to mature. There are, of course, many different models that

can be used, depending on the size, location and demographic profile of each mission. However the general model offered in this section can facilitate growth and help the mission evolve into a parish.

This section is divided into five areas that help chart and plan the growth of the mission. These five areas are: evaluation, leadership, small-group ministry, structure and vision. The material is meant as a suggested model only. However the experience of many missions has shown the model's value.

### **Evaluation**

There are differing ideas on how to evaluate the health and growth of a mission and these will often depend on national Church and diocesan requirements. The diocese or local dean may have other requirements beyond these; missions should contact their deanery and diocese for any additional requirements. In any event, evaluation can be a critical component in assessing a mission's current status and helping chart the course it may need to follow.

### **Lay Leadership**

It is common for missions not to have a resident priest until the mission can support him. Some missions will have assigned clergy who service the mission on a regular basis. Because of this, strong lay leadership is absolutely necessary so that the life of the mission continues in between visits by clergy.

The lay leader should be appointed by the priest in charge of the mission with conciliar approval of both the diocesan hierarch and the mission. While the appointment method may differ from diocese to diocese, the basic principle is to appoint the person

best qualified to assist the priest and to be the mission's contact person with the world (e.g., media, public officials). The priest must submit the name of the mission's contact person in an official letter to the diocesan for blessing and approval. This person should be willing to do whatever tasks the priest assigns him or her that would be beneficial for the growth, health and development of the community. Often the lay leader will serve as the reader for lay services as well as assist in organizing the community.

It should also be recognized that one person cannot do everything. As God has gifted each of us with a variety of gifts, missions should enlist gifted members who can assist the lay leader and take on some of the tasks of leadership and ministry. The more people are involved the more they gain a sense of ownership and responsibility for the life of the mission. For example, if someone has the gift of music, they should be given the training and responsibility for developing a choir. If someone has the gift of administration or organization, they should be given the job of treasurer or secretary. Remember that not everyone can be a "chief"; the mission needs workers and often the greatest help comes from the person in church who prays.

The lay leader should be willing to accompany the priest to represent the mission at various functions such as the All-American Council, diocesan assembly, deanery retreats and such. By their presence at such gatherings, lay leaders can become advocates for the mission to the larger Church and are able to report back to the mission on what is happening on a larger scale. This prevents isolation which can so often happen when a mission is far from other Orthodox communities.

The lay leader should be trained in simple rubrics. If necessary, the person should be able to set up and take down the mission, know where all the mission's items

are, and keep them in good order. Remember that only a priest can handle certain holy objects such as the chalice and reserved sacrament. These should be stored where only the clergy can retrieve them but the lay leader can guard them. The lay leader should be able to read the rubrics book that is published by St. Tikhon's Seminary Press so that he or she can put together a simple Reader's Service under the guidance of the priest and according to diocesan guidelines. She or he should be able to assist the priest in services and at least know simple chanting, if possible. If the lay leader is a man and can be tonsured as a reader, the community stands to benefit. Often, small isolated missions gain from this as they are able to do more services. The priest should organize appropriate training for all these areas.

Finally the lay leader should be prepared to help the priest and direct issues to him. He or she should be able to direct the mission's members to the priest as well as facilitate communication from the priest. In all things the lay leader needs to be obedient to the Church and the priest in charge of the mission.

Again, the more those leadership roles are developed in the mission, the easier the growth and the greater the harmony of the mission. This area needs to be supported and strongly developed.

### **Small Group Ministry**

This area is one of developing interest and necessity in the mission field. The goal of small group ministry is to utilize the gifts, talents and interests of as many members of the community as possible. This gives people a greater sense of participation in the life of the mission. The more people are involved in the mission and feel a sense of ownership of it, the better the chances of the mission succeeding.

Small group ministry enables this to happen by channeling the member's gifts, skills and talents into appropriate areas that can be managed by the priest. It can free the priest from many tasks that do not require the priestly office. Often a mission priest has to wear many hats at the same time and work a part-time job to support his family. The effective budgeting of his time and the resources of the mission can allow for greater growth. It also ensures that as many people as possible are involved.

