

# THE IMPERATIVE OF EVANGELIZATION



MATERIAL IN PREPARATION FOR THE 16<sup>TH</sup> ALL-AMERICAN  
COUNCIL EVANGELIZATION WORKING GROUP,  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

The purpose of this “Read-Ahead” is to provide participants in the All American Council (AAC) with the benefit of the initial thinking that has been done to date on this important issue in the life of the Church. It is meant as **STARTING POINT FOR YOUR OWN DISCUSSIONS AND DELIBERATIONS** and does not represent *official* Church positions. Please feel free to add to, modify, take away, correct, or challenge any of the ideas in here. It is through your collective inputs and the guidance of the Holy Spirit that we will be able to discern the best path forward in this area for the life of the Church during the next decade.

# EVANGELIZATION WORKING GROUP

This document covers three important and highly related aspects of Church life -- Parish Revitalization, Mission (new Parish) Planting and Evangelization. This was prepared with broad input from a variety of clergy and lay people who have actively worked in this area over the past years. The document should be used as both a guide and a starting point for honest discussions on what needs to be done in the future. As Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann stated over fifty years ago, "To recover the missionary dimension of the Church is today's greatest imperative." ("Orthodoxy and Mission," *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 4 [Fall 1959]: 41-42.

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Each topic will be handled individually using a similar format for each topic.

## PARISH REVITALIZATION

### **The Challenge**

Many parishes are withering. Many others, while not in decline are not growing.

- Parishes that were 500 members in 1980 are now 200 persons or smaller.
- Parishes with a church school of greater than 50 children are rare. The average age of parishioners is getting older. A median parishioner age of 60 or even 70 years of age is not at all uncommon.
- Many parishes find that a disproportionate share of their income comes from older members. When those members die the parish loses not only people but a significant portion of its funding base as well.
- Many newer parishes (those founded post 1970) are on a plateau in terms of size and vision.

These facts have been apparent for many years. The quantitative and qualitative evidence of decline, staleness and tepidness in too many communities are easily visible. Nonetheless we as a Church, particularly bishops and clergy, seem unwilling to face facts.

The Church is not about numbers. But a Church whose numbers continue to decline seriously will soon cease to exist. And a Church with a clear inheritance of the Apostolic deposit and 'The faith that changed the world' needs to seriously explore why many of its communities are in numerical, financial and no doubt, and most importantly, spiritual peril.

## **Key Facts**

- From 1980 to 2000, the OCA declined 6-9%.
- Since early 90's 170 + parishes have declined or no growth; 140+ have declined by double digits.
- From 1990 – 2000 US population grew 11%; OCA decreased 13%.
- The number of unchurched Americans: 40%, representing over 120 million people. Only 1/10 of 1% of that number would double the size of the OCA.

## **Past and Current Efforts**

The church has made efforts to address, in some way, issues of parish revitalization in the past. Many of these efforts have been well developed and comprehensive. But they have often seemed to operate on the margin –as optional tools and possible ideas. As topics that receive serious attention for a day or a week only to fade when faced with seemingly urgent yet often less important matters. Among the efforts have been:

### ***All American Councils***

Numerous AACs have addressed issues of The Church as Mission (1975); Church Growth (1983); Evangelization (1986); The Parish Community (2002) In 2005 the OCA set out to explore “Our Church and Future” by examining five strategic pillars including one devoted to Parish Health and another devoted to Evangelization.

### ***Workshops***

“Heating Up a Luke Warm Church” (1982) and the Office of Church Growth & Evangelism’s Boot Camp (1999 – 2002) in which over 140 people from over 50 parishes were trained in the four-year period between 1999 and 2002. The effort was highly instructive, with hands-on workshops following each of the ten teaching modules, and contained a specific implementation model for use back in the home parish. In spite of its popularity with parishes and especially with the laity, a decision was made by the Department of Evangelization in 2003 to discontinue the Boot Camp program. The 2010 OCA Parish Ministries Conference in Cleveland was an example of the successful, multi-departmental effort to assist parishes.

### ***Ministry Units***

A variety of ministry units have existed at the OCA level, including Church Growth & Evangelization and a variety of others over the years. Other ministries contribute materials, tools and assistance that contribute to elements of what healthy parishes need. (e.g. education, charitable etc.) These ministries have created various aids such as the “Resource Handbook”.

