

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE**  
of North America

Held at the Antiochian Village Heritage and Learning Center  
June 4, - 5, 2004

PRESENT were: Metropolitan PHILIP, Bishop Antoun, Bishop Joseph, Bishop Basil, Rt. Rev. Paul M. Doyle, V. Rev. Elias S. Bitar, Dr. George J. Farha, Mr. Alan G. Abraham, Mr. Daniel J. Abraham, Mr. Nicola M. Antakli, Mr. Edward F. Assile, Dr. Anthony S. Bashir, Dr. David G. Bojrab, Mr. Daniel E. Braun, Dr. John D. Dalack, Mr. George G. Darany, Mr. Fawaz R. El Khoury, Mrs. Laila R. Ferris, Mr. Philip A. Haddad, Dr. Elias K. Hebeka, Mrs. Elaine Heider, Mr. Anton K. Khoury, Mr. Robert A. Koory, Dr. Sam H. Kouri, Dr. Raymond J. Kyriakos, Mr. William D. Morrison, Mr. George N. Nassor, Miss Ruth A. Nimee, Mr. Walter Parhamovich, Mr. Mansour Rayan, Dr. Raymond J. Rishwain, Dr. Joseph J. Samra, and Mrs. Gizelle "Gigi" Shadid; and Honorary Members: Mr. Ralph Abercia, Mr. Walid K. Khalife, and Mr. A. Ernest Younes.

Guests: V. Rev. John P. Abdalah, V. Rev. Joseph J. Allen, V. Rev. Michael Ellias, V. Rev. Peter E. Gillquist, V. Rev. Joseph F. Purpura, Rev. Fr. George D. Kevorkian, Rev. Fr. Michael Massouh, Rev. Fr. Michael Nasser, Archdeacon Hans El Hayek, Archdeacon David B. Nimer, Subdeacon Ronald Tershey, Mr. Salim Abboud, Kh. Joanne Abdalah, Mrs. Adelene Abercia, Mrs. Kathy J. Abraham, Mrs. Elinor G. Bourjaily, Mr. Sean P. Buscay, Mr. Peter S. Dacales, Mrs. Dorothy Darany, Mrs. Dena H. Fasheh, Mrs. Gwenna Haddad, Mr. Michael A. Hamwey, Mrs. Barbara Hebeka, Kh. Maggie Hock, Mrs. Jacque Kouri, Mr. Rex Moore, Mr. Farah Munayyer, Mrs. Mary O'Conner, Mrs. Grace Mary Parhamovich, Mr. Elias Saba, Mr. Abraham Sallouh, Mrs. Marlene Samra, Mr. Doug Skaff, and Mrs. Mary Ann Skaff.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m., with the reciting of the Lord's Prayer and the chanting of the Troparion of Pentacost, led by Metropolitan PHILIP. In his opening remarks, His Eminence welcomed all the Board members and guests who were present, and he extended the regrets of the following Board members who were unable to attend: V. Rev. Paul W. S. Schneirla, Mr. Charles R. Ajalat, Mr. Joseph F. Hanna, Dr. Donald C. Howard, Mr. Robert H. Laham, Mr. William J. Nassir, Miss Jean Sam, Dr. Eugene J. Sayfie, Mrs. Adele N. Soffa, and Mr. Kory W. Warr.

Before turning to the formal agenda, Metropolitan PHILIP asked that we pray for the speedy recovery of Mr. Ernest J. Saykaly, who is recovering from open-heart surgery; Mr Robert H. Laham, who is recovering from spinal surgery; and Dr. Eugene J. Sayfie, who is recovering from hip-replacement surgery. Three cards -- one for each -- were passed around for all Board members to sign.

Following a motion by Dr. Elias K. Hebeka, seconded by Mr. George N. Nassor, the minutes of the previous meeting of October 31, - November 1, 2003, held at the Wyndham Hotel and Resort in Toledo, Ohio, were accepted as printed and previously distributed to all Board members.

### **METROPOLITAN PHILIP'S REPORT**

In the first part of his report, Metropolitan PHILIP expressed his profound thanks and appreciation to the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch, and all the Board members (also members of the Order) who responded so generously to the appeal for funds to build the new Museum Wing which will be dedicated tomorrow at noon when this Board meeting adjourns. Parishes were not assessed or asked to contribute in any way. With very few exceptions, most of the individuals who contributed were Board members.

In the next part of his report, His Eminence asked the Secretary to read aloud two letters. The first was from Rev. Fr. George Dimas, Secretary of the Holy Synod of Antioch, to Metropolitan PHILIP; and the second was the reply of His Eminence to Fr. George. For the sake of thoroughness, both of these letters are reproduced below, in their entirety. As will be noted, little additional explanation is necessary.

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch & all the East

Beirut, April 26, 2004

Christ is risen\_ Indeed He is risen.

After the October 2003 resolution of the Holy Antiochian Synod, granting "self-rule" to the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America, as a sign of good will in response to the request of the Archdiocese to be given the ecclesial status of "autonomy," a large wave of appreciation welcoming the resolution expressed an apparent understanding of the significance of this decision.

Unfortunately, many articles published afterwards, by laity officials and some clergy of the Archdiocese revealed a deep misunderstanding of the spirit of this resolution. The February 2004 editions of "The Word" and "Again" magazines published an altered text of the resolution and a list of autonomous churches including the name of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese being one of them.

In the "Word" magazine, a letter from H.E. Metropolitan Philip concerning self-rule is published on page 5 of the February edition. This letter refers to the "full text of the resolution of the Holy Synod," published in the November 2003 edition of "The Word" on page 4.

In fact, when comparing the official English version of the resolution issued by the Holy Synod to the published text, there are discrepancies, in more than one place of this "authorized English translation."

"Eparchial Synod" and "Local Synod":

The official English version of the Synodal Resolution speaks of an "Eparchial Synod" while the "author-ized translation" published in "The Word" calls it "Local Synod." (Paragraphs: 3, 4, 5 and 6). This last term, creates ambiguity, since it is used for Churches not for Archdioceses.

