

# CHURCH ADMINISTRATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

## INTRODUCTION

Laity have the right to let their pastors know about their spiritual needs and how they can be fulfilled; to advise Church leaders about what is good for the Church; to form associations of like-minded persons; to hold meetings; to enjoy a good name and reputation; to enjoy academic freedom; to perform certain roles in the liturgy; to oversee Church finances; to receive protection from illegally imposed sanctions. (McManus)

It is an un-Christian and un-Orthodox idea that there can exist a division between the "material" and the "spiritual" in Church life, or a division in the powers and privileges in these two spheres between the Laity and the Clergy.

Today the truly Orthodox conciliar approach to the totality of Church life and activity, including everything from the collection and disbursing of funds to the celebration of the Sacraments, is increasingly understood as the concern of ALL God's People, both Clergy and Laity (Hopko).

One often hears the cry that the Church is becoming too secular, that its material preoccupations too often impinge or influence the spiritual; that the Laity is becoming more and more disenchanted by its exclusion from the governance of the Church by the Hierarchy.

But as our Christian brothers quoted above indicate, there is no real problem for the true followers of our Lord. There is no "split" in the Church between the secular and the spiritual, but rather a cohesive bonding, or "Syndiakonia," that as the Body of Christ the Church is administered according to Christian principles, eschewing the techniques used by purely secular institutions for their funding goals.

It is the prayer of Orthodox Christian Laity (OCL) that the recommendations and ideas suggested in the following Commission treatise: Church Administration and Accountability will help open windows for more effective Church Governance.

Utilization of the substantial Laity resources of talent and professional skills and experience must be harnessed by the Archdiocese and Dioceses to help our Orthodox Church meet the challenges of the coming new century.

## PURPOSE AND GOALS

It is the aim of this commission to study the strengths and weaknesses of the administration of our institutional church. If our Church on all its levels, Archdiocese, Diocese and Parish, were being managed efficiently and effectively, there would be no issues to discuss, no problems to solve, no need to conduct this study and prepare this paper. Therefore, let us state briefly the specific purposes and goals of our report:

- To review significant and relevant existing regulations, practices and procedures regarding administration and financial accountability;

- To identify, examine and define areas of special concern;
- To explore, describe and suggest ways and means to address the issues, and make recommendations for improving the administrative structure of our institutional church so that it may operate more efficiently and effectively.

### **ISSUES - POINTS OF CONFLICT**

We fully understand that our religious organization is firmly based on the doctrines and canons of our faith. This report is not dealing with that aspect of our church; we fully accept and understand that our religious dogma clearly prescribes matters of faith and spiritual practices. We are, however, concerned with those aspects of managing and administering the church institution so that the faithful can approach it for their spiritual needs without thoughts and feelings of distrust, or suspicion of administrative and financial irregularities. We believe our church administration suffers from careless or inept management, and violations of the trust of the communicants. Relative to mismanagement or careless administration, much of this is the result of inexperience, incompetence, and on occasion abuse of power.

Briefly, the issues revolve around such specific areas as:

1. The financial relationship between the parish and the archdiocese; the administrative authorities of the parish council and the parish priest, the diocese, or with the archdiocese;
2. The absence of cooperation between and among these levels of authority or persons of "power";
3. The need to know accurate data regarding financial matters on the three levels, parish, diocese, and archdiocese;
4. Who controls what within each level of church existence;
5. The need to know how money is spent and for what reason;
6. The contradictory practices that exist on each level; and
7. The reasons for some irregularities and damaging procedures that destroy parts of entire communities or individuals.

Very often questions have arisen by some individuals around the country as to whether or not our church institution(s) have developed around a "personality cult." The variety of issues we encountered only serve to damage the worth of a parish or diocese or archdiocese. Thus, we believe our problems cannot continue to be systematically ignored; they must be identified and addressed, and ultimately appropriate solutions sought.

Certainly, this report cannot and will not address ALL the issues or questions, but to some degree will attempt to analyze major problems and then offer suggestions for reconstruction.

## **THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH**

Before we proceed, it is important that we explain HOW we are using the phrase "institutional church." First, we do not capitalize the word church - so that we can separate Church (capital c) meaning the theological or religious institution, that segment which concerns itself with doctrine, from the temporal or secular aspects.