### ***Diocesan Efforts***

Some dioceses, most notably the Diocese of the Midwest’s Parish Health/Development Ministry, have established specific efforts oriented to stimulate parishes to renew themselves as hopeful, vibrant Orthodox communities that:

- Grow in their commitment to living a life in Christ,
- Share the Gospel with all in their own locale
- Are prepared to do the work of Christ in the world

Efforts of this ministry include a variety of efforts including Workshops, Conferences, Webinars, Newsletters, Articles, Consulting & Coaching and Assessment tools.

Several dioceses have recently begun to consider how to adapt these efforts to their specific needs and are specifically focused on providing similar activities.

### ***Seminary Curricula***

Seminary offerings have been or are being transformed including SVS' Good Pastor Program and a curriculum thread for Mission and Evangelism.

### ***Possible Models***

Numerous models of varying depth and approach have become available:

- **Orthodox Natural Church Development (ONCD):** 8 quantifiable and qualifiable characteristics of a healthy parish with an implementation model. Currently in use in 3 Orthodox jurisdictions with over 2 dozen churches surveyed in the past 10 years.
- **The Diocese of the Midwest's Parish Health Inventory:** Used in the Diocese of the Midwest since 2009 and based on the lived experience of real Orthodox Church in America parishes.
- **The "Healthy Parish"** A model presented by Fr. Thomas Hopko at the Orlando AAC in 2002 themed "The Parish Community: Our Life in Christ".
- **The "Ship Model"** (Worship; Fellowship; Discipleship; Apostleship; Stewardship; Leadership); Informally used in many circles; basis cited is often Acts 2:42-47.
- **ACTS 2:42** – oft cited basis for the "healthy parish" as demonstrated by the early church shortly after Pentecost.

A key conclusion from all of these common efforts would be that "any parish can be healthy and vibrant -- if the parish is willing to make a basic honest effort to become centered around the gospel. As in I Cor 3:6 explicit Christ centered effort (planting, watering, and by extension weeding and fertilizing) leads to growth by God.

### **Root Causes**

In past discussions concerning the issues of parish revitalization, ministry leaders and concerned contributors listed the following as potential contributors to the challenge. What items do you agree and disagree with? Can you add to the list?

1. Sociological factors: Mobile society; Flight to the suburbs; Competition from secular activities; Post modern culture etc. Many religious bodies are suffering from similar declines – some at alarming rates.
2. In a sound bite culture Orthodoxy is not easily understood or easily communicated.
3. We lack clear, effective evangelization approaches.
4. Bishops often lack managerial experience; tools; mindset; Unwilling/unable to generate accountability. Too far away.
5. Clergy often have limited pastoral and administrative skill sets. Many have limited mental models of what an Orthodox parish needs to look like and behave like in America. *Many do not know what to do.*
6. Many faithful have a limited understanding of scripture, Church teachings & traditions – making them susceptible to the advances of others -- or to social lethargy; making them ineffective at bringing others to the gospel since they cannot give what they themselves do not possess.

7. Cradle laity often have a heritage of church as a social center. They may have grown up with a limited understanding of stewardship and even lack a specific commitment to Christ; often fear or distrust Clergy/ Converts/ Neighbors/ “the other”.
8. Parish Councils that focus only on the material issues of the parish and are unwilling or unable to collaborate with the priest.
9. Forgotten stewardship. In many instances particularly “heritage parishes” we often forget that the parish has been entrusted to us—not to keep and not to serve our own needs—but to care for, to minister from, to strengthen, and to preserve for future generations. We have often lost the sense of responsibility, gratitude and concern that reminds us of the need to pass it on in *better shape* than received.
10. All: We too often share an inability to dialogue and collaborate; to discern what a vibrant parish looks like. ( Acts 2 model.)
11. We lack a sense of urgency: Changing cultures, behaviors, assumptions and expectations is difficult but must be done. And the time to act was 10-20 years ago.
12. Many parishes lack ministries and the mechanisms to generate and nurture new ministries. They often lack the mechanism to propose a change, discuss it and move ahead to try new approaches. We have a limited legacy of *intentionality* toward strengthening our parishes and their ministries.
13. Our view of lay contribution beyond traditional roles of singer, church school teacher, parish council member and sexton is limited in too many parish situations.
14. We lack money, skills, tools, models, methods to fix it because we have not focused on this as the most critical problem we face in contemporary Orthodoxy.
15. There is clear skepticism about the efficacy of church “programs.” We have tried a lot of ideas. Other denominations have spent significant money on programs with little to show for it. We often label efforts “dead on arrival” before balanced consideration. Conversely we also often ascribe impossible “silver bullet” expectations to programmatic efforts.