Election of Bishops:

The article four of the official English version of the Synodal Resolution states: "The Patriarch of Antioch shall delegate three Metropolitans." While the so called authorized translation published in "The Word" mentions: "The Patriarch of Antioch shall delegate two or three Metropolitans," as if the published text aimed to minimize the "weight" of the Patriarchal presence in the election process.

Right of appeal:

The article six of the official English version of the Synodal Resolution states: "Bishops of the Eparchial Synod have the right of appeal of its decisions to the Patriarch of Antioch who shall be the final judge along with the Holy Synod of Antioch." While, the published resolution contained an additional condition, it mentions: "In all matters of hierarchal discipline, Bishops of the Local Synod have the right of appeal"\_\_

This added condition, limits to the disciplinary matters, the right of Bishops to appeal. In fact, the Bishops, according to the Synod Resolution, have the right to appeal any decision taken by the Eparchial Synod to the Patriarch who shall be the final judge along with the Holy Synod of Antioch.

Strange enough, this additional condition was not even discussed in the Synod meetings. The Holy Synod adopted literally the text of the paragraph presented by H.E. Metropolitan Philip as it was voted by the convention of July 2003.

Synaxis attendance:

This same article six of the official English version of the Synodal Resolution states: "The Bishops of the Archdiocese shall attend the gatherings or synaxis of Antiochian Bishops which may be called by the Patriarch of Antioch." Here again a new condition of Bishops' attendance is inserted. The published text mentions: "The Archdiocesan Bishops, after consultation with the Metropolitan, shall attend the synaxis" \_

Printing the copy of all the Synod fathers' signatures, at the bottom of this modified text, gave the reader the false impression of reading the official Synodal Resolution.

The "Word" editor's note at the bottom of page 4 speaks about "Autonomy" while obviously this term is not used at all in the official English version of the Synodal Resolution. The Holy Synod used the term "Self-Ruled Archdiocese," because the word "Autonomy" is also used for "Autonomous Churches." This "mistake" was made in the Editors note, when it says: May God grant our holy leadership many years and bless the autonomous Antiochian Orthodox Church in North America."

The discussions of the Holy Synod as well as the Synodal Resolution emphasized on the unity of the Antiochian Church and stressed on the fact that the North American Archdiocese is and shall remain an Antiochian Archdiocese, excluding the use of the term "Autonomous Church."

For the good sake of the Christ's flock, and to avoid any misleading interpretations, the secretary of the Holy Synod asked the publication of a note explaining these differences in the next issue of "The Word" and "Again" magazines as normally it is the case. This was not done. It is for the "The Word" and "Again" magazines to give an explanation of what happened, if they have one. However, they chose to ignore the matter.

The secretary of the Holy Synod finds now that it is of his own obligation, towards the North American Antiochians and the Orthodox American sister churches, to publish the facts and to highlight the full reality.

It would be most unfortunate if the North American Antiochians go to the July convention of the Archdiocese without having been exposed to the Truth that was not shared with them by the organs of their Archdiocese.

The Holy Synod and His Beatitude the Patriarch Ignatius IV reaffirms, as they have always done, the strong relationship with the Metropolitan, bishops, clergy, and laity of the North American Archdiocese, where we know that the love of the Church of Antioch runs very deep.

Father George Dimas

Secretary of the Holy Synod of Antioch.

**Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America**

May 3, 2004

Fr. George Dimas  
Secretary to the Holy Synod Of Antioch  
c/o The Archdiocese of Beirut

Dear Fr. George:

Christ is Risen!

I have before me your correspondence dated April 26th, 2004. I believe that this correspondence raises the same points as your original letter to the WORD magazine dated February 16, 2004, and to Again Magazine dated February 12, 2004. I also have a copy of Mr. Albert Laham's letter to His Beatitude Patriarch IGNATIUS IV dated February 7, 2004. Your letter, Fr. George, seems as if it is a translation of Mr. Laham's letter. Now we know who is muddying the water and fanning the fire for reasons that I will not mention in this letter.

First, I would like to clarify my relationship with the WORD and Again magazines.

A. Please be advised that the WORD magazine is edited and published in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The editor of the WORD magazine is the Very Rev. Fr. John Abdalah, in whom I have full confidence. Pittsburgh is quite a distance from the Archdiocese Headquarters in New Jersey (approximately 500 Km). The issue of the WORD magazine that contained the word "autonomy" in the Editor's Comment was prepared and printed while I was still in the Old Country. When I returned to the United States, I directed the editor of the WORD not to use the word autonomy, but rather to substitute the expression self-rule. This was done in accordance with the decision of the Holy Synod of Antioch.

B. Again Magazine is edited and published in California which is approximately 4,800 Km from New Jersey. The editor of Again Magazine is the Rev. Fr. Thomas Zell who is rendering a tremendous witness to Holy Orthodoxy in this land.

It is important for you and for all concerned to know that I do not censor these publications. What is published in these magazines does not necessarily express the official position of this Archdiocese, nor its policies. We are responsible only for what we send from our office under the title "Archdiocese Office." The authors of various articles are responsible for what they write. It is also important to know that here in America we live in a country that does not censor articles and opinions. The First Amendment of the United States Constitution guarantees *freedom of speech*. Both magazines (i.e. The WORD and Again) have been informed of our policy concerning self-rule. It is interesting to note the following dialog that is recorded on page 38 of the official minutes of the meeting of the Holy Synod of Antioch that was held in October, 2003. I asked the question "How do you translate the word *autonomy* into English or Arabic?" Albert Laham answered "There is no strict legal (canonical) translation for this word. There is no objection to calling it 'self-administered church' or 'self-governing church'." This is the translation of the word *autonomy* according to Mr. Laham.

