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STANDING CONFERENCE OF THE CANONICAL
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The Orthodox Christian Mission Center: Helping Orthodox Christians respond to Christ's call to preach, teach, baptize, minister to the poor and make disciples of all nations.



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A Walk in the Desert:

Reflections from a Recent Journey to the Northern Regions of Cameroon

by **FR. MARTIN RITSI**

The morning was quiet and still, warm and humid by daybreak. In this stillness a new day began. It was a typical day in Africa, but one completely unusual for a visitor to this vast and harsh desert region. It was not an ordinary desert as one might imagine, like the Sahara with endless dunes of sand. Rather, this desert was green and full of water...at least for a season. In this northern region of Cameroon, known formally as the “Extreme North” province, the rains come for three months a year. From these rains people will draw the sustenance that will keep them alive throughout the remainder of the year. In the dry months, temperatures rise well over 100 degrees, scorching everything in site, turning the plains into a vast, brown dust bowl.

The people of this land are hardy and have learned to survive completely through their own ingenuity and centuries of tradition passed on from generation to generation. Virtually everything they use is hand-made. Without nails or plastic, even the poles for the roofs of their homes are held together with a rope that is hand woven. Almost everything for survival has been taken directly from what seems to be an empty wasteland.

Yet in the midst of this remote region of sub-Saharan Africa the Orthodox Church is growing. His Eminence, Archbishop Gregorios had invited me to tour the thriving communities of newly illumined that have sprung up in his Metropolis. Over the course of my visit, I would be moved by the vibrancy and joy that the Holy Spirit had bestowed upon the people of Cameroon.

The Archbishop and I begin our day with the goal of visiting several Orthodox communities to check in on the progress of various projects...a well here and there, or the building of a church over the border in neighboring Chad. Traveling with us are Fr. Philip from Chad, Theo (the Archbishop's driver and aid) and Tesu (a local helper from the area).

His Eminence, Archbishop Gregorios, several indigenous Cameroonian clergy, and OCMC Executive Director, Fr. Martin Ritsi are surrounded by several of Cameroon's Orthodox faithful. Returning from a visit to this west African country, Fr. Martin brought back several opportunities for Orthodox Christians to witness in Cameroon through the Mission Center's many ministries including: missionaries, Teams, and SAMP.

Any visit to this harsh land always brings with it unforeseen, yet expected difficulties. Our car is parked in a “nearby” village because it is the beginning of the rainy season, making further travel by car or motorcycle impossible. To continue, we pack our necessary belongings for the day and sling them over our shoulders taking care to prepare our feet for the upcoming journey. We start the day with an hour and a half hike through muddy plains and around small ponds that have just begun to fill.

Fr. Philip carries a second pair of shoes which he will put on after passing thru heavy areas of mud. Theo and Tesu each carry flip flops in their hands and set out barefoot. The



OCMC Executive Director, Fr. Martin Ritsi walks with His Eminence, Archbishop Gregorios following a visit to one of the Orthodox churches that have been built in Cameroon. His Eminence escorted Fr. Martin on a two-week tour of Cameroon where he shared some of the accomplishments, hopes, and struggles that the growing Church faces there.

Archbishop follows suit and I attempt to give my galoshes a try, hoping that the mud and water are still shallow enough after last night's downpour. I am left wishing that my feet were tough enough to follow the more practical method of our hosts.

The land is green and flat with sporadic clusters of trees standing here and there. We see broad sweeping vistas and vast desert plains that stretch for miles and miles on end. Somehow, scattered throughout the area As the Church in northern Cameroon, Chad, Gabon and the Republic of Central Africa blossoms, more indigenous clergy are trained and ordained to minister to the growing flock of faithful. On his recent visit to Cameroon, OCMC Executive Director, Fr. Martin Ritsi met with many of these clergymen to find out how Orthodox Christians from North America can help.





farther than the eye can see and even further than we could imagine are groups of round, mud huts with thatched roofs. Sometimes they stand alone surrounded by emptiness, at other times 6 or 8 of them are situated in small compounds surrounded by an earthen fence. Occasionally, such groupings are near each other forming a small village, but more often than not they are separated by great distances.