### **Possible Actions**

What should be done? The following actions have been suggested?

#### **Bishops**

Bishops with numerically declining parishes need to hold clergy pastorally accountable for declines. Offer and provide necessary resources, tools and personnel to such parishes.

#### **Priests**

Priests in numerically declining parishes should attend foundational training in the basic skills of parish revitalization and accept diocesan counseling on needed next steps.

#### **Laity**

Lay leaders in numerically declining parishes should attend foundational training in the basic skills of parish revitalization.

#### **Seminaries**

Seminaries should develop criteria for examining spiritual gifts and talents necessary to properly identify and recruit men specifically for parish revitalization work. Develop course content to deal with issues encountered in turnaround situations.

### **Parishes – Declining or Not**

Undertake a serious, structured review of parish life, ministries and practices with a diocesan or national church parish health ministry coach/consultant.

Make a commitment to improve. Make a serious rededication to Christ. Submit this in writing to the parish's diocesan hierarch for review and blessing.

Provide budget line items for leadership development, education, outreach and ministry.

Specifically designate groups of people with the appropriate gifts and talents to form a Church Health Team to learn and use available parish health tools, resources and implementation models.

### **Dioceses and/or OCA**

#### ***Commitment***

Make a commitment to prioritize action & resources for revitalization of parishes –as a key priority of the OCA.

Establish a budget over next ten years to address this area.

Pursue funding for a major grant (Lily etc.)

#### ***Assessment Model/Tools***

Agree upon an inventory/improvement model and methodology then provide sets of classes, conferences, tools, videos, training & consulting for each dimension of the model.

#### ***Conferences***

Regularly offer Parish Health, Development, and Revitalization Conferences, similar to the 2010 OCA Parish Ministries conference, annually in different geographical areas. Provide travel assistance to assist parishes in sending clergy and laity to the conferences.

#### ***Development Grants***

Provide grants to parishes for developing new ministries.

Provide major grants/loans for upgrading facilities.

#### ***Facilitator/ Turn Around Team Training & Funding***

Provide regular training for facilitators that are available to assist parishes establish an intentional effort to strengthen their life in Christ.

#### ***Accountability***

Require parishes in deep decline to submit a plan for revitalization to their diocesan hierarch and diocesan parish health ministry leader(s) for review, comment, approval and implementation.

#### ***Turn Around Ministers***

Recruit lay persons and priests with useful skills (singing/directing; teaching, evangelizing) to be seeded into parishes in need of new life as change agents/"missionaries".

#### ***Proof of Concept Examples***

Target a few "lighthouse" parishes (examples of positive turnaround) that provide hope and confidence to others.

#### ***Practical Clergy Development***

Internships are a must before assignment of priests in turn-around situations. Offer practical training in understanding the history of the OCA –how did we get to be the way we are!

### **Possible Costs (OCA-wide):**

- Year 1-3: TBD
- Year 4-6: TBD
- Year 7-15: TBD

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Is the section labeled “The Challenge” a fair and accurate portrayal of the challenge we face in the area of parish revitalization? How would you modify it?
2. In the section labeled “Root Causes”, with which items do you agree and disagree? Can you add to the list? What do you see as the 2 or 3 most important items?
3. Given the issue of parish decline has been an important and obvious trend for many years and given that more than a few efforts have been undertaken, what do you see as the reasons why these efforts have been at best minimally effective?
  - a. We’ve been doing the wrong things?
  - b. We should do nothing and put this issue in God’s hands? He will handle this as He pleases in His own way and in His own time.
  - c. We’re doing the right things -- but in the wrong way?
  - d. We’re doing approximately the right things in about the right way –we just aren’t doing enough of it to make a difference.
  - e. We’re expecting results in too short a time frame?
  - f. We haven’t really committed to the problem and to really taking action.
  - g. If you had \$200,000 to spend on this issue how would you spend it?