Dear Fr. George, I will now proceed to answer your points categorically:

### 1. "Eparchial Synod" and "Local Synod"

After two years of tension and intense debate, the Holy Synod of Antioch unanimously adopted the document titled "Resolution of the Holy Synod of Antioch." I am most grateful to all of those who have contributed to this result. Our father in Christ, His Beatitude patriarch IGNATIUS IV deserves the credit for this wonderful achievement. After the unanimous adoption of this resolution, I said to His Beatitude, and may God be my witness, "Sayidna, there are some rough spots in the English translation of the resolution, and I am going to make corrections, not in substance, but in a few expressions." His Beatitude said to me "This is simple (baseeta)." Fr. George, Metropolitan PHILIP did not invent the expression *Local Synod*. I refer you to the Resolution of the Holy Synod of Antioch, where you will find the following:

- a. Paragraph 3 reads in Arabic "Recognition of Auxiliary bishops as diocesan bishops and the *Local Synod*."
- b. Paragraph 4 states that "the consecration and enthronement of the bishops shall be accomplished in North America by the Metropolitan, the Patriarchal Delegate, and the members of the *Local Synod*."
- c. Paragraph 5 mentions the *Local Synod* twice in the procedure for election of the Metropolitan Primate.

Now, Let us both examine the official minutes of the meeting of the Holy Synod of Antioch that was held in October, 2003. Please check the statement made by Metropolitan GEORGES Khodr on page 27. On page 33 even Mr. Laham used the expression *Local Synod*. On page 36, please check the second paragraph of Metropolitan GEORGES' statement. On page 43, please read what Metropolitan ELIAS of Beirut said about the *Local Synod*. On page 44, our beloved Patriarch says "I suggest that there must be some order for the *Local Synod*." On the same page, the Most Reverend YOUHANNA, Metropolitan of Latakia also mentioned the words *Local Synod*. On page 45 His Grace Bishop YOUHANNA Yazigi mentioned the *Local Synod*. Again on page 46, Metropolitan ELIAS of Beirut mentions the *Local Synod*. If the usage of the expression *Local Synod* is anathema, why did not someone raise a "point of order" in the meeting?

Since the expressions *Local Synod* and *Eparchial Synod* were used interchangeably in the official document "Resolution of the Holy Synod of Antioch" written in October, 2003, and since the expression *Local Synod* appeared in the official minutes of the meeting of October, 2003, I opted to use the expression *Local Synod* instead of *Eparchial Synod*. Why? Because the word Eparchy is not a widely understood term in this country. Only those who are familiar with ecclesial terminology are likely to be familiar with this word. For this reason, we chose to use *Local Synod*, so that the majority of people would understand.

### 2. Election of Bishops

I do not understand the logic of anyone who would say that we are trying to "minimize the weight of the Patriarchal presence in the election process." God forbid!! We have the utmost respect for the Patriarch, and we have proven that in words and deeds. We stated in our document "two or three" Metropolitans for purely practical reasons. We wished to give His Beatitude the choice of delegating two or three Metropolitans. Thus, if the Patriarch wishes to send three Metropolitans, who would object to that? They would be most welcome. This is a non-issue. We did not want to require His Beatitude, who is an excel-

lent steward of the Church, to spend between \$20,000 and \$25,000 for travel and living expenses. This money could be better spent on needy students at the University of Balamand.

### **3. Right of Appeal**

We indeed added the clause "in all matters of hierarchical discipline" to the language that specifies the right of appeal of diocesan bishops to the Patriarch and the Holy Synod. This addition to the document makes sense. For example, if a member of the Local Synod disagrees on how many students we should send to seminary, should this be a matter of appeal to the Patriarch and the Holy Synod? If a member of the Local Synod disagrees with the assignment of a newly graduated seminarian to a specific parish, should this be a matter of appeal to the Patriarch and the Holy Synod? If a member of the Local Synod disagrees with any financial matter related to the life of this Archdiocese, should this be a matter of appeal to the Patriarch and the Holy Synod? This would be beyond reason. I am sure that our good Patriarch has many things to attend to in lieu of these mundane issues. Moreover, if the Holy Synod wished to inter-vene in every minor disagreement of our bishops, then what remains of our self-rule? This is our rationale for the addition to article 6. This was not discussed by the Holy Synod because the obvious does not re-quire a discussion.

### **4. Synaxis Attendance**

Let us assume that we receive an invitation and agenda to such a synaxis, and the Metropolitan's health does not permit him to attend this synaxis. Do you not think that it is imperative that the Metropolitan should consult with the diocesan bishops before they attend the synaxis? Someone is again making an issue of a non-issue. It is extremely important that the Metropolitan should consult with any diocesan bishop within his Archdiocese before he travels abroad.

Dear Fr. George and venerable members of the Holy Synod of Antioch, St. Paul teaches us that our Lord gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this "present evil age" (Galatians 1:4). Thus, we find the Church at the beginning of the 21st century besieged by serious problems from all sides, both here in America, and in the Middle East. Do we not have anything better to do than to nitpick at such simple matters? There is an old proverb that says "While the ship is sinking, the crew is busy painting the chimney." Let us stop "painting the chimney" but instead let us, during this joyous Paschal season, renew our love for one another, and rededicate ourselves to the unity that exists between the Mother Church of Antioch and this Archdiocese. Finally, may the Light which cannot be overtaken by night always shine in your hearts.

Yours in the Risen Lord,

Metropolitan PHILIP  
Primate  
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

Both of these letters will be published in the June 2004 issue of the WORD Magazine.

In the last part of his report, His Eminence explained that, at the present time, Bishop Demetri resides at the Chancery in Toledo. He was incarcerated for 28 days, and two years of probation remain. Otherwise, it appears that there will not be any further or continuing legal action.

His written request to enter retirement has been accepted by His Eminence, and, when the necessary approvals have been received, Bishop Demetri intends to move to Florida, to live with his brother. His official status is that of retired bishop, and his proper title of address continues to be "Sayidna," or His Grace. He will not serve or perform any liturgical duties, and, with the continued financial support of the Archdiocese, he will complete various administrative and editorial assignments, the first of which will be that of as revising and updating the Priest's Guide.

### **PROPOSED AMENDED CONSTITUTION OF THE ARCHDIOCESE**

A committee which included of Bishop Antoun, V. Rev. Joseph J. Allen, Rev. Fr. George D. Kevorkian, Mr. Charles R. Ajalat, and Mr. Robert A. Koory met and conferred on several occasions to draft the amendments and related changes that are needed to bring the Constitution of the Archdiocese into conformity with the October 2003, Resolution of the Holy Synod of Antioch and with the Self-Rule status of the Archdiocese. These discussions also provided an opportunity to propose revisions designed to make the language less cumbersome.

