



Mission Department Report 2007 Diocesan Assembly

By Joseph Kormos, *Mission Development Committee Facilitator*

Overall Status of Mission Communities

Shortly after the Mission Development Committee met in January a mission priest asked: "So, are our missions improving?"

The answer, after some thought, was a qualified yes. None of the missions had reported astonishing breakthroughs in numerical growth or personal spirituality. None had identified any sure fire new methods, tools, practices, or projects that could kindle new life into a community.

There was, however, a reasonable amount of *good news*.

- A number of communities made important progress in terms of facilities in the past year.
- Some had gone through serious introspection and emerged with a stronger sense of -- well -- Mission!
- Some new ministry efforts had emerged.
- Many communities reported increased personal financial stewardship.
- A number of communities that had received support from the Diocese for a number of years did not request support this year. (A seeming indication of maturation.)
- Most communities appeared at least slightly healthier than a year ago.

Our mission communities continue to progress --though slowly. Often three steps forward and two back - but overall progress nonetheless. Life in a Mission community is vastly different than in an established parish --often more precarious; often more rewarding in the sense of being able to make/see a noticeable difference in persons lives and impact on local communities.

Missions are constrained by:

- Lack of awareness of the Orthodox faith (as well as awareness of their specific community) in the cities and towns in which they are located.
- Small numbers in their community. This places a burden on finances, overtaxes lay leaders, and burdens the priest



- Due to budget limitations almost all Mission priests have secular employment.
- Temporary facilities --often made beautiful through extra effort of the community -- but often far from a proper worship space.
- Specialized training for Mission priests. We are constrained in our mission efforts by the availability of priests -- trained, knowledgeable and competent in the particular issues of mission situations -to assign to new missions.

Specific reports on the status of each community are provided later in this report.

Mission Development Committee (MDC)

A Diocesan Mission Committee oversees the work of the Diocese' Mission Department. Current members of the Mission Committee are:

- Archbishop JOB
- Fr John Zdinak, Chancellor
- Fr. Thomas Mueller, Dean Chicago, Deanery
- Mrs. Mary Jane Lucak , Diocesan Council
- Mr . Joseph Kormos, Mission Department facilitator, Parish Health facilitator, Diocesan Council

The committee meets twice per year in January and May/June.

Overall Mission Approach

For the past 2 years the Mission Development Committee has attempted to provide increased definition and structure to the Diocese' Mission efforts.

The following is an overview of that activity:

The primary purpose of the Diocese of the Midwest's Mission planting effort is to deliver growth to the Diocese by planting new Orthodox communities and nurturing them into healthy, vibrant parishes that give Glory to God.

The Diocese is attempting to use a systematic approach to developing missions. That approach aims to conserve the Diocese' limited resources and to accelerate the calendar time from the first establishment of a mission community to its maturation into a healthy permanent parish.

Specific elements of the continuously evolving approach include:

- *Selecting high opportunity sites for planting new missions.*
- *Harvesting and applying the Diocese's best experience and insight to remove barriers and take actions that enable growth and health of missions*
- *Overseeing direct cash grants and selective training and development to mission communities*

- *Identifying unsuccessful mission efforts sooner so as to redirect energies and resources to more fruitful opportunities.*
- *Setting proper expectations and accountability for all involved*
- *Target goals and measures of success of the mission development effort are:*
 - *A 'crop' of 10-15 healthy new parishes is delivered to the Diocese every ten years (1-2 per year) and;*
 - *Four out of five of the communities that become designated as missions (plants) grow to become parishes of 50 or more persons within five years and;*
 - *Three out of five of the missions which become parishes grow to a size of 150 persons within 15 years of their initial planting.*
 - *Parishes that result from the mission program serve a broad cross section of the communities in which they are located.*

Mission Grants/Stipends

Much of the activity of the Mission Development Committee is associated with managing the award of grants to mission communities in a consistent and systematic manner. In January of 2007 the MDC met to review applications for grants. The following is a summary of this year's outcome:

- Nine applications were received with grant requests totaling \$60,600.
- Nine grants were awarded totaling \$56,400/yr. This was an increase of approximately 3% over 2006.
- Six communities received less than they requested. Two received the amount they requested. One community requested significantly less than they had previously received and they were awarded slightly more than they requested though substantially less than the previous grant.
- Three communities received increases from last period (one of which is a first time award); three decreased, three remained the same.

A number of communities that had received support from the Diocese for many years did not request support this year.