# MISSIONS/NEW PARISH PLANTING

## **The Challenge**

Mission planting efforts have suffered from lack of funding, but perhaps more importantly from a lack of local initiative and involvement. The OCA's Church Planting Grant, long the foundation of new our efforts to create new communities has been ably led from the vantage of the central administration during its existence, and there have been many good mission planting priests who have been involved in the program. Like many areas of Church life with the OCA, mission planting is more successful when there is stronger Episcopal oversight and local involvement, whether from the local dean, an assigned mentor, or local established parishes sponsoring new missions.

## **Key Facts**

From 1990 to 2000, the OCA opened 44 new missions

From 2000 to 2010, the OCA has opened over 50 new missions

## **Past Efforts**

### **All American Councils**

Numerous AACs have addressed issues of The Church as Mission (1975) Church Growth (1983)Evangelization (1986); The Parish Community (2002) In 2005 the OCA set out to explore "Our Church and Future" by examining five strategic pillars including one devoted to 'Evangelizing North America'

### **Workshops**

Office of Church Growth & Evangelism's Boot Camp (1999 – 2002), Evangelism Conference (2003, 2004). The OCA's Department of Evangelization published the "Church Planter's Resource Kit" (commonly know as the Mission's Handbook) in 2003 which still is the standard reference book on missions. It is in need of updating.

### **Church Planting Grant**

One of the most effective programs within the OCA over the last 15 years has been the Church Planting Grant program. This program has led to the establishment of dozens of new missions and parishes within the OCA in that period. Many of these missions and parishes are among more vibrant and flourishing churches within the OCA. In its earliest years the program funded as many as 5 or 6 new mission plants at any one time. With recent events within the church and the subsequent lack of funding this decreased to a low of one mission in 2010. Presently four missions are being funded (though one of these only partially).

### **Diocesan Efforts**

Many Diocese's have mission coordinators, conduct conferences, workshops experience sharing sessions focused on the needs of missions. Some also provide financial assistance to Missions.

## **Background/Importance/ Issues**

In past discussions concerning the issues of mission planting, ministry leaders and concerned contributors listed the following as key issues.

1. "To recover the missionary dimension of the Church is today's greatest imperative. We have to recover a very basic truth: that the Church is essentially Mission, that the very roots of her life



are in the commandment of Christ: ‘Go Ye therefore and teach all nations.’” (Matthew 28:19) --  
- Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

2. The methods and means of mission planting are as varied as the regions of North America that fall within the boundaries of OCA, the mission planters that are called to lead the efforts, and the people who labor to establish these missions.
3. The Orthodox faith in Christ ‘with its scriptural, liturgical and sacramental life, strong theological resources, and commitment...(to) piety and holiness’ remain the greatest strength and guiding principle in all our mission planting endeavors.
4. New missions revitalize the faith of people more than most established parishes.
5. Mission plants take bigger steps/leaps of faith than most established churches.
6. Mission plants reach new communities of people, challenge people to deepen their faith, instigate renewal in established parishes (especially where established parishes assist in the planting).
7. Mission plants baptize and receive more converts to Orthodox faith in Christ (per capita at least) than do most established parishes.
8. Bishops: Many seem to lack initiative and the mindset to establish new missions.
9. Clergy: Many have no training and limited skills for mission planting.
10. Local Parishes: Lack vision of church growth which necessarily includes the formation of daughter missions and parishes.
11. Seminaries are not focused on missiology and church planting.
12. Lack of coordinated effort to identify mission minded priests and seminarians.
13. Lack of clear guidelines for where and how to establish missions.
14. Lack a sense of urgency: Difficulty of changing cultures, behaviors, assumptions and expectations. The time to plant a mission is either now or 10 years ago!
15. Limited view of lay contribution beyond basic roles (singers; church school, parish council, sexton).
16. We have a limited legacy of intentionality in planting missions.
17. We lack money, skills tools models methods to fix it because we have not focused on this as the most critical problem we face in contemporary.
18. There is clear skepticism about the efficacy of church “programs,” but church planting is one that has clearly borne fruit.