We recognize that the term institution is used with different meanings by various people. We are using it to mean a system of human activity, having considerable and reasonable permanence, a legal entity organized for specific purpose(s), required to abide by some fundamental or specific rules and laws, in our case to serve and complement our beliefs in Orthodoxy and sustain the Church in this country.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

We must also provide the reader with a basic explanation of how we are using the term administration. An institution must have direction, must be managed by persons who accept the responsibility for the proper, efficient and effective operation of that institution. To carry on the "business" for which the unit was organized requires order, goals, rules and regulations, in short, knowledge of management and administration. Those persons who conduct the work of the unit need to have the necessary knowledge, expertise, and skills to carry on the work in accordance with the goals, needs, and purposes of the unit. Administration includes the qualities of leadership.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

We use this term to refer to the responsibility a person "in office," or appointed to a specific function and role by a group or a representative of a group, or a person in a significant position while representing a group or organization, HAS for explaining actions that occurred while he or she is in that position of responsibility, especially as the actions, results, or reasons affect the institution.

Any person in any kind of leadership position, be it major or minor, or in a position of responsibility, especially if financial responsibility is involved, must account for his or her actions and outcomes. We especially emphasize financial accountability, for this is an area that has damaged many a church community. Accountability, as we use it, includes all levels of our church institution, parish, diocese, archdiocese. The institutional church is responsible to the people who belong to it; to the members who support it both physically, morally, and financially. We expect our leaders, church employees and volunteers to maintain ethical standards with respect to their work as clergy or laity serving the community (parish, diocese, archdiocese). Since they are the persons responsible for conducting the day-to-day affairs of our church institution, they are responsible for the efficient functioning of the church and are obligated to report to those of us who form the "body" of the church. It is essential that complete information about the operations of the church be reported regularly through the Orthodox Observer, the Clergy-Laity Congress, the Archdiocese's Council and other public bodies of the church.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**

Those of us who go to our church and offer our service certainly have to be confused by the way our

church institution is structured administratively. As one of our bishops put it recently, "The church at the Archdiocese level is Papal, and on the parish level it is congregationalist" (a form of church government in which each local religious unit is independent and self-governing).

We would like to examine and redefine the roles of the clergy and laity on the parish, diocesan, and archdiocesan levels.

### **The Parish Level**

Because of the way the parishes were formed in the early years of our Church in America, the lay people who founded the parishes would seek out a priest and hire him, or even appoint someone with some theological background to act as their priest. Back in those days there was no formal institution, an archdiocese as we have today, that could administer the religious needs of a community and provide the priests to the parishes. Consequently, the parishes looked upon the priest as an employee to be hired and fired as they saw fit. Peter Kourides has described the early years in his booklet, *The Evolution of the Greek Orthodox Church in America and its Present Problems*. Those first years saw the priest's job as one of performing religious services, performing and keeping records of sacraments, perhaps even being responsible for the upkeep of the physical building housing the Church, and, if asked, to be the teacher of Greek lessons, and little else.

As our Church developed and expanded, this attitude and practice of the employer-employee relationship on the part of the lay leaders became, in some instances, a source of misunderstanding and dissension. This is one point of conflict that must be corrected. We are now an advanced religious and social institution in the Americas; we have established procedures and requirements which we must follow. The religious life and in many cases, the social and cultural lives of our communities are fully dependent upon the leadership and supervision of our priest and we must recognize this if we are to do the true work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are at a point in our institutional development where we must acknowledge our parish priest as the religious head of the parish, just as we acknowledge our Bishop as head of the Diocese, and the Archbishop as head of the Archdiocese. We have, for the most part, well-educated and trained clergyman whose sole purpose is to lead the religious life of a parish. If we acknowledge and respect the roles of our clergy, we should not object to their authority in matters of FAITH and THEOLOGY. However, we also know that occasionally theological decisions are blended with the personal attitudes of either a bishop or a priest, and then a conflict probably arises. For instance, in one diocese a priest may permit the marriage of an interfaith couple to take place with the minister of the non-Orthodox party present; and in another diocese the priest will prohibit such a service. There are many other instances and examples of contradictory actions within the Greek Orthodox Church. Another example, the sponsor (Godparent) of a Greek Orthodox child would be a Roman Catholic person. These are only two examples; there are numerous examples when religious rules were "waived" or ignored for a variety of questionable reasons. Sometimes it appears that selective religious rules are adhered to or bent to fit the occasion.