The inhabitants of these small encampments rise early with the sun trying to get as much done as possible before the intense heat of the day sets in. Women and men spend their working hours bent over at the waist, leaning close to the earth, turning over the land with a small hand tool that is shaped like a hoe. Each person tirelessly turns the earth a foot at a time as they tediously cultivate their crops. Some have already planted and are turning soil in between rows of Mili-mili (a type of grain that is in the corn family and the major source of sustenance), while others are dropping seeds into the ground. A sporadic goat or pig can be seen and children clothed in rags roam in small groups, doing what children do all around the world—searching for ways to keep themselves amused.

As we continue our walk, we pass other travelers, mostly women, balancing loads on their heads—large pots filled with water, clothes in a basket, and items purchased to be to be bought or sold at a village marketplace. We pass an area where other women are gathered on a small mound in the distance. They have convened at a round hole dug deep into the ground. Into it they lower a bucket and then proceed to fill their jugs, wash their clothes and visit with one another.

On another vista off in the distance, a group of young children, playing in the water, can be seen.

Farther still, three boys in tattered clothes are prancing through the dust, turning over stones and playing imaginary games together as they tend to a few animals that are grazing nearby.

The path meanders near some huts and the children see us. Sometimes they are afraid, but as we walk closer to where our churches are they know that the white man is the Archbishop. One can see the fruit of His Eminence's ministry through the joy in their eyes. We encounter many people that seem to have been touched by the love of Christ in a similar way, either by the Archbishop or by one of the many indigenous clergy that serve in this beautiful country.

After having spent some days among the people of northern Cameroon, I reflect on how we have become a part of the rhythm of life in this desert as we make our way back to the car. The unusualness of their circumstance fades, leaving only a sense of commonality between me and my fellow human beings. Despite our differences in life style and culture we are identical in bearing the image and likeness of God. We share in having hopes and struggles, joy and sadness, and we equally relate to God's presence in one another. Walking the same path with Fr. Philip and Tesu has brought me closer to them, making it easy to forget that they will return to their own mud huts whereas I will return to the United States. It is tempting to forget where I am. We are so similar that the reality of how radically different our lives are comes dangerously close to fading. But then, something stirs within me and my eyes again perceive the harshness of life, the absence of medical care, and the subjectivity to climate that I am insulated from and that they are not.

How is it, that I have been given a life with

In northern Cameroon seasonal rains briefly transform the region's arid landscape into a vibrant savannah. In the ponds and rivers that fill with the heavy deluge, indigenous Cameroonians fish and grow all that will sustain them for the rest of the year. With the help of OCMC, the Church in northern Cameroon is growing its infrastructure in response to the struggles that the faithful endure in such a harsh environment.

access to such abundance as if it is the natural order of the world, when here all around me, scattered over endless miles of land, are a people that live and suffer in a poverty that I can hardly conceive, even though it is before my own eyes? As I look out over the horizon, I remember the endless miles of similar landscapes that I had flown over on my way here. I remember that these people are not rare, but that many peoples in the world live in similar forms of poverty—across the entire continents of Africa, in India, and so many other places

Yet, somehow, I am here in their midst, not as a privileged tourist or in search of some exotic adventure, but in response to the Lord's call that we are to carry His love to the entire world. I am here on behalf of SCOPA and as a representative of the Orthodox Churches in the United States. I am here to prepare the way in order that others may follow to help these communities. Soon an OCMC Mission Team will be building an animal husbandry project on the same land where we have constructed a church and dug a well. The Mission Center will continue sending support to Cameroon to support the local clergy, help operate the seminary, dig more wells, buy medicines to be distributed in clinics, build more churches and translate materials to local languages. And maybe, just maybe, someone will hear the Lord's call to this region and people and will be sent through OCMC as a missionary to work alongside Archbishop Gregorios in reaching more of these precious children of God with the saving message of Jesus Christ.

On the previous day, the day before our "walk in the desert," a meeting was held with the 11 clergy in the area. They told of their parishes, the numbers of catechumens, possibilities for the future, and the struggles that they face. As I listened, it became clear that it would become my duty to carry their story back home—a place where this world is invisible and almost inconceivable. I pray, that together with our Hierarchs and the Mission Center, we will take their situation to heart; and that by God's grace we will gather our strength and talent to join the people of Cameroon on a walk through the desert—a journey with Christ.