The full text of the amendments and other changes to the Constitution, as of the May 13, 2004, was previously sent to all Board members, and our Chancellor, Mr. Robert A. Koory, reviewed the entire document, line by line, and section by section. During the discussion, a few additional modifications were incorporated into it.

At the conclusion of this process, Mr. Robert A. Koory moved that this Archdiocese Board of Trustees approve and ratify the Proposed Amended Constitution of the Archdiocese as herein presented and modified, and that, after it has been distributed to all the Parishes and Missions of the Archdiocese, it be submitted to, and recommend for ratification by, the General Assembly this July at the Special Archdiocese Convention in Pittsburgh.

Dr. George J. Farha seconded, and, after minimal additional discussion, this motion and the Proposed Amended Constitution of the Archdiocese were approved and ratified unanimously.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JANUARY 31, 2004**

In the absence of Mr. Robert H. Laham, the Treasurer, Comptroller, and Chairman of the Department of Finance, the Assistant Treasurer, Mr. George N. Nassor, presented the Annual Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended January 31, 2004. A copy of this report was distributed to each Board member; and, in keeping with established practice, two copies will be sent to each Parish and Mission in the Archdiocese; and a summary will be printed in the WORD Magazine.

Total receipts for this year were \$4,328,804, well ahead of both the budgeted estimate of \$4,000,000 and last year's actual receipts of \$4,164,501. Total expenditures were \$4,310,507, also well ahead of both the budgeted estimate of \$4,079,000 and last year's actual expenditures of \$4,098,510. An excess of receipts over expenditures amounting to \$18,297 was reported for the year, and, although this excess represents a more favorable outcome than the budgeted deficit estimate of \$(79,000), it is not as large as last year's actual excess of \$65,991.

Also in keeping with established practice, the Board members were asked to study this report over night, and to be prepared to discuss it and vote on it when the meeting reconvened the following morning.

## PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JANUARY 31, 2006

In the absence of Mr. Robert H. Laham, the Treasurer, Comptroller, and Chairman of the Department of Finance, the Assistant Treasurer, Mr. George N. Nassor, distributed to each Board member a copy of the Minutes of the Board Meeting of June 4, - 5, 2004

proposed budget for the Fiscal Year Ending January 31, 2006, which contained, for purposes of comparison, the corresponding figures from the previous year's budget, along with the actual amount of the difference for the items which had been increased or decreased in the budget being presented; and a copy has been attached to the file copy of these minutes.

As presented, the budget projects total expenditures amounting to \$4,790,000 (\$377,000 more than last year's budgeted expenditures); total receipts amounting to \$4,783,000 (\$376,000 more than last year's budgeted receipts); and an anticipated excess of expenditures over receipts amounting to \$(7,000), as opposed to last year's budgeted deficit of \$(6,000).

During the discussion which followed, several important points were emphasized. First, the \$265,000 increase in Parish Assessments was based on an increase of the assessment per baptized soul from \$30.00 to \$35.00, to help cover the increased expenses associated with the addition of three bishops and two chanceries, the establishment of a Local Synod and the new Department of Communications and Information, and the re-activation of the Department of Planning and Future Development.

Second, a recent actuarial study has revealed that, as it currently stands, the Retired Clergy Housing Allowance Fund must be increased by at least \$5,000,000 if it is to meet the anticipated needs of the next several years; and considerably more would be needed before the maximum monthly benefit can be increased from its present level of \$700 per month.

When this fact was brought to the attention of the Governing Council of the Order of St. Ignatius during yesterday's meeting, \$25,000 was added to the \$175,000 already budgeted. Therefore, the Retired Clergy Housing Allowance item in Note 6 of this proposed budget for the Fiscal Year ending January 31, 2006, should read \$200,000, instead of \$175,000. This also means that the total receipts figure of \$4,783,000 will have to be adjusted to \$4,808,000; and the deficit of \$(7,000) will have to be adjusted to show an excess of \$18,000.

As the discussion continued, two additional points were clarified with respect to Receipts from Parishes and Missions. First, amounts received from year to year from Tithing Parishes may often fluctuate as the incomes of parishioners fluctuate; and, depending on the size of a Parish, 10% of that Parish's budget may not always be greater than the total of assessments per baptized soul.

Following a motion by Mr. Fawaz R. El Khoury, seconded by Mr. Walter Parhamovich, the proposed budget for the Fiscal Year Ending January 31, 2006, which included and incorporated the recommended increase in Parish Assessments from \$30.00 to \$35.00 per baptized soul, and the increase from \$175,000 to \$200,000 in the Order of St. Ignatius contribution to the Retired Clergy Housing Allowance Fund, was accepted, and it will be submitted to, and recommended for ratification by, the General Assembly this July at the Special Archdiocese Convention in Pittsburgh.

On behalf of himself and the entire Archdiocese, Metropolitan PHILIP expressed his profound thanks and appreciation to Mr. Robert H. Laham and all the members of the Department of Finance, namely, Bishop Antoun, Rev. Fr. George D. Kevorkian, Rev. Fr. Michael Massouh, Rev. Fr. Michael Nasser, Dr.

George J. Farha, Mr. Edward F. Assile, Mr. Peter S. Dacales, and Mr. George N. Nassor, as well as the Head-quarters Staff, for their participation in the preparation of this budget.

## ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE CAMP

Rev. Fr. Michael Nasser, Director of the Antiochian Village Camp, distributed a copy of the Antiochian Village Camp report to each Board member, and a copy has been attached to the file copy of these minutes. Highlights of this report included the following:

Preparations for this summer's camping season are almost complete, and close to 1,000 campers are expected at the Antiochian Village this summer. There are still a few openings for the first session, but the other sessions have been filled to capacity. Some of the 55 counselors and program directors have already arrived, and the entire staff should be on hand within the next few days.