By the same token, the clergy must recognize and accept the proper role that the laity must assume in the administration of the church parish. How, you may ask, can we accomplish this? Let's consider the following:

1. In theological matters, the clergy should be the final authority; but, when asked, should be able to give a verifiable explanation.
2. In the matters of administration the responsibility must be shared by both laity and clergy; and this is explicitly stated in ARTICLE V, PARISH ADMINISTRATION in the Regulations.
3. When it comes to the formation of a Parish Council, the election of laity to serve on that body must NOT be conducted as a popularity contest NOR as a political contest. This unit may well be the most significant body in the entire church organization - BECAUSE it is responsible for the well-being, growth, and cultivation of the parish community. Therefore, these parish leaders must be committed to the purpose of the Parish Council, must be dedicated to service to the Church - and their selection and election to serve on the Parish Council should be based on their religious dedication, abilities and competence, past experience, service and participation in parish life. The Special Regulations and Uniform Parish Regulations very clearly spell-out in great detail the qualifications for members to serve on the Parish Council. (See Articles VIII through XVII of the Regulations.) All too often, we see groups with special interests - interests that have nothing to do with the spiritual life of the Church - campaign and gain control of the Parish Council just so their special interests will be met; thus they dominate the life of the parish, and in all probability suffocate and stunt the life of the community. And, sadly, we often see parishes divided and ruined by such thoughtless and damaging tactics.

Many years ago, as many people may remember, parishes became divided along political lines - not by American politics, but by the politics of Greece. What do Greek politics have to do with our religious life in America? This must not be construed to mean that we advocate denial of or indifference to our heritage and cultural background. But we believe our Church and institutional church must be concerned primarily with our spiritual life. There is no room nor is our parish community a place for political battles. It is our belief that the Church as a whole, from the parish to the Archdiocese, must avoid entering the political arenas of either the United States or Greece in the name of the Greek Orthodox Church. We believe that the Church should be extremely careful about including political figures, either Greek or American, at events of the Church. The pulse of the community should be taken before the church is unwisely used for political advancement of individuals. Further, we must certainly understand, and adhere to the laws of this country, especially as they pertain to the separation of Church and State. We owe our lives, achievements, and successes to what THIS country has offered us; so we are obliged to live by the laws of this country.

We who are of Greek birth or descent are fortunate to have many secular organizations, such as, AHEPA, AHI, and others which have faithfully and competently championed the cause of the Greek-American people. They are the ones who should be looked to and should be encouraged to assume the responsibility of our political, cultural, and linguistic needs.

1. A fourth aspect: In making the Parish Council truly representative of the community the Parish Bylaws should have a provision to include the President of the Philoptochos - perhaps the most vital laity group in implementing people-to-people missions.
2. Consider Standing Committees established in parishes to address all the needs of a particular community. The chairpersons of the Standing Committees should be selected by the combined judgment and efforts of the Parish Priest and the Parish Council. These Standing Committees

should be involved in Parish Council business only when it is necessary for them to report on their activities or projects. The persons chosen to chair the Standing Committees should have some appropriate background, expertise or proven experience in the role to which they are assigned.

For instance, some of the Standing Committees which could be considered are these: (in random order)

- Day Care Center for children - where needed and facilities exist.
- Adult Religious Education - Spiritual Renewal, Bible Study, Preparation for Interfaith Marriage and Chrismation.
- Orthodox Unity - Interaction with other Orthodox Churches in the area.
- Mission and Outreach - reach out to the unchurched/welcome converts and interfaith couples.
- Youth programs and Young Adult programs.
- Golden Age programs.
- Afternoon Greek Classes, Parochial School (where needed and if possible).
- Evening Greek or English Classes for adults.
- Soup Kitchen for the Homeless.
- Liaison to non-Orthodox religious civic or humanitarian groups.
- Counseling Services, Family and Personal (by qualified persons).
- Ways and Means - Fund-raising projects.
- A Talent Pool of Retirees or Available Parishioners. (There is a great deal of expertise available from this group that is seldom tapped and used in our parishes.)
- Study of liturgical music for Greek and English services.