One of the most effective results of the small group ministry is that leadership is developed among the lay people. If properly run, such a ministry can provide a constant source of enthusiastic people who can help in the operation and life of the mission. With time, as people rotate out of leadership in the mission, new leaders are being developed to take their place seamlessly.

There are two basic requirements for implementing the small group ministry model. The first is the identification of gifts, skills, talents and interests. The second is the formation of groups that fit the needs of the mission. Of course, follow-through will ensure success. This will take time to develop in a mission but perseverance will bring results.

### **Structures of Parish Councils**

Ensuring proper structures in the mission will enable it to grow into a healthy parish. Thus the leadership system must be in place from the very beginning. The size of the mission will often determine the structure of the council (leadership). Some missions operate with a minimal structure of a clergyman and a lay leader while others have councils of varying sizes. The dean, priest and lay leadership should together determine what best suits the mission.



The ultimate goal is to have a council that assists the priest but does not control him. In modern North America the parochial tendencies of some parish councils can often be detrimental to growth with council elections being no more than popularity contests. This prevents greater participation by members of the mission who do not want to get involved because of politics and/or personalities. In a healthy environment, councilarity combines harmoniously with hierarchy. There are no contests between the priest and the mission; instead, all work together by coming together.

In fact, it may be vital in the early stages for the priest to appoint members of the mission who demonstrate the gift of leadership to key positions such as vice-president, secretary and treasurer. A larger and more open council can be developed later. The goal is to have a healthy structure based on servant leadership, not one based on popularity or politics.

If the small group ministry is implemented, then the council and leaders will organically develop along these lines, each member of the council will have a defined role in the life and leadership of the mission. However always remember that the priest is the president of the parish as provided for in the OCA Statutes. Remember also that the incorporation process provides for the appointment of a vice president, a secretary and a treasurer. This is an excellent starting point. Take care when putting together the bylaws for the mission that the council be defined clearly and allow for growth. A healthy council rotates on a regular basis, has a priest in the ultimate leadership position and allows for full participation by the members of the mission. The diocesan bishop must approve any person(s) appointed or elected to serve in an official position in the parish. The priest must submit an official letter to the bishop asking for his blessing for

that person(s) to serve. Council members should be officially sworn in at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. A sample of this service can be found in the Book of Needs.

## **Vision**

Vision may be one of the most used and least understood words in the mission field. Vision is necessary for the mission to move forward but it is often difficult to understand and create, let alone implement. Many people will have different views of what the vision of the mission should be and it is up to solid leadership to help define and enact it.

The mission should take time to talk about what its vision is rather than simply allowing it to “happen.” This discussion can proceed through sermons, meetings or retreats. Some missions have brought in formal facilitators to help the mission define itself with mission and vision statements. However the goal of “one mind, one heart” should always be held up to the mission as a standard. At the very least people need to be willing to talk about the mission, its direction, goals and the vision that they all share.

Several resources offer solid assistance in this area:

- *Oriented Leadership* by Benjamin Williams and Michael McKibben. OCPC, Wayne, New Jersey, 1994. This book, written by two Orthodox Christians for Orthodox churches, can help guide a mission through the process of articulating its vision. Full of useful suggestions, it has been used by a host of missions and churches throughout North America.
- *Church Growth and Evangelization: The Basis and the Basics* Orthodox Church in America, 1986. This very useful book examines the “nuts and bolts” of parish and mission life and contains many good suggestions and helpful ideas.

Both books can be obtained easily through the Orthodox Christian Publishing Center (OCPC). Mailing, phone, fax and e-mail and website information for the OCPC can be found at the end in the appendix.

Other excellent resources for developing and fostering vision within the new mission are listed below. While most are written by Evangelicals, they nevertheless contain valuable insights and teachings that can prove helpful to the new mission. They are available from Amazon.com and other online bookstores:

- *The Power of Vision*, by George Barna, Regal Books, Ventura, CA, 1995. The author distinguishes mission from vision, corrects myths that prevent us from gaining God's vision and gives steps on how to become a parish of vision.
- *Turning Vision into Action*, by George Barna, Regal Books, Ventura, CA, 1996. A follow-up and companion volume to *The Power of Vision*.
- *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, by Aubrey Malphurs. One of the first vision books on the market.
- *The Purpose Driven Church*, by Rick Warren. The thesis of *The Purpose Driven Church* is that when churches think first about their health, growth is sure to follow.