SAMP: MISSION PRIEST SPOTLIGHT

BUILDING

the East African Church One Brick at a Time

To see the bright smile of Fr. Athanasios Karanja is to see the joy of a man who has found his calling; but to look into his eyes is to see the wisdom earned by his life's epic journey and complete trust in Christ.

Born in 1953 to Orthodox parents in Kenya, Fr. Athanasios was just a child during the turbulent years that followed the Mau Mau rebellion. Fueled by anti-colonial sentiments the uprising became one of the catalysts that led to Kenyan independence in 1963 from colonial rule. In his youth, he learned the construction trade and farming in a country that was very different from the one his parents had known. He was astute, faithful, and proved to be a gifted builder as he worked on land that his family owned. As a young man he married and started a family with his wife Jane.

In 1982, the Markarios III Theological Seminary opened in Nairobi. Fr. Athanasios was working as a contractor at the time and already had children. Feeling a deep desire to help spread Orthodoxy in East Africa, Fr. Athanasios left his job and enrolled at the seminary. Being among the first to complete his studies at the school, he was ordained to the priesthood

almost immediately after graduation.

Archbishop Anastasios, who was the Orthodox Church's presiding hierarch in Kenya at the time, had a tremendous vision for Church growth in East Africa. To this end, Fr. Athanasios' gifts in construction could not be ignored. He worked with several OCMC missionaries and oversaw the many building projects that were undertaken by the metropolis. One of these projects involved the first ever OCMC Mission Team in 1987.

For many years, a host of Kenyan churches, clinics, and schools would be built under the careful guidance of Fr. Athanasios. By the late



In 2007, an OCMC Mission Team traveled to Kenya to build a house of worship for the Turkana people in Lodwar. Fr. Athanasios oversaw the project which saw Kenyan workers and North American volunteers construct the first Orthodox Church in the far north of the country.



1990s he, Papadia Jane, and their five children had purchased land in Nakuru. In 1999, however, tragedy struck when Papadia Jane suddenly passed away. Fr. Athanasios had to choose between leaving the priesthood to remarry or abandon the rigorous travels of his construction work for the metropolis to care for his young children.

True to his lifelong calling to witness for Christ, Fr. Athanasios decided to remain a priest. He committed himself to a life of celibacy and became responsible for the pastoral care of two Orthodox communities in Kenya. With help from his family, Fr. Athanasios raised his children providing for them in every way possible and making sure they received a good education.

As his children began entering adulthood, divine providence would again shine on Fr. Athanasios Karanja. Under the current Archbishop of Kenya, His Eminence Makarios, Fr. Athanasios has been asked to head the construction of more projects for the Church in East Africa. In September 2007, another OCMC Mission Team was slated to assist the people in Lodwar build a permanent church. Fr. Athanasios oversaw the project. St. John the Baptist, as the church would be named, would mark the far northern frontier of Orthodoxy's spread through Kenya.

A SAMP recipient since 1999, Fr. Athanasios Karanja has sought to sanctify the talents that God has given him by offering them to the Church. With each of life's turns he has remained dedicated to serving Christ. He entered seminary with the desire to share Christ through the richness of Orthodoxy with East Africa. Through his loving obedience he has been instrumental in building dozens of churches and ministry facilities that have impacted the lives of thousands all over the region.

The support of indigenous clergy is vital to establishing vibrant Eucharist communities throughout the world. OCMC's SAMP program currently supports 319 priests like Fr. Athanasios. Each of these men offers a living Christian witness in his own unique way. More priests participate in the program every year and the contributions of Orthodox Christians in North America make it possible for these clergymen to dedicate their lives to the work of ministry.

Fr. Athanasios Karanja instructs two members of OCMC's first Mission Team sent to help build an Orthodox Church for the people of Lobere, Kenya in 1987. Fr. Athanasios has been involved in the construction of churches, clinics and schools throughout the metropolis.