This year's grants began July 1, 2007. This year we have expanded the practice of making specific requests/suggestions for some missions, particularly those receiving grants. Often the requests involve "deliverables" which need to be provided before payment of the grant is authorized.

Mission Committee/Department Actions

In addition to awarding Mission Grants the following are some key activities of the Mission Development Committee/Director that have come to some form of completion in the last year. (Many have been under discussion for longer than this past year.)

Mission Website

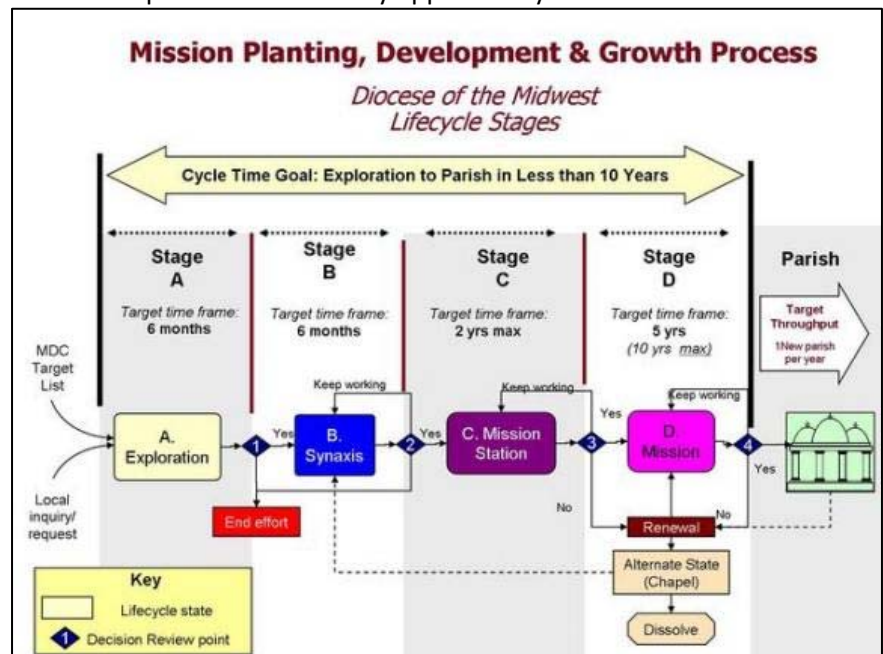
As part of the effort to build a useful Diocesan website, a Mission page was created. Contents include a list of mission communities, a description of the Mission Grant process and available forms for application, criteria for achieving parish status, mission planting criteria, a description of the overall Mission development cycle, a definition of chapel status and newly approved By laws for Mission parishes.

Chapel Designation

The Mission development Committee has been discussing a designation called Chapel Status for some time. A preliminary definition is available on the Diocesan website and included in the appendices of this report.

Criteria for Parish Status

Likewise at its May 2007 meeting the MDC agreed upon a definition of the criteria for achieving parish status. This is available on the Diocesan website and reproduced below in the appendix to this report.



Mission By-Laws

At its May 2007 meeting the MDC agreed upon new bylaws for Missions in the Diocese. These By- Laws are available on the Diocesan website. A list of Frequently Asked Questions concerning these bylaws is also available on the Diocesan website and reproduced below in the appendix to this report.

Existing Missions will not be required to change their existing bylaws to conform to these bylaws. New Missions will be expected to use these by laws.

Change in Status

No missions applied for parish status since October 2006.





St Andrew Mission in Minocqua WI has been designated as Chapel rather than a Mission.



Mission Starts and Explorations

- No new missions were started in the last twelve months.

- One location that had been previously approved as a possible Mission site, “Stateline” in Illinois near the Wisconsin border (Roscoe-Rockton, South Beloit, Beloit, and Janesville) had been in a dormant state. Fr Basil Aden is now actively exploring the opportunity again.
- One or two potential proactive sites for Missions have been discussed but no action taken.
- Requests have been received for Mission starts in a number of areas including Cedar Rapids IA, Ames IA, Joplin MO, Chillicothe OH, and SW Twin Cities.
- Preliminary proactive discussion about one potential mission site as an outreach of two existing parishes was discussed but no action was taken pending exploration of the idea with parishes in the target area.