The 3rd Annual Family Camp took place this past weekend, and 13 families participated. The weekend was filled with worship services, sports activities, and social events; and Dr. Al Rossi, a Lecturer in Practical Theology at St. Vladimir's Seminary, presented a session entitled: "Christian Living for Real Families."

Gathered at the Camp this weekend are more than 70 of the Village Alumni Fellowship, or more familiarly, the "Villagers," to celebrate the Camp's 25th Anniversary. Over the next two years, the alumni hope to: 1) reconnect all former campers and staff to each other and to the ongoing work of the Camp; 2) extend the ministry of the camping program to the local parishes through the "Village at Home" Program; and 3) raise \$750,000 for renovating the Dining Hall and camper cabins. Almost \$100,000 has already been pledged.

Over the last few years, two volunteer cabins, two double cabin camper units, and a new maintenance facility have been completed; the Metropolitan PHILIP Welcome Lodge has been dedicated; the water system has been winterized; and the pool has been renovated. Additional construction and renovation continue to be needed, however, since the original camp facilities are more than 50 years old.

During the discussion which followed, it was clarified that, in addition to the Antiochian Village Camp in Pennsylvania, we now have: Camp St. Nicholas in California; the Northern California Deanery's Camp of the Lifegiving Spring; St. John Camp in Alaska; Camp St. Raphael in Oklahoma; Camp St. George in Iowa; Camp Transfiguration in Quebec; and the Southwest Region's Camp St. Thekla. With this increase in the number of Archdiocese sponsored camps, it will now be possible to serve approximately 2,000 of our children this summer.

It was also pointed out that, at all camps, staff members must be at least 18 years of age, and volunteers must be at least 19 years of age.

Following a motion by Mrs. Elaine Heider, seconded by Mr. Daniel J. Abraham, the Antiochian Village Camp Report was accepted with an expression of thanks.

## **ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE HERITAGE AND LEARNING CENTER**

Rev. Fr. Michael Massouh, Executive Director of the Antiochian Village Heritage and Learning Center, distributed to each Board member a copy of the Antiochian Village Heritage and Learning Center report, and a copy has been attached to the file copy of these minutes. Highlights of this report included the following:

Minutes of the Board Meeting of June 4, - 5, 2004

The ground breaking for the Phase III Museum Wing construction took place on April 12, 2003, and, by the Grace of God, the dedication will take place at noon tomorrow, immediately following the adjournment of this Board meeting. This new wing also contains the Katherine Ajar Auditorium, a 143 seat amphitheater, and a climatically controlled rare book room.

Additional construction this year included the renovation of lodging rooms in Phase I and the installation of new carpeting in the Dining Hall. The work completed at the Camp has already been described.

With respect to programs, the biannual Missions and Evangelism Workshop was well attended and well received by representatives from several Orthodox jurisdictions, as well as by two Mennonite Pastors who are potential converts to Orthodoxy. Likewise, the Antiochian House of Studies had its largest class.

In cooperation with the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, the Center hosted a familiarization tour for 30 religious meeting planners in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Religious Conference Management Association which took place in Pittsburgh. Hopefully, this will result in additional bookings in the very near future.

During the discussion which followed, Metropolitan PHILIP reported that, in the early days of his episcopacy, when he was reviewing files which remained from the days of Metropolitan ANTONY, he came across six letters which Kahlil Gibran had written, in Arabic, to Metropolitan ANTONY. Gibran and Metropolitan ANTONY were very good friends, and, as a result of their close working relationship, Metropolitan ANTONY's translation of Gibran's works into Arabic is considered to be the finest and most authoritative. Metropolitan PHILIP indicated how thankful he was that we now have a properly equipped museum in which these priceless letters can be preserved and displayed.

Following a motion by Dr. Sam H. Kouri, seconded by Dr. David G. Bojrab, the Antiochian Village Heritage and Learning Center report was accepted with an expression of thanks.

## **ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA**

Mrs. Laila R. Ferris, the President of AOCWNA, distributed to each Board member a copy of the AOCWNA report, which also included a list of the orphanages which received donations during the past fiscal year; and a copy of each has been attached to the file copy of these minutes. Highlights of this report included the following:

This past Christmas, each of our seven Married Seminarians received a gift of \$500 from AOCWNA's Married Seminarian's Fund which was established in 1986.

The Mid-Winter Meeting took place on February 13, - 14, 2004, in Dallas, Texas. It was well attended and very productive. One of the more significant accomplishments of this meeting was the establishment

of a self-review committee which will be chaired by the Immediate Past President of AOCWNA, Mrs. Marilyn T. Robbat.

Monies are still being received for the 2004 Orphanages Project, and the Katherine Ajar Orphanage Endowment Fund is very close to the goal of \$1,000,000. The fund now stands at \$875,793. During the past fiscal year, a gift of \$5,000 was contributed to each of the following: Pantalaymon Orphanage in Damascus, Syria; St. Gregory Orphanage in Damascus, Syria; Oasis of Joy Children's Home in Tripoli, Lebanon; FISTA - First Step Together for Children in Beirut, Lebanon; Hogar Raphael Ayau Orphanage in Gua-tamala; an orphanage in the Archdiocese of Aleppo; and an orphanage in the Archdiocese of Zahleh.

N.A.B. Officers will be attending the AOCWNA Lunches and Brunches at all of the Regional Parish Life Conferences this summer, to express personal thanks for all that the women have accomplished.

The Antiochian Women's Scholarships will be awarded at the Summer Meeting this July.

During the discussion which followed, it was clarified that Mrs. Robbat's self-review committee will focus on: 1) increasing the membership and involvement of younger women, 2) improving and increasing communication on all levels, and 3) enabling the North American Board to provide greater support for the Regions.

It was also announced that, since the Katherine Ajar Orphanage Endowment Fund has almost reached its goal of \$1,000,000, and since, as explained earlier, the Retired Clergy Housing Allowance Fund must be increased substantially to meet the anticipated needs of the next several years, the AOCWNA Project for the next five years will be dedicated to the support and enhancement of the Retired Clergy Housing Allowance Fund.