The Local Parish as a Center for International Missions

Fr. John Chakos, OCMC Board Member and Presiding Priest of Holy Cross Church

Every newly planted parish invariably begins as a mission. A core group of dedicated families with a compelling vision comes together to form a viable and vital Eucharistic community in their local area. In the beginning the main focus is on the church building, fellowship hall and classroom complex, which gives credibility and a sense of permanence to the nascent efforts of the founding families. Their contagious enthusiasm draws more families into the parish circle, resulting in the addition of more programs and ministries, many of which are geared to the youth. Eventually, though, the parish begins to peak. From the early mission impetus, concern for maintaining what already exists often takes precedence over the primary focus of growing the parish. A tension is created between the need to pay the bills and additional forms of outreach. International missions, in particular, begin to seem like some esoteric activities, hardly related to the day-in and day-out life of the average parishioner.

At this point we have to start thinking outside of the box, which means outside of the four walls of the church and its internal mission of self-preservation. Ideally, the early missionary zeal of the parish can be transposed onto a bigger stage of development. A certain mentality needs to be fostered within the parish that shows a radical openness to the outsider, the foreigner, the one who would not appear to fit into the parish's mold. That new person walking through the doors may not be one of us, but until we open our arms to him, he will forever remain a stranger. To limit the outreach of the local parish only to those who "fit in" is to limit the power of the Gospel to transform lives, ours as well as the outsider in our midst or far away.

Through international missions, the Lord calls us to expand our vision and incorporate into the daily life of our parish the rich flavors

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church's Ladies Philoptochos Society hosted a "Mission Flavors" banquet to benefit the OCMC. The banquet was held during the Spring 2007 OCMC Board meeting and was attended by over 200 people from the greater Pittsburgh area.



of the mission field. To reflect this openness in our parish of Holy Cross, many languages are used at any given worship service. The Liturgy is heard as though it were another Pentecost.

In addition to being open to others, particularly those of different cultures, the local parish, under the leadership and inspiration of its priest, can bring the mission field directly into the parish. He is the one to invite those working in the lands of mission to tell their story. He must encourage his parishioners to sponsor a missionary in the field or give support to a project like the building of a catechetical school, clinic or church. He must research the needs of the mission field to see where assistance is needed. In all these efforts the guidance and support of OCMC is indispensable.

Part 2 of *The Effect of International Missions on the Local Parish*

That such support can be very fruitful and rewarding and of great benefit to the parish is proven by my own experience. At our parish of Holy Cross we have hosted and supported many missionaries from OCMC, starting with Father Daniel Byantoro, who in the early eighties sat across from us at our kitchen table and described his dream of starting an indigenous Indonesian Orthodox Church. Little did we know that three years later, all five members of that fledging mission would be under the roof of our house, supported by our Ladies Philoptochos and parish members who became sponsors for their welcome entry into Orthodoxy. Metropolitan Maximos, himself a staunch advocate of this mission, personally ordained two of its members at our parish into the holy priesthood to serve as

missionaries in their native land. Regular visits and correspondence keeps us in touch with this flourishing mission, of which OCMC has been intimately involved.

A second of many such supportive efforts from our parish that deserves to be mentioned began with a chance meeting in 1995 with two nuns from Guatemala, Mothers Ines and Maria, who at that time were trying to found a monastic mission on the scenic mountainside overlooking Lake Amatitlan just outside of Guatemala City. Little did I know that this brief encounter would lead to a decade long relationship, which led our parish, together with the OCMC, to help in reopening the Hogar Rafael Ayau Orphanage, the adoption of many children in our parish and others, including our own daughter Jenny, and mission trips sponsored by the sisters of our Philoptochos. So fruitful and inspiring has this relationship been that two of our parishioners, Varvara Pyros and Christina Hagelios have served there as long-term OCMC missionaries.

Every year since 1987 we have been blessed to send individuals or small groups to places like Kenya, Russia, Uganda, Tanzania, Haiti, Mexico, Upper Galilee, Guatemala, and Alaska. While most of these returning Team members have settled down at Holy Cross, transformed by their experience, a few have gone on to give longer commitments to the host country or region in which they served.

It's difficult to encounter a scene of human poverty and not be affected by it, especially when we consider that in the American church we have so much to offer a struggling mission church. The gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' begs for some type of a Christian response. It is in such settings that the claims of Christ on our love are most deeply felt. While not all of us can serve, each of us must ask the question, "What can I do?" The local parish, under the guidance of the parish priest, must be the setting that helps us work through such powerful emotions, giving them credence and validation.