## **A Possible Approach**

- Reorganize Mission Planting to align with the Dept. of Evangelization. Identify proven mission planters from each diocese to work with the department to share information, experience, and organize mission plants. Rewrite the Mission’s Handbook with continued emphasis on practicality. Rewrite the Mission Guidelines which will standardize the procedures for mission planting.
- Help those responsible for missions at the diocesan (or even deanery) level to identify the top 100 prospective new locations from missions and develop plans to reach them.
- Rethink policies and guidelines for forming and funding mission plants. As long as organization and funding comes mainly from the OCA’s central administration, there will not be an effective and cohesive church planting effort throughout the OCA. Emphasis needs to be put on local organization and funding. With local funding comes accountability.
- Work with the seminaries (SVOTS mission program and STOTS) to identify and train qualified students and priests for mission planting. Consider not only mission planting priests, but

developing mission planting teams including priest, choir directors, catechists, etc. Coordinate efforts among the seminaries and dioceses to find the best placement of mission planting priests and teams. Establish a mission planting program which would provide ongoing and continuing education for mission planters and mission planting teams already in the field.

## **Possible Actions**

### **Dioceses**

#### ***Bishops***

Actively support and develop missions through diocesan funding. Coordinate with Mission Directors/Deans, Seminaries, and the Dept of Evangelization to provide necessary resources, tools and personnel for Mission plants.

#### ***Mission Directors /Deans***

Identify locales within the dioceses (and its constituent deaneries) where new missions are desired and where demographics point to a need.

#### ***Parishes***

Adopt church growth models that include the formation of daughter missions and parishes when growth reaches desired level. Support the planting of new missions in your region with material and other resources.

### **Seminaries**

#### ***Curriculum***

Undertake a review of the seminary curriculum to include an emphasis on missiology and church planting: emphasis in MDiv on church planting; possible 4<sup>th</sup> year MTh in missiology; develop MA and DMin in Missiology and Church Planting.

#### ***Coordination***

Coordinate with the Department of Evangelism to integrate Church Planting Grant with a DMin program with which it would run concurrently, that in conjunction with the local bishop, dean, and grant recipient mentor would provide training, oversight, accountability, and a peer group.

#### ***Identification of Mission Oriented Future Clergy***

Specifically identify those students who might excel at mission planting. Work with the various dioceses and Department of Evangelism to place students in areas where they will have the best opportunities.

### **Dioceses and/or OCA**

#### ***Commitment***

- Make a commitment to prioritize action & resources for planting of missions.
- Establish a budget over next ten years to address this area.

#### ***Goals***

- The establishment of mission and parish churches in all of the major metropolitan areas (300,000 or greater) in the US and Canada.
- Encourage the establishment of daughter churches in the larger metropolitan areas .

- Establishing churches in the ‘second tier’ cities (those cities with population between 150,000 and 300,000), as well as in locales where unique circumstances can bring flourishing Orthodox communities.
- Increase funding of Church Planting Grants to a minimum of 10 per year.

### ***Conferences***

- Offer Mission and Evangelism Conferences, similar to OCA’s Parish Ministries Conference annually in different geographical areas.
- Provide travels assistance to assist parishes in sending clergy & laity to the conferences.

### ***Church Planting Grants***

- Provide a minimum of 10 Church Planting Grants each year.
- In conjunction with the seminaries provide regular training and oversight for grant recipients.

### **Possible Costs (OCA-wide):**

- Year 1-3: TBD
- Year 4-6: TBD
- Year 7-15: TBD

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Is the section labeled “The Challenge” a fair and accurate portrayal of the challenge we face in the area of Missions/New Parish Planting? How would you modify it?
2. In the section labeled Past Efforts”, with which items do you think was successful or not successful? Can you add to the list?
3. Given the issue of Mission Planting has been successful over the years, what areas have we not addressed or needs improvement? Do you believe this a parish issues, a diocesan issue, an OCA issue or a combination? Should there be a master plan for mission planting?
  - a. Should there be central Church office that coordinates the efforts of the diocese? How would you see this office impacting parish and diocesan efforts?
  - b. Should each diocese have someone dedicated to new mission planting?
  - c. We’re doing the right things -- but in the wrong way?
  - d. We’re doing approximately the right things in about the right way –we just aren’t doing enough of it to make a difference.
  - e. We’re expecting results in too short a time frame?
  - f. We haven’t really committed to the problem and to really taking action.
  - g. If you had \$200,000 to spend on this issue how would you spend it?

# EVANGELIZATION

## **The Challenge**

The Orthodox Church stands at an unprecedented opportunity for evangelization. After centuries of oppression, persecution, and destruction from non-Orthodox ideologies, the Church has struggled and survived as one Church worldwide to continue as a viable Christian witness in the world today. Success of its witness is not so much determined by education, training, and successful strategies, but first by the blood of the many martyrs who willingly laid down their lives for Christ and His Church during the past and present history.

