

MINUTES
Orthodox Christian Laity Spring Meeting
Hilton, Akron, Ohio
May 30, 2014

Meeting was called to order on Friday May 30, 2014 at 9:00 am. Those present included: George Pontikes; George Karcazes; Bill Souvall; Peter Petkas; Chris Xeros; Andy Kartalis, Vice President, Presiding for President Susan Haikalis; and George Matsoukas, Executive Director. Morning Guest included Ellen and Cary Pantazis and Roy Snyder. During the fellowship dinner on Thursday May 29, 2014 all the above were in attendance and our guests included Michael Pacurar, Andrei Russi and Victor Frunza. John Regule also traveled from Youngstown to be with us and share fellowship and his thoughts.

Meeting began with the OCL Prayer which is included here because when it was sent out as part of the Agenda it was incorrect. The prayer was written by Eva Topping in 1989 and the correct words are: *Gracious Creator of Light, We pray for our Holy Orthodox Church. Fill it with Truth and Peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it. Where it is in error, correct it. Where it is right, strengthen it. And where it is divided, restore its unity. We pray also for ourselves; daughters and sons of the Orthodox Church. Fill our minds with knowledge. Plant in our hearts, faith, hope and love. We ask for these blessings through the intercessions of all the saints, **our holy Mothers and Fathers.** Amen.*

An overview of the events of the weekend and Introduction of guests were presented. A motion to elect Roy Snyder to the board was made by George Karcazes and seconded by George Pontikes. The vote to elect was unanimous. Andy Kartalis made a motion to elect John Regule to the board which was seconded by George Pontikes. The vote to elect was unanimous.

Minutes were accepted and the financial report was presented by Treasurer George Karcazes. Year-end fundraising and membership drive brought in more revenue this year than any other time in the past. Board members commented on the membership mailer and Bill and Kim Souvall were thanked for developing this creative post card which included pictures of their grandchildren. We also thanked the parents of the children for allowing them to be the OCL poster children. Questions related to financial matters were deferred until telephone conference call because bookkeeper Joanne Nikides would participate.

The office reports of the Executive Director, Web Update, and Office Report were reviewed. Questions on the latter two reports were deferred until telephone conference call. **It was recommended that the President appoint a Committee on using technology as part of the Board Meeting Process.**

The Executive Director discussed upcoming events that impact the quest for Unity. The Antiochian National Meeting to elect and submit 3 names of bishops for consideration as the next Metropolitan will take place on Thursday June 5 in Chicago. Outcome of this selection affects Unity Issue. Patriarchate of Antioch will make the final selection first week of July. Tuesday June 10th all of the Committee Chairpersons of the Assembly of Bishops are to meet in NYC at the request of the Archbishop. This is the first such meeting. Now that time lines are established by Patriarchates the work of the Assembly should be more earnest and timely. Now that questions emerge such as those from ROCOR Bishops and Bulgarian Bishop concerning Unity are in the open efforts could be made to understand their reservations and to find common ground. Now that the clock is ticking toward making

recommendations and reports concerning the blueprint the work of the Assembly takes on new meaning.

At 10:30 the telephone conference was conducted. In addition to those gathered in Akron the following board members and staff members participated in the conference call: Staff, Joanne Nikides, Deacon David Oancea; Board Members: His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel, Susan Haikalis, Teva Regule, Alice Kopan, Bob Poydasheff, John Regule, and guest participant Sonja Anderson. The participants agreed that the financial reports are complete and detailed and excellent. Joanne discussed the working relationships of the principals involved in keeping the process going. Funds donated from 2011-2014 are as follows: Year End 2011 \$100,310; 2012 year end \$135,000; 2013 \$77,500 and so far 2014 \$32,705 was donated. Deacon David discussed the suggestion with Father Hans that the site needs a facelift to keep the interest of the users. **Ex Director will check with both Fr Hans and Fr Peck.** Focus of the discussion was on how we assist keeping the Unity Process visible and moving forward.