Reports of Mission Communities

<p>Christ the Savior Mission, Anoka MN Founded 2000</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community purchased and remodeled a building in 2006 for worship use. • Numbers & enthusiasm is up. • Attendance remains solid with July average about 58; 100 at Pascha midnight. • Giving is up from last year at this time but expenses are also. • Two potential catechumens. • Redoing a website • 25 minutes to nearest OCA parish; 36 adults 27 children <p>Critical barrier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a larger more traditional church building
<p>Theotokos of Unexpected Joy Mission Ash Grove MO, Founded 2000</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community reports one new member and a catechumen since Jan 07 • 8 new icons have been commissioned for the temple. • Parking lot to be repaved this summer. • Nearest OCA parish 40 minutes. • 26 adults; 17 children as of Jan 07 <p>Critical barrier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low population density in area
<p>Holy Apostles Mission, Normal IL Founded 1999</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A second priest was recently blessed to serve the Mission • Average attendance has been rising steadily; Sunday school program has grown significantly recently. • Planning a food drive and clothing collection for Orthodox orphanage in Moldova. • Nearest OCA parish 150 minutes; nearest Orthodox parish 60 minutes. 26 adults 15 children (Jan 07) <p>Critical barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part time priest (should be helped by second priest.) • Limited curb appeal for building
<p>All Saints of North America Mission, Delaware County, OH Founded 2004</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on Greeters' training; further development of community vision; development of healthy and responsible means of collecting and distributing charitable giving • 44 adults 24 children • Nearest OCA parish 15 minutes <p>Critical barrier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities • Building awareness

<p>St. Elizabeth the New Martyr Mission, Eagan, MN</p> <p>Founded 2004</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2006, the mission won approval for the construction of a new church building; all contractual contingencies eliminated, the mission formally completed the purchase of lot • A 4,800 square-foot building is expected to be completed by next Easter. • The mission has formally adopted the Peace House community of Minneapolis as a partner ministry. • Also exploring the possibility of setting up a satellite food shelf program on our building site, in partnership with the Eagan Family Resource Center. • Continuing to develop/promote the Minnesota Bible Lecture Series. This program has opened--and continues to open--new avenues of dialogue and exposure for our parish. • The number of people volunteering, donating and participating in the life of the community has increased. More people stepping up to take on serious leadership responsibilities in the community. The new bookstore and women's society are evidence of this. • Nearest OCA parish 30 minutes; 33 adults 29 children <p>Critical Barrier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of permanent worship space inhibits development of fuller liturgical cycle... <i>this is close to being addressed.</i>
<p>St James Brother of the Lord, Kansas City, MO</p> <p>Founded 2004</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community reports the formation of a Children's Church School; 2 successful Festivals for outreach and financial support; First complete Lenten and Paschal services schedule. • 25 adults 9 children; 2 persons received into Orthodoxy in past yr. <p>Critical barrier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities, in a shopping center, not conducive to Vespers; limited space
<p>St. Stephen the First Martyr Mission, Lima OH</p> <p>Founded 1999</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installing Pantocrator icon in center of Church • begun a Cell Group Bible Study • begun a new catechism class, and hope to chrismate two more by the beginning of +2008. • 15 adults; 8 children • Nearest OCA parish; 70 minutes <p>Critical Barrier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transient nature of the area; people move in; seemingly more move out

Holy Cross Mission, Chisago City, MN

Founded 1998



- Now meeting at Zion Lutheran Church in Chisago City, MN
- Emphasis on daily prayer for the Mission, priest, etc. Expanded presence at community events.
- Restoration of Saturday Vespers and Sunday Church School.
- More "inquirer-friendly" educational opportunities. We hope to have 4-6 new members by this time next year.
- Community reports a new catechumen and (they hope) her husband and 3 children.
- Successfully participated in the area Home Show (attended by over 2200 people) and resulting in 3 new visitors.
- We're on the leading edge of future booming population growth and new housing starts -- with fervent prayer and positive active outreach, the future will be bright for us.
- Nearest OCA Church 55 min; nearest Orthodox Church 45 min.
- 23 adults 14 children as of Jan 07

Key barriers

- Numbers of current members (losses)/new members (gains)
- Public awareness of Orthodoxy and the Mission

Holy Cross Mission, Nashville OH

Founded 2003



- 2 new members, 3 Catechumens
- Participated in Memorial day parade
- Concert of psalms at church
- 60 minutes to nearest OCA parish; 50 minutes to non-OCA Orthodox parish
- 11 adults; 3 children

Critical barrier

- Gain a family; lose a family

**Archangels Michael and Gabriel Mission
Omaha NE**




Founded 2004



- Intro to Orthodoxy class beginning shortly
- Fr James to deliver lecture series in September
- Three baptisms in 2007
- The community has its own building w/o mortgage; though updating is needed.