With this legacy how do we:

- Further equip the Orthodox Church in order that it may be faithful to its sacred evangelistic tradition.
- Continue the powerful witness of its martyrs.
- Demonstrate the Godly love that compels it to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all peoples and nations.

## **Key Facts**

- From 1980 to 2000, the OCA declined 6-9%.
- Since early 90's 170 + parishes have declined or no growth; 140+ have declined by double digits.
- From 1990 – 2000 US population grew 11%; OCA decreased 13%.
- From 2000, the OCA has experienced growth from Protestant/Catholic converts.
- In 2006, 90% of 100 students at St. Tikhon' were converts to Orthodoxy.
- There is growth in the Church, but mainly of believers from other traditions.
- This growth may not be through the Church's efforts.

## **The Orthodox Century**

- Two thousand years of Christianity culminated in a century of martyrdom, as multitudes of Orthodox Christians perished under the communism.
- Based upon the blood of generations of martyrs from this past century, we know from history that the fruit of their sacrifice strengthens the Church.
- The Holy Spirit is already working throughout the world leading men and women into the Church as evidenced by the many converts in America.
- 1995 SCOBA Bishops challenge church to evangelize US & East Europe.
- Protestant/Evangelicals are publishing articles asking, "Will the 21<sup>st</sup> century be the Orthodox Century?" (Christianity Today 12/2006).
- God wants us to cast our nets over the side. Are we still fishers of men?
- Are we ready to be what Christ has called and made us to be? If so, then...
- The 21<sup>st</sup> Century will be remembered in history as "The Orthodox Century!"

## **Background/Causes/ Issues**

The Church exists to proclaim the Gospel as a witness for man's salvation. Our Church was birthed from the Apostolic witness & ministry of evangelization.

The Christianization of the empire led to the solidification of faith & traditions, but altered the spiritual dynamic in regards to evangelism & mission. The Church's Divine Services and Liturgy took shape within this time reflecting the challenges of ministering within a 'Christian empire' ministering mainly to the baptized in the divine services, teaching them what and how to believe. Over the centuries, various attacks and oppression effected evangelism: Islam, Catholicism, Communism, Hinduism, Secularism, and Protestantism.

As one Orthodox Church worldwide, when one part suffered persecution, preventing evangelism and mission, it affected the whole Church. History has shown an "ebb and flow" in regards to evangelism in the Church, but the missionary witness has continued throughout in various forms/degrees.

The OCA was birthed through the missionary efforts of St. Herman, St. Innocent and others in Alaska and North America who had an evangelistic witness in one form or another. The continual flow of immigrants was one kind of evangelistic ministry, but over time this stunted the active evangelistic outreach to non-Christians. While the Orthodox continues a passive evangelistic witness in faithfully holding Divine Services, reading scripture, living holy lives, fasting, etc., it also needs to engage in more active evangelism through an engagement with society.

Many have said we are living in a "post-Christian" society, paganism, occultism, etc. rising similar to Apostolic age. The challenge is to rediscover & reawaken our Apostolic evangelical witness, mission & tradition and become an evangelizing church.

Question: Have we become a church that "has form without power?" 2Tim.3:5. Can any of our people stand up and speak of how Christ and His Church changed their lives, delivered them from addictions, healed their marriage, changed life? Clergy and laity must learn the scriptural basis for evangelism and how to lead a non-Christian to faith in Christ.

The Sacred Scriptures and Saints (St. Seraphim of Sarov) tell us the Holy Spirit is the main determinant to successful evangelism.

We need to apply the timeless scriptural principals and examples that has enabled the saints to turn the world upside down and effect countless lives.

In so doing we need to overcome certain biases. Among those:

- The Orthodox church does not evangelize, that is what Protestant churches do .
- We don't use the word evangelism or evangelistic, only evangelization .
- We should NOT be open to learn from the best of evangelism that evangelicals/protestants practice.

We need a simple, clear, effective approach to evangelization that incorporates the liturgical life of the Church with the outreach to people and the community.