### **Stewardship: Healthy Church Finances**

Stewardship is a difficult issue in the Church because people have always had a problem with money and possessions. The most important thing to understand is that the eternal truths concerning stewardship are greater than money. In the Scriptures there are approximately 500 verses on prayer, fewer than 500 on faith and more than 2,000 on money and possessions. In fact, the majority of our Lord's parables concern money and possessions. Christ knows we struggle with financial issues and addresses the problem often in the Scriptures.

This section is an outline for priests who want a better understanding of how to teach stewardship effectively. The purpose is to better equip the local priest to nurture stewardship in his mission. While the OCA has made great strides in developing and teaching a sound, scripturally based theology of stewardship, the main problem in the

Church today is that we are unable to communicate this theology effectively. Many bricks must be placed on the foundation of stewardship before we can effectively introduce any Christian to Orthodox stewardship. Tithing is ultimately not an issue of finances but of spiritual health.

### **Money, Inquirers and New Members**

For many good reasons, do not talk about money to new members of the community or to inquirers. The first thing the newcomer wants to know is that you are concerned about them and their souls. To speak about money early in a relationship will make them question your motives. Some priests make this fatal mistake many times. Not only does it not add to the bottom line, it runs the person off. The church is about Jesus Christ. There is a natural progression of commitment. The first thing that arrives to church is the person; the second is the heart; and the third is financial commitment. Money is also the first thing that leaves!

### **Relationships Are Important**

Until a solid relationship is built between the priest and the parishioner, issues of stewardship cannot be discussed with integrity. The parishioner has to feel ownership in the mission. Remember that mission leadership is not solely “positional”; it is built upon foundations of trust and mutual respect that help open parishioners’ hearts to receiving Church teaching on any subject.

### **The Issue of Lordship**

The issue of Lordship must be settled in people’s lives. Who is really the Lord of our lives? This issue takes a minimum of one to two years to settle in the mission and is a

function of time. It is the Holy Spirit who does the persuading and convicting over time, not us. Effective evangelical preaching calls people to a deeper relationship with Christ, always living for Christ, zealously seeking Christ in every part of their lives. Christ is the way, the truth and the life.

### **Spiritual Dimension of Prayer/Asceticism**

Only people of prayer will tithe. Prayer is what makes us Christians. People who do not pray do not expose themselves to the Holy Spirit and thus they do not recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their lives. Praying people tithe. People who do not pray see giving in the Church as something unspiritual. The priest must be committed to prayer and serve as a model for the prayerful life marked by Christian action and integrity.

Teaching Orthodox asceticism figures importantly in this area, e.g., fasting improves prayer.

- Sanctification/Theosis: People need to be taught that God seeks to sanctify us through baptism, Chrismation, prayer, the Eucharist, etc.
- Tithing is Eucharistic, so extensive understanding of the Eucharist is needed. The basic teaching is that God created everything and owns everything. This needs to be an underlying theme of many sermons. The breath in our lungs comes from God. It is a gift of God that we exist.
- Worship: There is a definite connection between Orthodox worship and the tithe. Over time, this needs to be explained. Themes to explore include: the origin of the Great Entrance, what people originally brought to church for their offering, what was done in the Old Testament.

## **Preaching the Tithe**

Approximately two-thirds of our Lord's parables were about money in some form: money, finances, stewardship. Our Lord felt comfortable talking to people about their money and priests should feel just as comfortable talking with parishioners about the same things. Do not be afraid to preach and teach openly—and boldly—about the proper understanding of stewardship including the Scriptural admonitions to tithe. Tithing is a necessary component of a healthy and growing church. Once tithing is established, set aside two or three weeks a year as “tithing season” so that people are reminded annually of their pledge.