Today, the opinion that money spent on such missions diminishes the finances of the local parish still persists. The experience of mission-supporting and mission-sending parishes is quite the opposite. Such outreach enriches the life of the local parish in untold ways. Since 1987, when the Mission Center sent its first short-term team to Africa to build a church, opportunities for mission outreach have increased considerably. Facilitating the overseas missionary efforts of the canonical churches under the umbrella of SCOA

Become an OCMC Ambassador

OCMC Ambassadors work toward the spread of Christianity by letting their fellow parishioners know how they can answer their call to missions through OCMC's many programs. Ambassadors are able to serve others and contribute to the work of foreign missions by helping to engage the faithful at home.

Broaden Awareness of Orthodox Missions by:

- **Distributing** and posting OCMC materials to the parish as they are sent
- **Providing** OCMC announcements for the Church Bulletin
- **Hosting** one OCMC awareness event or inviting an OCMC representative to speak.
- **Praying** for the work of missions and OCMC Missionaries serving abroad

Contact the Mission Center to volunteer by sending an e-mail to communications@ocmc.org or by phone at 1-877-463-6784.

became the sole purpose of OCMC. The positive effect on those who have participated in OCMC missions from our community is dramatic. The Gospel comes alive for them as never before. When they return to their home parishes they become ambassadors for missions and church leaders in their own right. Their enthusiasm is unbounded and contagious. With the encouragement of their parish priest, they can form the nucleus of mission outreach within the parish. They become the new apostles of Orthodox Christianity, but they do not work alone.

The responsibility for continuing the mission of the church, then, belongs to every one of us and not just a select few. By now it should be clear that Christ's mission is to be found in the very heart of parish life and every believer. We must come to see that missions is one of the main purposes of our parishes; and that the work of missions is our responsibility. Seen in this light, our growth in Christ takes on cosmic proportions because it not only affects us but the whole of humanity. We can and must make a difference. Of course, not all of us are called to go to the ends of the earth. Nevertheless, we are not exempt from some type of involvement, whether at home or abroad.

Let me conclude with just one of the many stories brought back by a Team member that was sent from our parish. He was part of an OCMC Team sent to help construct a catechetical school in Tanzania. The parishioners of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Kazikisi announced the upcoming project to their fellow townspeople. The long-awaited day to start the school's construction came, but not the Team members. Their arrival had been delayed two days. The local people, many of whom had never seen a white man, began to openly doubt the veracity of the reports – the thought that a group of Americans would come to work in such a destitute and remote area seemed beyond belief. Finally, the construction team arrived in Kazikisi, eager to begin after the embarrassing delay. As they assembled to survey the work site, they lifted up their eyes to the surrounding hills, only to behold an incredible scene. Coming to welcome them were over a thousand curious and incredulous onlookers. At that very moment, through this mass movement of people, this Team member felt Christ calling him to serve. He went on to serve for two years as a missionary to Tanzania.

Stories like this abound in the mission field. They make the mission come alive for all of us, reminding us that we each have a unique calling to promote the work of Christ in the world. Toward this end, let us endeavor to keep alive the fervor to do missions in the local parish. Whether we are in a start-up parish or an established one, we must seek to extend the boundaries of God's Holy Kingdom. A parish that understands its role is in living communion with Christ, and its members are the true expressions of His love for the entire world.

Holy Cross Philoptochos Mission Team members to Guatemala bring infants from the nursery to Holy Communion. For Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the early missionary zeal of the parish has evolved in to a profound dedication to foreign missions.





ABOVE: Fr. Alexander Winogradsky blesses the faithful. OCMC supports him in his ministry to offer the Liturgy and other Church services in Hebrew for the Orthodox Christians that live in Jerusalem.

Holy Land Missions:

An Interview with Fr Alexander Winogradsky of Jerusalem

INTERVIEW BY FR. JAMES BERNSTEIN

The Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) recently began supporting the work of Archpriest Alexander Winogradsky in Jerusalem. Fr. Alexander leads a small community where he performs the Liturgy in Hebrew. Offering Church services in the native language of the Israeli people has allowed Fr. Alexander to build bridges and reach out to those who are seeking Christ in this ancient and Holy Land. Fr. James Bernstein of St. Paul Antiochian Orthodox Church in Brier, Washington, interviewed Fr. Alexander about his remarkable ministry.

