

Commission on Missions and Evangelism

Archpriest Jonathan Ivanoff, Coordinator

Commission members: Archpriests Alexey Karlgut, Samuel Kedala, and Wiaczeslaw Krawczuk; Priest Gary Breton.

Please note: All information contained in this report is current as of June 1, 2011

With the blessing of His Grace, Bishop +Michael, the newly appointed Commission on Mission and Evangelism held its first working meeting on Tuesday, December 7, 2010 (with a follow-up conference call held in March) and reviewed the charge given to it by Bishop +Michael: a three-prong strategy for diocesan growth and health:

1. **First**, a more focused and aggressive approach to mission planting that will directly involve qualifying newly planted missions for OCA Church Planting Grant [CPG] status within the first two years of the mission's founding. It was also agreed that, going forward, no future mission would be established without immediate and adequate diocesan financial support for its assigned clergy. Father Ivanoff will visit each diocesan mission during 2011 to become more acquainted with the communities and their needs.

Status: Visits to existing missions are now being planned. A visit to the Mother of God Mission, Rocky Hill, NJ was planned for the first week of May but required postponement until mid-June. Visits to the missions in Lansing and Oneonta are planned for July and August. The purpose of the visits:

- **Rocky Hill:** to ascertain the parish's readiness and qualifications to finish an application, by the end of summer, 2011, for a special one-year OCA Planting Grant
- **Lansing:** to assess their status and prospects for applying for a CPG next year, in 2012 for 2013 and, hopefully, beyond
- **Oneonta:** to ascertain how diocesan resources may be best focused here in order to help the mission achieve stability and position it for future growth

Inquiries have been received from Orthodox Christians in the Potsdam, NY area, a college town near the Canadian border; similar potential missionary possibilities also exist in Plattsburgh, about an hour's drive away to the east, near the Vermont border. Preparations are now underway to meet with and visit the faithful in Potsdam to ascertain the potential that exists there.

2. **Second**, the commission will endeavor to create and aggressively offer adequate resources for those parishes that find themselves in numerical decline. This new ministry of parish health and revitalization will feature both short-term seminars/workshops and long-term solutions and approaches to clergy and laity concerned about the decline of their parish.

Status: A **Church Growth Boot Camp** for parish health and revitalization is planned for **August 1 – 3 in Binghamton, NY**. Informational flyers and registration forms have been disseminated via email to all diocesan clergy and on the diocesan website (<http://nynjoca.org>) and Commission subsite (<http://oncd.us/diocesenynj.html>), and has also been passed on to other neighboring dioceses. It is hoped that, pending the successful attendance at and interest in this conference, such conferences focusing on issues of parish health and growth can be held yearly, focusing on practical skills for "equipping the saints for the work of ministry."

3. **Third**, future meetings will not only continue to flesh out the details and "next steps" to the above, but also address the general issue of evangelism within the diocese -- both of our own members as well as the evangelization of non-Orthodox persons and communities who may be interested in learning more about the Orthodox Faith and Church.

Status: Work in this area will begin in the fall of 2011.

Respectfully submitted,
Fr. Jonathan Ivanoff