## **General Principles**

- Be highly organized, using well-polished sermons founded in prayer.
- Focus on the Lordship of Christ and not on money.
- Schedule sermon “series” on tithing during appropriate seasons of high attendance—for example, January.
- Let the Holy Spirit work, never the priest. The Holy Spirit is the most effective preacher. The Spirit will whisper in your parishioners' ears.

## **Sermon Suggestions for the First Year**

- Psalm 24:1—The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. Everything is God's. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills.
- Genesis 3:17—We are made from the dust of the earth, filled with the breath of God and stewards of the Holy Spirit.<sup>126</sup>
- Proverbs 3:1-10, Malachi 3:8-11—Trusting God and tithing. You can preach a sermon just on trust.

The OCA's Department of Stewardship has published a handbook on Stewardship. This handbook is a valuable tool and resource for new missions establishing programs for giving in the light of Christian stewardship.

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<sup>126</sup> Acts 2, Luke 24:49

**Conclusion**

With these practical concerns in mind before, during, and after the decision to found a mission the OCA can grow and be the light in a world in need of Good News.

## Appendix I

### Glossary

In the various *Offices*, a number of ecclesiastical terms are used which may be unfamiliar to the reader; these are explained below:

#### Liturgical Books:

- Typikon:** This contains the rules and rubrics governing every aspect of the liturgical services and their celebration throughout the year. Until 1888 the Greeks, Slav and Romanian Churches observed substantially the same Typikon. In that year, however, the Church of Constantinople adopted a revised Typikon that differs radically from that used by the Slavic Church; this revision has been generally adopted by the Greek-speaking Churches, although the older Typikon is still used by most Greek monasteries. (The Typikon used in this Horologion is that used by the Church of Russia.)
- Octoechos:** This contains the variable portions for the daily *Offices* throughout the week. Eight series of *Offices* are provided, one for each of the eight tones; and within each series there are seven sets of Services, one for each day of the week.
- Triodion:** In this book (Fasting (or Lenten) Triodion in the Slavonic) are found texts for the Great Lent (starting with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee). Many canons in the Triodion contain only three canticles or odes; hence the title of the book
- Pentecostarion:** In this book (Flowery (or Festal) Triodion in the Slavonic) are found the texts for the services from Pascha until the Sunday of All Saints (the first after Pentecost).
- Menaion:** In this book are contained the Services for the fixed feasts throughout the twelve months of the year, divided into twelve volumes (corresponding to each month), beginning with September. In it are contained the texts for Services to the Saints as well as the Great Feasts of the Lord and Theotokos (but excluding the Great Feasts of the Pentecostarion—Pascha, Ascension and Pentecost).



## Glossary of Terms

**Forefeast:** One or more days of preparation immediately preceding a Feast.

**Afterfeast:** The period immediately following a Feast (one to seven days), during which the observance of the Feast continues.

**Stikheron:** Hymns inserted between verses taken from the Psalms. These occur at Vespers (between the concluding verses of “Lord, I have cried...” and the (Apostikha) and at Matins (between the concluding verses of the Praises and/or Apostikha).

**Apostikha:** Stikhera accompanied by verses taken from the Psalms. These occur at the end of Vespers on any day and at the end of Matins when there is no Great Doxology.

**Troparia:** Hymns sung at the various *Offices*, e.g., “Troparion of the Feast or Day”, but sometimes read, e.g. at the Hours. Troparia are also appointed to be sung between each verse of each Ode of the Canon(s) of the Sunday Midnight Office, Matins and Compline, although these most often are read.

**Kontakion:** Hymns sung at the various Offices, e.g., “Kontakon of the Feast or Day”, but sometimes read, e.g., at the Hours. Kontakion of the Feast are also appointed to be sung after the 6<sup>th</sup> Ode (sometimes after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ode, as well) of the Canon(s) of Matins and Compline, although these most often are read.

**Theotokion:** A troparion or stikheron in honor of the Theotokos. The last in any series of troparia or stikhera usually is a theotokion. (On Wednesday and Fridays (dedicated to the memory of the Lord’s Passion) in place of the Theotokion there normally is a Cross-theotokion honoring both the Cross and the Theotokos).

