

Statement on Mission and Evangelism
SCOBA Conference of Bishops
Antiochian Village, Ligonier, Pennsylvania
November 30-December 2, 1994

The end of the second millennium after Christ coincides with a unique missionary challenge to the Orthodox Church around the world. To mention only two dimensions of this challenge will show its scope. 1) The fall of communist totalitarianism in Central and Eastern European countries opens the way for the re-evangelization of the peoples of these countries. 2) In the United States and Canada millions of people are in spiritual crisis, millions of people are unchurched, the societies are afflicted with a spiritual and moral vacuum, and the Orthodox Church is therefore presented with a challenge to bear witness to the Orthodox faith and to evangelize.

We, the Orthodox bishops of North America, assembled at the Antiochian Village, Ligonier, Pennsylvania, November 30-December 2, 1994, have heard an address on Mission and Evangelism by His Eminence, Metropolitan Philip of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, and a response by His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas, Orthodox Church in America, and have reflected together on the missionary task of the Orthodox Church in North America.

We wish to express the following convictions and commitments regarding mission and evangelism in North America:

- It is our conviction that mission is the very nature of the Church, and is an essential expression of her apostolicity, and that the Orthodox Church is therefore commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ to teach, to preach, and to make disciples of all nations;
- It is our conviction that the Orthodox Church's history and experience give numerous examples of commitment to mission and to the preaching of the Good News of Christ (missions to the Slavs, missions in Siberia, China, Korea, and Japan, the evangelization of the Alaskan native people, and contemporary mission in Africa, Indonesia and Albania);
- We believe that our task in North America is not limited to serving the immigrant and ethnic communities, but has at its very heart the missionary task, the task of making disciples in the nations of Canada and the United States;
- We believe that the Orthodox of North America - bishops, clergy and laity - are called to think together, plan together, and work together in order to do mission work together;
- We commit ourselves to show special pastoral attention to couples coming to marry in the church, especially in mixed marriages, and to their Orthodox Christian education and inauguration into Church life.
- We commit ourselves to the evangelization, or re-evangelization, of those many people who call themselves Orthodox, and have indeed been baptized and chrismated in our churches, but whose lives are in fact distant from the fullness of the Orthodox Faith and the fullness of the Orthodox Church's sacramental life;
- We commit ourselves to avoiding the creation of parallel and competitive Orthodox

parishes, missions, and mission programs;

- We commit ourselves to common efforts and programs to do mission, leaving behind piecemeal, independent, and spontaneous efforts to do mission, moving forward towards a concerted, formal, and united mission program in order to make a real impact on North America through Orthodox mission and evangelism;

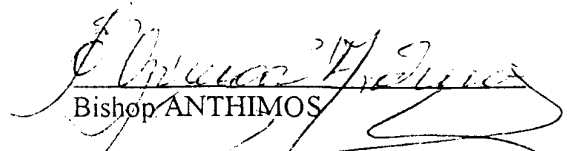
- We strongly endorse the unified Orthodox Christian Mission Center, the Mission Conferences (at present co-sponsored by the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, and the Orthodox Church in America), and encourage further consolidation of mission efforts and programs here and throughout the world;

- We commit ourselves to express a common vision of mission and to work towards this end in the teaching of mission as an important part of the theological education of our future priests.

-We respectfully petition His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch to convene a world conference of mission representatives to help coordinate Orthodox mission strategies and efforts around the world;

-We Orthodox in North America commit ourselves to bringing our household into order for the sake of the preaching of the Good News of Jesus Christ, His Incarnation and His teaching, His crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection, and His presence in the Church through the descent of the Holy Spirit.


Bishop ALEXIOS


Bishop ANTHIMOS

+ Bishop Antoun
Bishop ANTOUN



Bishop BASIL

+ Metropolitan Christopher
Metropolitan CHRISTOPHER

+ Archbishop Dmitri
Archbishop DMITRI

+ Archbishop Herman
Archbishop HERMAN

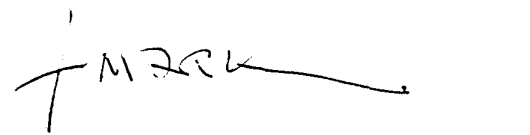
+ Archbishop Iakovos
Archbishop IAKOVOS

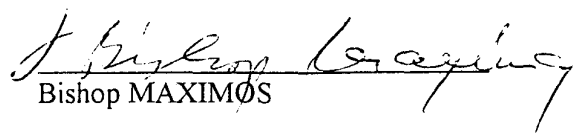

Bishop IAKOVOS

+ Metropolitan Irinej
Metropolitan IRINEJ


Metropolitan JOSEPH

+ Archbishop Kyrill
Archbishop KYRILL


Bishop MARK


Bishop MAXIMOS

+ Bishop Methodios
Bishop METHODIOS

Bishop Mitrophan
Bishop MITROPHAN

+ Bishop Nathaniel
Bishop NATHANIEL

+ Bishop Nicholas
Bishop NICHOLAS

+ Arch. Peter of W.G. (OCA)
Archbishop PETER

+ Metropolitan Philip
Metropolitan PHILIP

+ Bishop Philj of Alaska
Bishop PHILIP

Bishop Philotheos of Alaska
Bishop PHILOTHEOS

+ Bishop Seraphim
Bishop SERAPHIM

+ Metropolitan Silas
Metropolitan SILAS

+ Metropolitan Theodosius
Metropolitan THEODOSIUS

Bishop Tikhon
Bishop TIKHON

+ Archbishop Victorin
Archbishop VICTORIN

+ Bishop Vsevolod
Bishop VSEVOLOD