And so many more possibilities that can be established according to the needs of and the availability of volunteers in a particular parish.

These are but a few ideas regarding the life of the parish community. Each parish has its own unique requirements and should, therefore, study its environment and profile carefully in order to decide how to approach the administration of the parish most efficiently and effectively.

We impress upon the reader that SERVICE TO THE CHURCH must be recognized by both clergy and

laity as a shared ministry. We are a family of God, and we must respect each other's responsibilities and efforts. Thus, as we undertake our various roles in the parish, we must remember that we are serving HIM, together with our fellow parishioners; and we must not engage in egocentric maneuvers that will destroy the very institution we are all working to strengthen. Our Church must remember that its responsibility is to be INclusive and NOT Exclusive.

### **The Diocese Level**

Clearly prescribed in the Special Regulations of the Archdiocese (ARTICLE III) are the formation and requirements of a Diocesan Clergy-Laity Assembly. Section 4 of the Article states: The Diocesan Assembly shall be convened by the Bishop annually. Yet, some Bishops never convene such an assembly, while others convene assemblies only biennially.

There is no doubt that the Diocesan Assembly can be a very helpful part of the governance structure. It is interesting to note that the same article cited above states that the Assembly should "discuss matters of common concern and . . . submit proposals and recommendations to the Archdiocese for submission to the next Clergy-Laity Congress." Too often the meeting is not held and/or proposals not submitted.

We believe the Diocesan Assembly must not be ignored or omitted from the life of the institutional church. For purposes of efficiency and effectiveness, each Diocese should have a standard date for its meeting to take place and, of course, announced by the bishop "no later than ninety days in advance" as the regulations stipulate. This way the parishes can plan, prepare, and propose topics they want to place on the agenda. This time-frame also affords the parishes the opportunity to elect and instruct their delegates on the topics. And, knowing in advance when the Diocese Assembly will take place will also afford sufficient time for the host parish to make preparations.

The Diocese Assembly should be a working conference with a minimum emphasis on social and ceremonial activities and a maximum emphasis on working committees, workshops and discussion groups. Every opportunity should be given to the delegates and guests to exchange ideas, evaluate programs, study common problems and concerns, and take the necessary steps to enhance their Diocese and meet the needs of their constituent parishes.

It is our belief that in order to conduct a free and open conference, in order to share ideas and problems and understand them, and in order to make wise decisions, the conference officers must be elected by the delegates. This is not to say that the Bishop of the Diocese is not the Head of the Diocese, for he is. But, if he is also the presiding officer of the annual assembly, it is obviously very difficult to have a free and open conference, and in the long run it puts him in a very difficult position. He is the spiritual leader and can rule speakers out of order. It is imperative that the Bishop should maintain his position as the religious leader and be the guiding light and adviser to the assembly. He should counsel and help direct; he should NOT control and make the decisions for the entire body. In a democratic society and organization, the member delegates have the right and privilege of electing the officers of a meeting. This is correct parliamentary procedure and will allow the delegates to challenge, if necessary, the rulings of the Chair without feeling intimidated by the authority of a Bishop, thus, avoiding a confrontation with a religious leader. In this manner, we could truly have a free and open conference, and the delegates would know that they DO have the right, responsibility and opportunity to express their views. In the long run, the results will be far more acceptable and understandable, and the delegates will not return to their parishes with complaints and negative impressions.

If the real purpose of these Diocese Assemblies is to establish and cultivate a shared ministry between the clergy and the laity, then the right must be given to each Diocese to elect those persons - men and women - whom the delegates believe will best represent their work, hopes, dreams, aspirations, and goals for their Diocese. We, therefore, advocate the free election of conference officers.

### **Elect a Diocesan Council**

If the Diocesan meeting operates with democratic principles, then it will be easy to continue that spirit and form a DIOCESAN COUNCIL which will be workable and productive. We suggest that the Diocesan Council be formed in the following manner. At the Diocese Assembly, five clergy and five lay persons should be elected by the delegates; the Bishop will appoint five additional persons, either clergy or lay or a combination, making a total of fifteen persons on the Diocesan Council. At their first meeting, they should elect their chairperson and secretary; and, of course, should meet at least quarterly with the Bishop. Further, both men and women should be considered for these positions, and the best qualified should be chosen.