**Kathisma:** Each of the twenty sections into which the Psalter is divided.

**Sedalen:** Sometimes called “Kathisma Hymns” or Seasonal Hymns”, a Sedalen is a short troparion sung or read during Matins at the end of each Kathisma of the Psalter, after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ode of the Canon(s) of Matins and Compline.

**Ypakoe:** A troparion Sung at Matins on Great Feasts and Sundays. On Great Feasts it occurs after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ode of the Canon and on Sundays after the reading of the Psalter. The Sunday Ypakoe is also read at the Sunday Midnight Office, after the Canon to the Trinity.

**Canon:** A series of eight songs (odes, canticles), each made up of a number of troparia. The Canon occurs at Matins after the reading of the Psalter and Psalm 50. Originally, at this point the nine Scriptural songs were sung, with a short refrain inserted between the verses, but the short refrains eventually were expanded into troparia celebrating some particular theme. In time the custom of reading the actual Biblical text largely disappeared, although it is still observed by many monasteries during Great Lent and throughout the year on Mt. Athos and other places. Consequently the troparia of the Canon now usually are recited by themselves, accompanied by a short verse such as “Glory to Thee, O our God, glory to Thee.” The only Biblical canticle still sung in full is the Magnificat, “My soul magnifies the Lord....” The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ode is sung only on various days of Great Lent.

Canticle (Ode): The title “Canticle” or “Ode” refers to the nine subdivisions of the Canon and consist of the following Biblical texts:

- 1 The Song of Moses (Exodus 15:1-19)
- 2 The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1-4)
- 3 The Prayer of Hannah (I Kings (I Samuel) 2:1-10)
- 4 The Prayer of Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3:1-19)
- 5 The Prayer of Isaiah (Isaiah 26:9-20)
- 6 The Prayer of Jonah (Jonah 2:3-10)
- 7 The Prayer of the Three Holy Children (Daniel 3:26-56)
- 8 The Song of the Three Holy Children (Daniel 3:57-88)
- 9 The Song of the Theotokos (Luke 1:46-55) and The Prayer of Zachariah (Luke 1:68-79)

Irmos: This title (the Greek word “irmos” means “chain”) refers to the opening stanza of the Biblical Canticle which, in content, “links” together: the theme of the Biblical Canticle, which the Canticle of the Canon was originally designed to accompany; the theme of the Feast or commemoration of the day, developed in the following troparia.

Katavasia: The title katavasia refers to the concluding stanza in a Canticle (Ode) of the Canon. Sometimes the irmos itself is repeated as katavasia, but on Sunday and certain Feast, there are special katavasia appointed according to the time within the liturgical year. On Sundays and Feasts there is a katavasia at the end of every Canticle. On ordinary weekdays, however, a katavasia is appointed at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Canticles only.

Prokeimenon: These verses from the Psalter sung immediately before readings from the Holy Scripture: 1) at Vespers, 2) at Matins (on Sundays and Feasts) and 3) at the Sixth Hour on weekdays of Great Lent and at the First Hour during Passion Week. (The “Alleluia” with verses, sung before the reading of the Gospel, is itself a Prokeimenon and in some books is referred to as “the Prokeimenon before the Gospel

## Appendix II

### Orthodox Church Supply

Suppliers of Liturgical and Ecclesiastical goods and also a list of publishing houses.

#### **American Orthodox Church Supplies**

317 Cassville Road  
Jackson, NJ 08527  
Phone: 732 928 8060  
Fax: 732 833 0029  
Email: [aochs317@aol.com](mailto:aochs317@aol.com)

#### **Consistory Church Goods Supply**

9 St. John's Ave.  
Winnipeg, MB K2W 1G8  
Phone: 800 804 6040  
Fax: 204 582 5241  
Email: [churchgoods@uocc.ca](mailto:churchgoods@uocc.ca)

#### **Eastern Christian Supply Company**

PO Box 677  
Etna, CA 96027  
Phone: 530 467 5620  
Fax: 530 467 3996  
Email: [fatherd@sisqtel.net](mailto:fatherd@sisqtel.net)  
Website: [www.easternchristian.com](http://www.easternchristian.com)