Following a motion by Miss Ruth A. Nimee, seconded by Mr. Philip A. Haddad, the AOCWNA Report was accepted with an expression of thanks.

### **NAC FELLOWSHIP OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE**

Mrs. Gizelle "Gigi" Shadid, President of the NAC Fellowship of St. John the Divine, distributed to each Board member a copy of the NAC Fellowship report, along with: 1) an application form for the Fellowship's *Running The Rat Race* Retreat for young adults, scheduled for August 19, - 22, 2004, at the Antiochian Village; and 2) a copy of an article from *The Eagle-Tribune* about the donation of 12 books on Orthodoxy (part of the "**2004 in 2004**" Library Project) to the Public Library in Lawrence, Massachusetts; and a copy of each has been attached to the file copy of these minutes. Highlights of the report included the following:

The Archdiocese website, which was originally established and maintained for over 10 years by the NAC Fellowship, now has a full-time Technology Specialist, Mr. Sean P. Buscay; and Mr. Buscay was introduced and welcomed.

The "**2004 in 2004**" Library Project, which seeks to donate a set of 12 books on Orthodoxy to at least 167 local libraries so that there will be at least 2,004 books on Orthodoxy in North American libraries by the end of 2004, still has a long way to go. Approximately 560 books have been donated thus far, and Sara Bitar is coordinating this project. Her e-mail address is: [sar1006@aol.com](mailto:sar1006@aol.com).

During the 2004 Special Archdiocese Convention in Pittsburgh, the Bible Bowl will take place on Friday evening, July 16th, and the Oratorical will take place on Saturday evening, July 17th.

At the Mid-Winter Meeting in Dallas this past February, the NAC Fellowship made the following donations: \$500 to the Teen SOYO Youth Worker Endowment Fund, \$5,000 to help train and educate future Parish Youth Workers; and \$1,500 to help with the Teens' "OYO" (Orthodox Youth Outreach) Program.

A committee, consisting of V. Rev. Michael C. Abdelahad (New England Region), Mr. Abdallah Daud (Eastern Region), and Mr. Chuck Nassif (Western Region), has initiated a **Video Project**, which will pre-present a history from the pre-SOYO days to the present-day Fellowship.

Work on the Fellowship **Mission Statement** continues, and it should be finalized at the summer meeting. All Parishes and Missions should have received a copy of the Fellowship Resource Book; those which did not should contact their respective Regional Presidents.

A Parish "Needs Survey" will be distributed to all priests at this summer's Clergy Symposium. In addition to the Fellowship of St. John key rings, which every Board member at this meeting has received, Fellow-ship pins and visors are also available.

Following a motion by V. Rev. Elias S. Bitar, seconded by Mr. Nicola M. Antakli, the NAC Fellowship Report was accepted with an expression of thanks.

#### **DEPARTMENT OF MARRIAGE AND PARISH FAMILY MINISTRIES**

Kh. Maggie Hock, the Chairperson of the Department of Marriage and Parish Family Ministries, distributed a copy of her department's report to each Board member, and a copy has been attached to the file copy of these minutes. Highlights of this report included the following:

To fulfill its mission to preserve and enhance marriages and parish families, couples and families through-out the Archdiocese have received instruction, by means of seminars and workshops, on Orthodox mari-tal, family life, and parish dynamics. In addition, an interview on "Romance In Marriage" was aired on the program entitled *Come Receive The Light*, and a workshop on pre-marital counseling and inventories will be presented this summer at the Clergy Symposium.

To provide resources for the development and maintenance of relationships within an Orthodox context, articles have appeared in the WORD, the SWORD, AGAIN, and HANDMAIDEN magazines; and two books on Orthodox Marriage and Parenting are in preparation. A workshop on Orthodox Parenting will also be presented at six of this year's Regional Parish Life Conferences.

Counseling services are available through an employee assistance program for individuals and families with respect to such problem areas as marital difficulties, parenting challenges, and psychological issues.

During the discussion which followed, it was pointed out and clarified that the employee assistance program referred to in the report is not a service recently established by the Department of Marriage and Parish Family Ministries. It has already been in existence and providing services for several years now.

Following a motion by Mr. Robert A. Koory, seconded by Dr. Anthony S. Bashir, the report of the Department of Marriage and Parish Family Ministries was accepted with an expression of profound thanks and appreciation.

The meeting was recessed at 11:00 p.m.; and it was reconvened at 9:30 a.m., on the following morning of Saturday, June 5, 2004.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JANUARY 31, 2004, CONTINUATION**

After this report was reviewed overnight by the Board members, there were essentially no questions, but the point was made and repeated several times that all Board members should do everything they can to see to it that the information contained in this report reaches all Parish Councils and as many of the faithful as possible. In this connection, it was suggested that the possibility be looked into of preparing visuals of one sort or another that Parishes can download from the Archdiocese website.

Following a motion by Mr. Mansour Rayan, seconded by Dr. Raymond J. Rishwain, the Annual Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended January 31, 2004, was accepted.

On behalf of himself and the entire Archdiocese, His Eminence again expressed his profound thanks and appreciation to Mr. Robert H. Laham and all the members of the Department of Finance for their dedication and outstanding work.

## **DEPARTMENT OF MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM**

V. Rev. Peter E. Gillquist, Chairman of the Department of Missions and Evangelism, distributed to each Board member a copy of his department's report, as well as a registration form for the North American Orthodox Conference on Missions and Evangelism, scheduled for September 3, - 6, 2004, in Norman, Oklahoma; and a copy of each has been attached to the file copy of these minutes. Highlights of this report included the following:

The department has focused its efforts on: cities of 50,000 and up with no Orthodox Church, cities with a major university campus and no Orthodox Church, and cities which have asked for the department's help. More recently, the department has also begun to coordinate its efforts with the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF).

In addition to the Orthodox Study Bible, several other publications such as Becoming Orthodox, Thirsting for God, Our Heart's True Home, Again Magazine, and Conciliar Press booklets have been very helpful.