The elected body of Diocesan Council members would also assist the Bishop in carrying out the mandates and programs of the Diocese.

We, of the Orthodox Christian Laity ministry, firmly believe that this type of fair and equal representation is absolutely essential if we are to establish and develop a ministry of lay participation. No matter how honorable and well-meaning the present members of the Diocesan Council may be, they are not elected representatives of the parishes and dioceses; they are appointees of the Bishop and they serve the one who appointed them, and not necessarily the church-at-large. More often than not, this closed and exclusionary procedure is a roadblock to free and open discussion of the real problems and needs of our parishes.

This is NOT how we should operate. We should not penalize people who may have differing points of view or who present a responsible opinion, or express an opposing idea; we should listen and try to understand and then let the majority decide whether or not the idea has merit. Too often we hear that the Diocesan Councils are run in an authoritarian manner.

There is no doubt in our minds that a Diocesan and ultimately the Archdiocesan Council will best serve our interests when they are truly elected bodies. We allow for one-third of the Diocese Council to be appointed by the Bishop; but the Council must be elected. They MUST be the representatives of the church members, their parishes. When the decisions and programs of the Diocese Assembly are made and announced, they reflect the work of all the parishes together, by the representatives of those parishes. Thus, the results, decisions and mandates will be accepted with greater interest and understanding. The parish delegates will return to their parishes with greater enthusiasm and vigor to put the programs to work, and not simply ignore the outcomes of the Assembly. There WILL BE greater satisfaction in cooperative work when the input has come from all the delegates.

If our church leaders, our hierarchs, expect the full and total support of the laity, and they should, then they must realize that the elected laity along with the elected clergy have the clear right and responsibility to participate in the decision-making process. ONLY THEN WILL WE BE ABLE TO EXPECT THE FULL AND TOTAL SUPPORT OF OUR PEOPLE.

As to the composition of the Assembly program, we must reflect what the parishes need and what their activities are. We must have workshops in which we teach and prepare delegates and guests about the specifics of parish administration and programming. We do have the responsibility of preparing our people for service. If the Diocese ignores this aspect of its work, it stands to lose many willing and capable people, who simply need a little inspiration, confidence, and training.

We may be too idealistic. We think not. The educational level and experience of our laity and clergy has advanced tremendously these past few decades. It is time for us to understand the needs of our people, especially our young people, as we prepare to enter the 21st century. If we can institute some of the procedures described here, we could truly reflect a SHARED MINISTRY OF LAITY, CLERGY, AND HIERARCHS. The Diocese level is the middle of our church structure. It must be structured with the same democratic pattern as the parish.

### **The Archdiocesan Level**

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#### The Clergy-Laity Congress

Those of us who have attended the Clergy-Laity Congresses during the past twenty years or more, are certainly aware that these biennial meetings have become largely social, ceremonial, and political in nature. If we are to do the work of the church properly on the national level, then all the social functions must be either removed or minimized drastically. There is no need for a continual series of formal breakfasts, luncheons and dinners, with a variety of receptions in between. At most, there should be ONE formal luncheon, and one banquet with a limited number of speakers, and with speakers who will reflect the religious theme and tone of the event they are attending. Otherwise, the attendees are victims of irrelevant subjects and embarrassing moments.

Those of us who have attended the Congresses have ALSO seen inordinate delays in starting meetings; in postponements and cancellations of committee meetings because a social event ran too long; or a social event has to begin; or delegates need time to dress for a formal event; and so forth.

As a result, important meetings have been compressed into an hour or two, leaving little or no time for thorough and honest examination of the issues before the delegates. At best, topics are considered in a superficial manner.

It is disturbing to see hundreds of delegates, both clergy and laity, milling around in a hotel lobby with nothing to do because of the delays or cancellations. This is hardly productive time-use, and is really very costly for our parishes and delegates.