#### **FOCA Mission Hotline**

6610 Cypress Point Road  
Alexandria, VA 22312  
Email: [slanta@erols.com](mailto:slanta@erols.com)

#### **Holoviaks Church Supply**

2211 West Front Street  
Berwick, PA 18603  
Phone: 570 759 1581/1860  
Fax: 570 759 2297  
Website: [www.holoviak.com](http://www.holoviak.com)

#### **St. Zosima Candle Supply**

PO Box 286884  
New York, NY 10128  
Phone: 212 987 0537  
Fax: 212 426 1517  
Email: [asommer508@aol.com](mailto:asommer508@aol.com)  
Website: [www.varietycandles.c](http://www.varietycandles.c)

**Holy Transfiguration Monastery**

278 Warren Street  
Brookline, MA 02445  
Phone: 800 227 1629  
Fax: 617 730 5783  
Website: [www.thehtm.org](http://www.thehtm.org)

**Istok Enterprises**

Suite 4029  
918 16 Ave., NW  
Calgary, AB T2M 0K3  
Phone/fax: 403 220 9316

**Orthodox Church Supplies of America**

35 Orchard Street  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
Phone: 800 632 2260  
Fax: 617 524 7142  
Email: [chsupplies@aol.com](mailto:chsupplies@aol.com)  
Website: [www.orthodoxchurchsupplies.com](http://www.orthodoxchurchsupplies.com)

**St. Isaac of Syria Skete**

25266 Pilgrim's Way  
Boscobel, WI 53805  
Phone: 800 814 2667  
Website: [www.skete.com](http://www.skete.com)

**St John of San Francisco Monastery**

PO Box 563  
Point Reyes Station, CA 94956  
Phone/fax: 415 663 1705  
Website: [www.divineascent.org](http://www.divineascent.org)

**The Orthodox Christian Publication Center**

4653 Memphis Villas South  
Brooklyn, OH 4414  
Office: 216 351 1838  
Fax: 216 351 1842  
Email: [ocpc@oca.org](mailto:ocpc@oca.org)

**Department of Christian Education OCA**

Alexandra Safchuk  
PO Box 675  
Syosset, NY 11791  
Email: [christianeducation@oca.org](mailto:christianeducation@oca.org)  
Website: [www.oca.org/focusededucation/home.htm](http://www.oca.org/focusededucation/home.htm)

**St. Vladimir's Seminary Press**

575 Scarsdale Road  
Crestwood, NY 10707  
Phone: 800 204 BOOK  
Fax: 914 961 5456  
Email: [svspress@svots.edu](mailto:svspress@svots.edu)  
Website: [www.svspress.com](http://www.svspress.com)

**St. Tikhon's Seminary Press**

South Canaan, PA 18459  
Phone: 570 937 4390  
Email: [bookstore@stots.edu](mailto:bookstore@stots.edu)  
Website: [www.sots.edu/bookstore.htm](http://www.sots.edu/bookstore.htm)

**Conciliar Press**

PO Box 76  
Ben Lomand, CA 95005  
Phone: 800 967 7377  
Fax: 831 336 8882  
Website: [www.conciliarpress.com](http://www.conciliarpress.com)

**Eight Day Books**

2838 E. Douglas  
Wichita, KS 67214  
Phone: 800 841 2541  
Website: [www.eightdaybooks.com](http://www.eightdaybooks.com)

**Light & Life Publishing Company**

4808 Park Glen Road  
Minneapolis, MN 55416  
Phone: 952 925 3888  
Website: [www.light-n-life.com](http://www.light-n-life.com)

**Regina Press**

Phone: 800 636 2470  
Email: [info@reginaorthodoxed.org](mailto:info@reginaorthodoxed.org)  
Website: [www.reginaorthodoxpress.com](http://www.reginaorthodoxpress.com)

**St. John of Kronstadt Press**

1180 Orthodox Way  
Liberty, TN  
Phone: 615 536 5239  
Fax: 615 536 5945  
Email: [info@sjkp.org](mailto:info@sjkp.org)  
Website: [www.sjkp.org](http://www.sjkp.org)

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