Critical barrier

- This community needs a full time priest; today it is being served by a retired local Antiochian priest with assistance from Fr James Dank who is 2 hours away and Deacon Edwin Aassen who is local.

<p>St Nicholas Mission, Pella, IA Founded 2002</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Paschal liturgy and Agape Vespers books for everybody in the church. They were very user-friendly and in modern English with musical notes for everything that is sung. • New white vestments • Fr. Bartholomew made presentation on Orthodox Tradition of Praying with Icons after Pella's "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" kick-off service at 2nd Reformed Church • Community continues its Open house for St. Nicholas day. One of our biggest events of the year for publicity and visitor participation. • Many other outreach activities. • 17 adults 7 children; nearest OCA church 5 hours; nearest Orthodox parish 60 minutes. <p>Critical barrier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temptation, distraction, and various forms of sin that we allow to mislead us; constrain spiritual growth. • Secular work required for priest
<p>St. Raphael of Brooklyn Mission Quincy, IL Founded 2002</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of our families now serves as our representative to the St. Louis area IOCC Committee. • website was upgraded. • sent a mission team to the Hogar Rafael Ayau orphanage in Guatemala in February. Some of our members held a public fund-raiser in June for that orphanage. We tentatively plan to send another team there in February 2008. • 17 adults 4 children; nearest Orthodox parish 110 minutes nearest OCA 150 minutes. <p>Critical Barrier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building awareness of the mission and Orthodoxy in a town where it is little known while operating the Mission community on very tight budget.
<p>Holy Myrrh Bearers Mission, St Cloud MN Founded 2001</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the request of the Mission committee the Mission has established two goals for the coming year. • First is to develop a proactive, business-like approach to their bookstore. (Managing inventory, operating with scheduled, open-to-the-public hours, and integrating the bookstore's finances into the mission's so that the two are not operating irrespective of each other.) The bookstore is seen as a tool of evangelism that needs serious effort. • Another goal is to strengthen greeter and follow-up ministry for visitors including definition of who how to capture contact information, and what follow-up communication. • Both of these goals had enthusiastic support among council members and all parishioners were invited to provide input on these items. We found that nearly everyone in the mission took the time to review the ideas, and with only a couple reservations (having to do with being "invasive" toward visitors), everyone favored pursuing these two goals. • Also planning an overhaul of the mission website.

Appendices

Appendix A: Chapels in the Diocese of the Midwest

The designation “chapel” applies to small communities which are not clearly able to demonstrate the ability to grow numerically and, often, which are a considerable distance from an existing parish.

The term is meant to describe the status of particular communities in a way that is more realistic and accurate than “parish”, “mission” or “mission station”. These communities are not “parishes” – having never demonstrated or having lost the ability to offer a full ministry and robust liturgical life or never having achieved parish status to begin with. They are not “missions” because the term mission carries with it a requirement to grow numerically – to expand the church. Also, missions are expected to focus broadly, to actively bring all to Christ and His Church. Chapels may, for a variety of good reasons, the ministry of the priest, the makeup of the community, the geography of the community or other, offer a more particular, focused outreach.

The benefit of chapel status is that the community is freed from the burden of the expectations of growth while still remaining on the roles of the diocese as an active community.

The term may apply to a community in a mature state that has declined but which still exists and ministers to faithful in some appropriate manner and frequency. The chapel may be a community nearing the end of its life or it may be anticipated that the community will continue in this state into the foreseeable future.

The chapel designation is not a code term connoting “end of life”. The chapel designation may apply to a community in an early stage of existence. This community may exist as an outreach of an existing parish, perhaps to test the viability and interest in a more active community at some distance from the base parish.

Another circumstance resulting in the chapel designation for a community could be when a parish moves to a new location, perhaps more exurban, and it maintains an urban chapel to serve the needs of the current/past neighborhood.

Other key points about chapels:

- A chapel may or may not have its own priest.
- A chapel can maintain or receive the benefit of an identity with a patron. (A name)
- A chapel would be listed in directories/o.ca.org etc as a chapel.
- If a chapel is attached to a parish –as its outreach – the members of the chapel are members of the parish. The chapel, in this case, would not, for example, have a council.
- If a chapel is a mature community, perhaps at one time a parish, the members are members of the chapel.
- In all cases chapel members are members of the Diocese and submit Diocesan/OCA assessments.
- A status change to chapel would most likely be initiated by the Dean or Mission Committee in consultation with the affected community.