The Archdiocese should also consider the wisdom of moving the Clergy-Laity Congress out of the big

cities where there are too many distractions, the costs are too high, and the atmosphere is not conducive to the spiritual-religious-administrative nature of the Congress. There are many very appropriate conference centers throughout the country that would be ideal for our kind of meeting. These conference centers also have their own hotel facilities, and they are located in more tranquil and appropriate environments than big-city hotels. If the atmosphere is appropriate, delegates are more likely to be more productive in their mission; and the tone of the Clergy-Laity Congress will be dignified and appealing. It is essential that the parish delegates have opportunities to meet and discuss topics of mutual concern with each other, with clergy and with hierarchs. Most professional, civic and religious organizations have already learned to use the facilities of conference centers where they are able to concentrate on their work and where they stand a better chance of achieving their goals. It's time for us to do the same.

Another area of our Congress structure and planning that requires attention is the educational and training areas. It is vitally important that we establish and conduct workshops on topics of religion, interfaith marriages, liturgical music, social issues, senior citizens, missions, outreach, youth program, fund raising, funding of our institutions, and administration and management of a parish and its components, and so many more subjects that are crying for attention and direction from the top. We need to utilize our competent professionals IN and OUTSIDE the church who can help prepare, guide, and conduct the workshops and training sessions we need. We need workshops that will help our men and woman who serve on parish councils understand their functions and roles better. We need workshops that will inspire young people to understand and be willing to participate in church administration properly.

Unless we use the Clergy-Laity meeting that is held every two years for improving our church institution, and training our people to better administer, and providing our people with spiritual renewal, WHY go to the trouble of holding these congresses? The legislative assemblies can do their work better when they have experienced the real meaning of CHURCH LEADERSHIP and ADMINISTRATION. It is incumbent upon the Archdiocese to provide such opportunities for making our church and parish administration more effective and productive.

As we explained earlier, it is essential for the Clergy-Laity Congress officers to be elected in the same manner that they are elected for the Diocese Conference. No one doubts that His Eminence the Archbishop is the over-all CHAIRMAN of the Congress; but the officer who actually conducts and presides over the assembly should NOT be the Archbishop or a Bishop or lay person appointed by him. It behooves the Archbishop to remain outside the legislative debates and to be present only to offer information, opinion and advice. The Archbishop should maintain his position as the religious leader and not be involved in "personality debates" nor must he be put in the position of ruling speakers out of order; this only tends to damage his role as religious leader. We must maintain respect and love for the Archbishop. He should be the guiding light and adviser to the congress; he should counsel and inspire.

He should NOT control and make decisions for the entire body, overlooking and ignoring the responsibilities of the delegates. Therefore, the elected presiding officer should be an unbiased person, man or woman, who is competent and capable, and who will be able to hold the respect of the delegates and conduct the proceedings in a truly business-like and professional manner according to established rules of parliamentary procedure. Furthermore, the Congress Committees must also have elected chairpersons, for they, too, need to be independent and responsive to the delegates.

We strongly recommend that strict adherence to schedules and meeting times be an important element of Congress. The plenary session **MUST BE** run in an orderly manner and take place as scheduled. Too often the program and schedule of the Conferences have been badly ignored and abused.

As we all know, the agenda for the Clergy-Laity Congress is prepared in advance by the various departments of the Archdiocese. Before the agenda is finalized, the parishes have the right to submit to the Archdiocese any item or topics they deem important to be **INCLUDED** on the agenda. In accordance with the Regulations, the Archdiocese notifies and invites the parishes to forward their input. The staff of the Archdiocese has the responsibility and obligation to prepare the final agenda, and to include **ALL THE INPUT** from the parishes, and then distribute the final agenda to the parishes three months in advance of the Congress. Only if that procedure is followed can we accept Archdiocesan claims that the congress is being conducted in a fair and open manner. Only if that procedure is followed will it be possible for the parishes to study the topics and instruct their delegates accordingly. But, this procedure, though stipulated in the Archdiocese bylaws, has **NOT BEEN FOLLOWED** in the recent past.

Finally, in keeping with what should be the primary focus on religious matters, we recommend that secular political figures and governmental figures, whether Greek or American not be invited to the Congress. We believe that there should be only two exceptions to this rule. The mayor or governor of the host city or state may be invited to give a brief "welcome" and public officials of the Orthodox faith can participate having the same status as any other Orthodox lay person.