Since 1988, the department has established 91 missions, of which 54 have become Churches; and another 26 locations are in the process of being developed or explored. The report included the complete listing in each category.

It is interesting to note that, as our Antiochian Department of Missions and Evangelism has made progress, various changes have also been taking place in our sister jurisdictions. For example, the OCA has received Protestant groups; the Greek Orthodox and the Ukrainian Church of Canada have full-time directors; and the Serbian Orthodox and the Ukrainian Church of America have English speaking missions.

During the discussion which followed, it was reported that the expected publication date of the Old Testament of the Orthodox Study Bible is August of 2005.

Following a motion by Mr. Fawaz R. El Khoury, seconded by Mr. George N. Nassor, the report of the Department of Missions and Evangelism was accepted with an expression of profound thanks.

## **2004 SPECIAL ARCHDIOCESE CONVENTION**

V. Rev. John P. Abdalah, Pastor of St. George Church, the host Parish for the Special Archdiocese Convention scheduled for July 16, - 18, 2004, at the Pittsburgh Hilton Gateway Center, Downtown, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Rev. Fr. George D. Kevorkian, Hierarchical Assistant, distributed to all Board members a copy of the convention schedule, an advance registration form, and the names and photographs of the seven eligible candidates worthy to stand for election as bishop; and a copy of each has been attached to the file copy of these minutes.

On Friday, July 16, 2004, the day will begin with Orthros at the hotel, at 9:00 a.m.; the General Assembly will begin at 10:00 a.m. and recess in sufficient time for Vespers at the hotel at 6:00 p.m.; and the Bible Bowl will take place at 8:30 p.m., at Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral.

On Saturday, July 17, 2004, the day will again begin with Orthros at the hotel, at 9:00 a.m.; the General Assembly will reconvene at 10:00 a.m. and adjourn in sufficient time for Great Vespers at the hotel at 6:00 p.m.; and the Oratorical Festival will take place at 8:30 p.m., at Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral.

On Sunday, July 18, 2004, Orthros at 9:00 a.m. and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m., both at the hotel, will conclude the Special Archdiocese Convention, after which delegates will return to their homes, and all clergy will depart for the Clergy Symposium at the Antiochian Village.

During this Special Archdiocese Convention, the business of the General Assembly will be to: a) accept the Financial Report for the Fiscal Year Ended January 31, 2004; b) approve the Proposed Budget for the Fiscal Year ending January 31, 2006; c) ratify the Proposed Amended Constitution of the Archdiocese, to bring it into conformity with the October 2003, Resolution of the Holy Synod of Antioch and with the Self-Rule status of the Archdiocese; d) elect three of the seven candidates for bishop; and e) ratify the establishment of the Local Synod and the proposed structure of our self-ruled Archdiocese as follows:

### **The Diocese of New York and Washington, D. C. -- 12 Parishes**

Title: *Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America*

Seat: St. Nicholas Cathedral, Brooklyn, New York

Extent of Jurisdiction: Metropolitan area of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Metro Washington, D. C., as well as the Antiochian Village

### **The Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest -- 41 Parishes**

Title: *Bishop of Toledo and the Midwest*

Seat: St. George Cathedral, Toledo, Ohio

Extent of Jurisdiction: Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Eastern Missouri, Illinois, Eastern Iowa, Minnesota, Kentucky, and Fargo, North Dakota

### **The Diocese of Miami and the Southeast -- 39 Parishes**

Title: *Bishop of Miami and the Southeast*

Seat: St. George Cathedral, Miami, Florida

Extent of Jurisdiction: Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Virginia, and Alabama

**The Diocese of Worcester and New England -- 11 Parishes**

Title: *Bishop of Worcester and New England*

Seat: St. George Cathedral, Worcester, Massachusetts

Extent of Jurisdiction: New England

**The Diocese of Wichita and the Great Plains -- 39 Parishes**

Title: *Bishop of Wichita and the Great Plains*

Seat: St. George Cathedral, Wichita, Kansas

Extent of Jurisdiction: Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, Western Iowa, Western Missouri, Nebraska, Rapid City, South Dakota, and Gillette, Wyoming

**The Diocese of Los Angeles and the West -- 34 Parishes**

Title: *Bishop of Los Angeles and the West*

Seat: St. Nicholas Cathedral, Los Angeles, California

Extent of Jurisdiction: California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and Hawaii

**The Diocese of Ottawa and Upstate New York -- 18 Parishes**

Title: *Bishop of Ottawa and Upstate New York*

Seat: St. Elias Cathedral, Ottawa, Ontario

Extent of Jurisdiction: Ontario (including Windsor), Quebec, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, New York (outside of the New York City area)

**The Diocese of Pittsburgh and Tri-State -- 25 Parishes**

Title: *Bishop of Pittsburgh and Tri-State*

Seat: St. George, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (could reside at the Antiochian Village)

Extent of Jurisdiction: All of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland (except Potomac), and Delaware

**The Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest -- 18 Parishes**

Title: *Bishop of Eagle River and the Northwest*

Seat: St. John Cathedral, Eagle River, Alaska

(This diocese will be under the omophorion of the bishop of Los Angeles for the foreseeable future)

Extent of Jurisdiction: Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Canada from Manitoba and west, and Alaska

A special room rate of \$99 per night, plus tax, has been secured.

Each delegate and attendee will be expected to pay a special registration fee of \$20, and there will be no other charges or fees.

During the discussion which followed, it was indicated that a packet containing the resume of every candidate has been mailed to all Parishes, Pastors, Board members, etc. It was also pointed out that the Parish Life Conferences will continue to be scheduled and to be constituted as they are at the present time.

Following a motion by Mr. George G. Darany, seconded by Dr. Anthony S. Bashir, the 2004 Special Archdiocese Convention report was accepted with an expression of thanks; and His Eminence urged everyone to send in the special registration fee as soon as possible.

## **ORDER OF ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH**

Mr. Edward F. Assile, the Chairman of the Order of St. Ignatius, distributed a copy of his report to each Board member, and a copy has been attached to the file copy of these minutes. Highlights of this report included the following:

Membership in the Order now stands at 3,015, and this number includes 219 Life Members. Membership objectives were established for every Parish last May. From May 2003, to May 2004, membership in the Order increased by 194; new members were inducted in 71 parishes; and 13 parishes met their goal.