- If a chapel demonstrates a clear broad mission and an ability to grow numerically and spiritually it can graduate to mission or parish status. The chapel status is not necessarily a permanent or irreversible status designation.
- Communities may become chapels as a result of the departure of the current priest when a replacement priest cannot be found.
- Chapel status does not imply abandonment of the community by the deanery/diocese. It indicates recognition of the community and the need for the deanery/diocese to use best efforts to supply and support the chapel community and to provide stability and security commensurate with the efforts and commitment of the community members.

Appendix B Criteria for Parish Status

1. **Overall Criteria** -- Overall Health, Vitality and Permanence – To achieve the status of parish in the Diocese of the Midwest the mission community is expected to demonstrate that:
 - a. It is a vibrant community of Orthodox Christians
 - b. God willing, it will be a permanent Orthodox community.
 - c. It can survive the loss of a number of key families.
 - d. It can survive the loss of its current pastor and, in the case of such a loss, another pastor, compatible to the community, can be found that would be willing to accept the assignment.
 - e. It can grow over the next 5-10 years to become a parish of at least 100 persons.
2. **Specific Criteria** – The following specific criteria are a part of assessing achievement of the above overall criteria:
 - a. *Membership* – The community consists of 50 or more adults.
 - b. *Full Liturgical cycle* – Worship schedule in the community supports a robust Resurrectional & Festal liturgical cycle.
 - c. *Temple* – The community has its own building which is owned or mortgaged.
 - d. *Administration*
 - i. Clergy compensation – The community provides salary, housing and benefits support to the priest according to a compensation package developed by the Dean and approved by the Diocesan Hierarchy.
 - ii. Assessments - Diocesan and OCA Assessments are paid on all members per then current Diocesan assessment policies and guidelines. (i.e. currently \$ per head on adult members.)
 - iii. By laws have been adopted which are consistent with Diocesan standards and which have been approved by the Hierarchy.
 - iv. Parish council - An elected parish council exists.
 - v. Ministries - Ministry positions that meet the needs of the parish while vigorously reaching out to others in the Name of Christ have been filled and are actively working.
 - vi. Budget - An annual parish budget exists.
 - vii. Audited Statements - The financial statements of the parish have been audited per then current Diocesan Guidelines and found to be unencumbered.
 - viii. Misconduct Policy Compliance - Evidence exists that the community is aware of and follows the policy on Sexual Misconduct.
 - e. *Stewardship*
 - i. Stewardship Effort - An active annual stewardship, (time talent and treasure) effort is a standard part of parish life.
 - ii. Stewardship Standards - Member donations average at least 5 % of the median annual family income of the county/counties in which the parish resides.

Appendix C Frequently Asked Questions on Mission By-Laws

What drove this change?

For years the Church in America has worked to have a set of by-laws that would reflect essential Orthodox canonical tradition on the nature of a parish. By-laws emerging from the crises of early 20th Century life in the Church reflected secular not-for-profit models. Such thinking influenced not only parish thinking, but also the governing statutes of the Metropolia and the OCA after autocephaly. If one were to move from the present back and see the changes made to those works, s/he would see that there is movement towards an hierarchical-conciliar model; or even better put a Eucharistic model that can be evidenced in the by-laws missions are now being asked to use.

Missions, perhaps more than longer established entities, ought to be able to move towards this model because of their very newness and desire to move into the future in an essential Orthodox manner.

What are the primary differences between these by laws and previous versions?

The Mission By laws have been proposed as a better model for parish governance than previous by-laws models. The overarching difference with previous by laws models is that it is generically Eucharistic, i.e. the one who presides presides. Council seats by and large are held by those who do the work of the Church through their various ministries. In such a way the life of the local parish is best reflected and administered.

Who will be required to adopt these bylaws?

Missions not having by-laws will be required to adopt the new bylaws.

Missions which already have approved by laws will not be required to change to the new Mission by Laws. It is suggested, though that transitioning to the new model be considered.

What will be needed to transition to parish bylaws when and if a mission achieves parish status?

Missions adopting these bylaws will, once parish status is granted by the hierarchy, need only to adopt a version which changes the words “mission” to “parish”.

Can these by Laws be localized?

These by-laws can be tailored to the specifics of each mission community by modifying blanks in the by-laws model.

If a mission community desires to recommend prudent, appropriate additional localization of the bylaws, these can be submitted for approval by the Hierarchy. These modifications should be clearly identified with a list of changes from the standard model.

Will these by-laws become the standard parish by laws?

It is hoped that these by-laws become a model for parish by-laws – though this is beyond the competency of the Missions committee.