#### Archdiocesan Council

Regarding the Archdiocesan Council, let us, once again, review the recommendation we made in this paper for the Diocese level. The Archdiocesan Council should be comprised of at least two elected laypersons and at least one elected clergyman from each Diocese. Then, we must **ADD** to that combined group all the Bishops of the church, the elected president of the Presbyters' Council, the elected president of the Retired Clergy, and ten more qualified individuals (either clergy or laity) appointed by the Archbishop. The numbers could easily be adjusted, if it is appropriate to do so; but, the end result must be a fair and equal representation so that they will share the responsibility of "interpreting and implementing the decisions of the Clergy-Laity Congresses." We believe that such a structure is truly more representative, more democratic, and is in a better position to represent the interests of the entire church because it is accountable to a cross-section of our entire church institution.

ARTICLE II, Sec. 5 of the Special Regulations spell out in detail the purpose and functions of the Archdiocesan Council. The Archbishop is given the authority to select and appoint from the Archdiocesan Council an "Executive Committee of nine which shall have in the interim between meetings of the Archdiocesan Council all of its authority, excluding legislative powers." However, in Sec. 6 of the same Article, it states: "In the event legislation is required between Clergy-Laity Congresses, the Archbishop shall convene the Archdiocesan Council for the purpose of adopting legislation." In other words, the Archdiocesan Council can have the same powers as the Clergy-Laity Congresses.

On the other hand, several members of Archdiocesan Councils have admitted that very little, if any serious work is covered in Council meetings; that most of the real work is done by the Executive Committee - the "super nine." Thus, most of the significant decisions of our Archdiocesan

administration are made by nine persons who serve at the Archbishop's beck and call and owe allegiance totally and completely to him. This centralization of real legislative authority in the Church is a significant factor for sapping the vitality of both the Clergy-Laity Congress and the Archdiocesan Council. The restoration of power, authority and information to the Clergy-Laity Congress and the Archdiocesan Council are essential steps to revitalizing these fundamental structures of the Church. Reducing the size of the Council and providing for the election of its clergy and lay members will do much to make the Council more effective.

### Financial Management

Recently serious questions have been raised by OCL and by other concerned laypeople concerning the financial management of the Church. The Archdiocese has announced that it is suffering a significant deficit and that it has had to reduce its support of important ministries of the Church. Additionally, the Archdiocese has sold off substantial real properties it owns in New York, and very nearly gave a long term lease for much of the land of the Holy Cross Seminary to private developers.

These indications of financial stress raise grave concerns of several types for OCL.

First, are the funds and operations of the Archdiocese being managed in as efficient and cost effective a manner as possible? Proper financial management is essential not only to reduce costs, but also as part of an effective fundraising program.

Second, if Archdiocese properties are to be sold, are they being sold as a result of a rational business plan or are they being sold for ready cash?

Third, are church properties being sold in a commercially reasonable fashion or is the church being burdened with excessive commissions, fees and charges?

Fourth, a full accounting of the church's financial position performed by outside independent auditors should be published regularly in the Orthodox Observer.

OCL is not in a position to state conclusions as to the financial status of the Archdiocese, but we do recognize the legitimacy of the concerns for our church.

We strongly recommend that a thorough review of the Archdiocese's financial affairs be performed by a firm of independent financial consultants to study the financial management of the Archdiocese, to recommend improved practices, and to create a financial plan to eliminate the deficit and, if necessary, to guide the disposition of real property.

### The Orthodox Observer

The Observer is not only the voice of the Archdiocese to the community, it is also the voice of the community to itself. The newspaper on the whole has not performed either task in a satisfactory manner. Although the Observer covers the Archbishop's schedule in meticulous detail, there is rarely an article on the condition of the Archdiocese or its major ministries. Significant stories involving Orthodoxy are written in such an unbalanced fashion that the reader often has to read between the lines to catch the meaning of an article. A person could regularly read the Observer and be totally unaware of

the status of the Archdiocese.

Furthermore, the Observer, perhaps uniquely among bilingual publications, functions as two different documents. The Greek language portion of the paper is not a translation of the English, but is often a wholly different newspaper with different articles and a different focus. The Observer thus treats the Church community as two separate audiences with very little in common.