Training programs have begun for Order Ambassadors, and a page on the Order's website will assist Ambassadors by providing them with information about projects, budgets and points to cover when speaking to groups and prospective members.

In the proposed budget for the Fiscal Year Ending January 31, 2006, the Order has increased its contribution to the Retired Clergy Housing Allowance Fund to \$200,000; it will also provide substantial support to the new Department of Communications and Information and the re-activated Department of Planning and Future Development.

During the discussion which followed, it was reported that project funds were allocated to assist married seminarians, thereby providing them with an early introduction to the work of the Order. It was also reported that some discussion time will be devoted at a future meeting to the creation of projects for Area Fellowship Chapters and to the establishment of a membership category above the level of \$15,000.

Following a motion by Dr. Elias K. Hebeka, seconded by Mr. William D. Morrison, the report of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch was accepted with an expression of profound thanks and appreciation.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR A DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

Dr. Joseph J. Samra, Chairman of the Search Committee to recruit a Director for the Department of Planning and Future Development, distributed a copy of his committee's report to each Board member, and a copy has been attached to the file copy of these minutes. Highlights of this report included the following:

Since the fall meeting of the Board of Trustees in Toledo, the committee, which consists of Mrs. Arlene Assile, Mr. Edward F. Assile, Dr. Anthony S. Bashir, Mr. Fawaz R. El Khoury, Mr. Robert H. Laham, and Miss Ruth A. Nimee, met in December to complete a mission statement, and to prepare a job description which detailed the qualifications and responsibilities for the position of Director of the Department of Planning and Future Development.

The position was advertised in the March and April issues of the WORD and AGAIN Magazines. Letters were also sent to all Pastors and Parish Council Presidents requesting that notices of the position opening be placed in parish bulletins and on parish websites.

The committee will meet again this afternoon to evaluate the three applications received thus far.

The Chairman and members of the Committee also expressed their appreciation to the Order of St. Ignatius for making it possible to increase the budget of the Department of Planning and Future Development from \$80,000 to \$150,000 in the proposed budget for the Fiscal Year ending January 31, 2006.

Following a motion by Dr. Sam H. Kouri, seconded by V. Rev. Elias S. Bitar, the progress report of the Search Committee to recruit a Director for the Department of Planning and Future Development was accepted with an expression of thanks.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **PROPOSAL BY DR. JOSEPH J. SAMRA**

Dr. Joseph J. Samra distributed to all Board members a memo which outlined his proposal, as well as a copy of the letter he sent to Metropolitan PHILIP this past March; and a copy of each has been attached to the file copy of these minutes.

The proposal for which Dr. Samra sought Board approval is as follows: a) seek out ten individuals who will each make a one-time gift to the Archdiocese of \$100,000; b) place the resulting one MILLION dollars in an irrevocable trust, for however long it takes (possibly 70 to 90 years), until it reaches one BILLION dollars; and c) apply the entire annual income from the billion (\$500,000,000 or more) to the annual operating budget of the Archdiocese.

Several Board members expressed their support for the proposal, and Dr. Elias K. Hebeke indicated his readiness to be the first contributor. The response was that he would be the third, since Metropolitan PHILIP and another individual are already first and second.

With three-tenths of the initial goal already pledged, it probably will not be especially difficult to accomplish part a) of the above proposal; and every effort will be made to involve individuals who are not members of the Board.

Other Board members were not quite as ready to support the proposal, because they were concerned about the answers to such practical questions, for example, as: How would such an irrevocable trust be related or connected to the funds raised by the Department of Planning and Future Development? Would the fund raising efforts for this fund constitute serious competition with, and impact negatively on, the efforts of that Department? How will the trust fund be administered? Who will be responsible for investments?

Still other Board members were concerned that, if serious amounts of money were indeed available on an annual basis, interest in giving to the Church and the motivation to work for the Church might erode and vanish entirely.

Since there was insufficient time to properly discuss the many issues and concerns which had been raised, Metropolitan PHILIP appointed a committee, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Joseph J. Samra, and including himself, Mr. Edward F. Assile, Mr. Elias K. Hebeke, Mr. Fawaz R. El Khoury, Dr. Sam H. Kouri, Mr. William D. Morrison, and any other Board members with investment experience who feel they can be helpful, to discuss the proposal and the related issues and concerns as carefully as possible, and to present the results of their deliberations to the Board at the fall meeting in Florida.

Following a motion by Mr. Edward F. Assile, seconded by Mr. Alan G. Abraham, the above named committee was granted a vote of confidence to discuss all the issues and concerns which were raised, and to present the results of the discussion to the Board at the fall meeting in Florida.

### **FALL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

In anticipation of the fall Board meeting which will be held at the Hilton Naples and Towers, in Naples, Florida, on October 29, - 30, 2004, Mr. Elias K. Hebeka distributed to each Board member a schedule of events for the entire weekend of October 28, - 31, 2004; a room reservation card; a Souvenir Journal Sponsorship Form; and a letter of invitation from the Pastor and Parish Council Chairman of St. Paul Antiochian Orthodox Church in Naples, Florida.

In addition to the meeting of the Board of Trustees, there will also be meetings of the Local Synod of our Archdiocese, the Antiochian Village Council, and the Governing Council of the Order of St. Ignatius. The Board Luncheon on Saturday will be hosted by the Antakli's, Darany's, Haddad's, Hebeka's, and Nassor's; and, at the Saturday evening banquet, St. Paul's Pastor, V. Rev. Joseph M. Shaheen, will be recognized for his 45 years in the service of Our Lord. In conjunction with the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Sunday, there will also be a Groundbreaking Ceremony.

A basic room rate of \$79 has been obtained, and various other accommodations are also available. The nearest airport is Regional Southwest Airport (RSW) in Fort Myers.

Next spring's meeting of the Board will be hosted by St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn, New York, on June 3, - 5, 2005.

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John D. Dalack, Ph.D.,  
Secretary