### **Key Principles of Evangelization**

- Evangelization requires us to be filled with God's love.
- Evangelization recognizes our need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Evangelization rediscovers the power that is available from Christ's Spirit.
- Evangelization realizes the freedom to be a witness for Christ.
- Evangelization reinstates the apostolic witness of the Church.
- Evangelization reintegrates the gift of public proclamation.

- Evangelization remembers God's essential mission for the Church.

## **Elements of An Action Agenda**

Possible key actions for equipping the Church to evangelize are the following:

### **Parishes**

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to the leadership in relation to the area of evangelization and outreach?
- In what way is He leading you to implement some form of outreach and with what training materials?
- What teaching does the leadership need and what resources are needed, if any, to make it work?
- Preach and teach on the subject of evangelism for a period of time. Then gather those people who have an inclination or desire to be involved in outreach to non-Christians. Train them and send them out.
- Make an assessment of your progress. Continue what is working and change what is not working.
- Integrate evangelism into the divine services, Bible studies, etc. catching the fish who swim into our nets

### **Seminaries**

Seminaries should give priority to evangelistic training for future church leaders. Graduates can give priority and leadership in the area of evangelization and mission.

## **Priorities/Recommendations**

### **Make Evangelization a Priority**

Members of the Church must look to how they can be used in evangelization.

### ***Bishops***

Bishops should commit themselves to emphasizing, teaching, inspiring and praying for people to do evangelism and witnessing in our communities. Church leaders identify those with the evangelistic calling and gift and utilize those with the evangelistic calling and gifts to empower and equip others.

### ***Priests***

Priests and people seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Eph.5:19) and submit to training and inspiration in order to teach and mobilize the faithful. They should also look for those individuals with a calling for this particular emphasis of church ministry.

### ***Lait***

Once instructed and empowered, are to be sent out into the world to do evangelism.

### **Budget and Assigned Accountability**

Appoint leader/leaders to be responsible & accountable for evangelization work.

Establish a budget for them to undertake their work which would include:

- emphasize, identify and train the laity for witness and evangelism.
- dialogue with other Orthodox churches & Evangelicals for training.
- gather and offer evangelistic materials.
- evangelism department visits churches weekly for teaching & inspiration.

- director take teams to experience evangelistic campaigns and then organizes & oversees appropriate Orthodox evangelistic campaigns.
- evangelistic outreach be both international & domestic for success.

### **Conferences**

In addition to the above consider a suite of conferences including:

#### ***Holy Spirit Orthodox Conference (evangelism)***

Since the Holy Spirit is key to evangelism, hold an annual conference in each diocese of the OCA with various speakers emphasizing inspiration, information, individual prayer and ministry. Ministering to and targeting the entire body of Christ, clergy & faithful alike.

#### ***Evangelism/Mission Seminars in Seminaries***

Host annual/bi-annual seminars at each Orthodox seminary for students and clergy with both Orthodox and non-Orthodox specialists in evangelism and missionary outreach.

#### ***OCMC Evangelistic Campaign effort***

Teams of clergy and laity travel to foreign and domestic places to attend a public evangelistic campaign/conference and participate in the outreach.

### **Possible Costs (OCA-wide)**

1. Missions/Evangelization Director: TBD
2. Conferences/Campaigns: TBD
3. Materials/Tools, etc.: TBD

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Is the section labeled “The Challenge” a fair and accurate portrayal of the challenge we face in the area of Evangelization? How would you modify it?
2. In the section labeled “Past Efforts”, with which items do you think was successful or not successful? Can you add to the list?
3. Given the issue of Evangelization is the most important priority in the coming years, how is it not being addressed or needs improvement? Do you believe this a parish issues, a diocesan issue, an OCA issue or a combination?
  - a. Should there be more education and material available on evangelization for clergy and lay people? What form should that material be in?
  - b. How important is the “new media” in evangelization efforts?
  - c. We’re doing the right things -- but in the wrong way?
  - d. We’re doing approximately the right things in about the right way –we just aren’t doing enough of it to make a difference.
  - e. We’re expecting results in too short a time frame?
  - f. We haven’t really committed to the problem and to really taking action.
  - g. If you had \$200,000 to spend on this issue how would you spend it?

# OVERALL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of the three areas of church life do you see as most critical and worthy?
2. What tools needs to be made available to parishes? Dioceses? The Church?
3. What areas has the Church been successful overall? Not successful over all?
4. How much of the Church's resources should be dedicated to this area?
5. Is there something that was missed in this analysis?