The Observer also fails as a voice of the community. It is a scandal that the editorial policy of the Observer forbids any mention of OCL or other groups in its pages even though OCL frequently has been covered by the Greek, religious and secular papers. The Observer's editorial policy should include objective articles and commentary about all issues of concern to the Church. It requires a "Voice of the People" section on vital concerns of the community.

### Discipline

One of the most embarrassing moments in the history of the Church in this nation occurred when a bishop of the Church was accused of sexual misconduct with the daughter of a parish priest by a national newsmagazine. OCL cannot comment on the guilt or innocence of the Bishop. However, the procedural course of this case raises many questions about the operations of the Church.

So far as is known, the accusations against the Bishop have never been fairly resolved in either a civil or ecclesiastical tribunal of any kind. A civil suit against the Archdiocese was dismissed because it was filed after the expiration of the statute of limitations. The "ecclesiastical" court that was purportedly convened did not hear the testimony of the alleged victim. Thus, he has never had an opportunity to clear his name; the accuser has never had an opportunity to present her case, and the faithful even now cannot say whether a Greek Orthodox Bishop has disgraced himself and the Church or whether he is the innocent victim of false accusations.

The Church must adopt clearly understood procedures by which to resolve cases like this in a fair, just and open fashion. The status of this case does no one justice.

## MANAGEMENT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE

### Another Approach to the Problems

We believe this paper has certainly focused on some of the most glaring problems in the administration (or governance) of our institutional church. We also believe that some important recommendations and solutions have been considered and included. Yet, we recognize that there are more ways to view the problems and perhaps find inspiration and guidance from them. Thus, we add to our report the following ideas that are strongly based in theological reasons.

Is THE CHURCH an institution? Even if the Church uses institutional forms, yet She is clearly NOT an institution. (It would be wise to speak of the Church as a person, rather than a thing.) The Church is the Body of Christ, a mystical, somatic entity. A better foundation for any call for "inclusiveness" would be the words of St. Paul.

Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the

Church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments [administration might be included here], diversities of tongues (I Corinthians 12:27,28).

Now there certainly is a need to discuss these roles which define leadership in the Church. A discussion of the Apostolic, Prophetic, and Didactic duties and responsibilities of both the clergy and the laity is long overdue in the Orthodox Church. And it is in the somatic model of the Church that we have our paradigm for inclusiveness.

For the Body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the Body; is it therefore not of the Body (I Corinthians 12:14,15)?

This approach would serve not only to encourage the laity in the tremendous diversity which our Church really does afford them, but it would also challenge the clergy as to their real role in service to Christ in His Church. What has happened instead is that the clergy, bishops and presbyters alike, have adopted the institutional forms of the secular world. These forms are nothing more than luxurious apparel on the Body of Christ, weighing down and burdening the Faith.

But what of the pretentious and imperious damasks we clothe our behavior in? Thankfully, in Christ we have a solution to this divergence from the meaning of Orthodoxy:

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from Supper and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin and began to wash the Disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded . . . . So after He had washed their feet and had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; Ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. Amen, amen, I say unto you. The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them (John 13:3-5,12-17).

This is an Orthodox model for administration! It's timely for our day.

It is important to show how the basic foundation of any theological argument influences the approaches to solutions. Philip Sherrard said it this way in *The Eclipse of Man and Nature* (45):

It is useless for Christians to try to grapple with and find solutions for contemporary problems if the only intellectual weapons they have to hand are those which contributed to the production of these problems in the first place.

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

In this report we have tried to focus on the major problems that seem to impede the work of the institutional church. We are fast approaching the 21st century; we are living in a world of great social and political intensity. We will see changes around us that we cannot begin to imagine at this time. Are we ready to face this world with personal peace and understanding? Will our children move into that environment knowing they have a religious home - a Church - that can give them inspiration, peace,

and guidance?

We fear that our institutional church will be facing more problems as the world makes more demands on our lives. Our Orthodox people will not be able to find an understanding church, a church governance and administration that has looked ahead to envision and prepare for their needs, not to mention the needs of the Orthodox in the 1990s.

We want to be proud of our institutional church and the manner in which it is administered and managed; we want it demonstrated that it is achieving its goals, that it is truly serving the faithful. We want to see it fit into the world effectively, not only as a beautiful religious faith, but also as an institution that can and will serve her people in an exemplary manner.