- Ask the Bishops face to face how the process progressing. We are asking so that we can have a better understanding of what is involved.
- Ask Deacon Danilchick and Eric Namee to do more regional meetings with folks around the country so they get a feeling of the process and issues. Ex. Dir. Was asked to speak with Deacon Danilchick about joining the OCL Board.
- Meet with Metropolitan Tikhon to explain to him the mission of OCL.
- **Work with Archbishop Nathaniel to set a date for an OCL Board Crew to visit Project Mexico to build a home. Ex Director will follow up.**
- The work of the Assembly could be energized if more lay participation were encouraged. Laity needs to be included in the process of developing the blueprint for unity. There needs to be better communication between the Assembly and the laity.
- We need to keep asking what unity will look like until a plan is developed.
- The greatest impact on the Assembly is to see unity at work on local level. OCL needs to sponsor, report, local projects. When local outreach and community projects take place unity happens. It happens naturally on local levels.
- Encourage Youth –Young Adult Community Outreach and Service Projects. **Develop an Ad Hoc Committee for Young Adults. This committee needs to be appointed by President.**
- **The apathy that exists by the laity is the result of them not knowing or understanding that the Assembly exists and what it is trying to do. All the above measures are related to helping educate the Church Body about the Assembly. It seems too that the bishops themselves do not know how to manage and move ahead with the task assigned to them.**

Bob Poydasheff suggested that Fundraising Committee be appointed to create a special event in Chicago area and if successful it can be duplicated in other areas of the USA. The event would involve a piano concert by an outstanding pianist who has contacts with OCL.

Following the telephone conversation three guests joined the meeting. They were the working staff of the Pan Orthodox United Event taking place in Akron May 31-June 1. Michael Pacurar, Andrei Russi and

The board continued its discussion on making OCL a more effective organization promoting Unity. It was suggested by Ellen Pantazis that OCL work toward affiliating and supporting the other Pan Orthodox Organizations that exist including OCF, OCMC, and IOCC. She suggested that within the year, she would

assist OCL in sponsoring a cruise that included all these organizations and that all of them would benefit from the money raised on putting together the Cruise. Dr Cary Pantazis suggest that OCL write a letter to a list of benefactors of Orthodoxy asking them to support our efforts to promote Pan Orthodox United. He will help prepare the list and would write a general letter.

Board members were energized by the fact that the telephone conference reinforced the board members working hands on to build a home with the Project Mexico Project showed that we just were not talking about unity but were promoting it.

At the afternoon session the three organizers of Pan Orthodox United Event discussed their history, vision and weekend project. They will support providing signatures for the petition. OCL has supported the Pan Orthodox Project these past two years with modest donations. At the request of Andy Kartalis and second by George Pontikes, Michael Pacurar was elected to the board. His election helps OCL reach out to young adults and hopefully Michael will chair the Ad Hoc Committee for Young Adults. OCL needs to know what events at the grassroots level are going on so that we can report them.

OCL board members will assist this group with its vision of covering as an independent news source the Great and Holy Council. Peter Petkas will work with Andrei to see how much of the wish list they prepared can be implemented. Check out www.andreirusso.com Andrei's e mail is Andrei.russu.o@gmail.com.

Andy Kartalis provided an update of the Endowment Program. He sent letters to all of the board members and advisory board members. Six thousand and five hundred dollars was sent back to the Endowment. Another \$2,000 pledge was offered.

The board voted to move ahead with plans to hold the Annual Meeting October 23-26 at St Vladimir's Seminary. The Executive Director will work with Board Member Tony Kasmer on the details.

George Pontikes nominated Ellen Pantazis to become an OCL Board Member. This motion was seconded by George Karcazes. Ellen agreed. Meeting was adjourned at 4:20pm so participants could attend the 5:00 pm vesper at Presentation of the Lord Orthodox Church - Fr Pacurar officiating.

At the suggestion of the executive director, the board voted to donate \$500.00 to the DePaul University Archives which houses the OCL papers.

Some board members returned to the church grounds in the evening to meet the young adults participating and registering for the Pan Orthodox Unity Events. Other board members attended Saturday activities.

Overall it was a very productive board meeting weekend.

George Matsoukas, Recorder