Fr. Alexander, you are authorized to serve the Divine Liturgy and other services in Hebrew in the Holy Land. Is the servicing of Orthodox services in Hebrew a recent development?

Hebrew is the language of the Old Testament or First Covenant, and is held in very high esteem because God Himself chose to deliver His first message in this language. This is why I call Hebrew my “Father tongue,” and indeed the Lord’s Prayer begins as Jewish prayers often do: “Our Father Who art in Heaven – Avinu

shebashamayim.” It is a paternal tongue, only written with consonants. Hebrew is also the major language of the Mishnah or Talmud, the oral tradition that explains the First Covenant. The Church was born from first century Jewish Semitic Christendom, and thus the Greek Scriptures used by Orthodox Christians contain a lot of Semitic phrases or expressions.

Hebrew has always been a living tongue, though at times limited to scholars and pious disputes. The revival of modern Hebrew as a spoken language is due to the insightful courage of Eliezer Ben Yehudah, who, in the nineteenth century, envisioned the ingathering of the exiled Jews, in the Eretz Israel (Earth of Israel – cf. Matthew 2:21). He thought that they would need a common language. Ben Yehudah was from Poland and met, in Paris, an Algerian Jew, and they simply began to speak the Hebrew they had learned from use in the prayers! He could have chosen Esperanto or any other language, but he chose Hebrew, feeling it was a special time to revive and make Hebrew a living spoken language.

The use of traditional and Biblical Jewish

phrases common to both Judaism and Christianity enables the Christian faith to be connected with its roots. Hebrew is ancient, yet new, in its use within the Church. The Moscow Russian Mission in Jerusalem proposed a translation of the Liturgy in about 1845 that was blessed by the Holy Synod at that time. The version is excellent, and this is the text I use (with slight corrections or updates) when I celebrate the Divine Liturgy. It is used within the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Hebrew is also my “liturgical mother tongue.” As a child I learned to write in Yiddish, which is written with Hebrew letters, and I often read the prayers and the Psalms in Hebrew. Some find it astounding that an Eastern Orthodox priest knows so many of the prayers and Psalms in Hebrew by heart. In Jerusalem, both Jews and Christians read the Psalms regularly, and this constitutes a significant link between us. As a priest whose ministry is to develop and organize Hebrew-speaking Orthodox Christian communities in Israel, I meet with a lot of Israeli people, Jewish or Christian faithful, for whom Hebrew is their primary language.

Over three decades, Hebrew grew into a mature colloquial language. This has a real impact on the children who go to church. At home, the children usually continue to speak Russian or Ukrainian with those of the previous generation, but speak mostly Hebrew

among themselves. And indeed, this does have a real impact on the way they think, speak and pray. Our words contain a mixture of Hebrew, Yiddish, Arabic and Greek which connect us with thousands of years of history and diverse cultures. The use of Hebrew has appeared as a great prophetic sign as we now speak the language of the Prophets.

Are there many people in the Holy Land who prefer to hear the services done in Hebrew?

We know that approximately 400,000 people among those who arrived in Israel over the past fifteen years – mainly from the former Soviet Union but also from Georgia-Caucasus, Romania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Albania – had been baptized Orthodox Christians in their home countries. The former Soviets are numerous, and visit the monasteries and holy sites in large groups. They are usually very open-minded, well-read and love to tour the country. Many come to my services by buses and then we collectively make a pilgrimage to a holy site. A number of them want to go to confession, but because they are suspicious also want to protect their privacy. This is an outgrowth of their communist background and educational system. Most Russian-speaking churches gather about sixty faithful each week. The use of Hebrew attracts the younger generation. These faithful are thoroughly Israeli, and as such they have to deal with Israeli problems including military service, the educational system health care and administration, relationships with the Jews, and mixed marriages.

Over the past ten years I have seen many young children become adults using Hebrew as their mother tongue. They clearly want to pray in Hebrew. At the same time they are very interested in the Arab Christian Orthodox heritage in the Holy Land, and the Aramaic language spoken by Jesus Christ. They want to have a church life that does not disconnect them from the Israeli reality. The use of Hebrew in the Orthodox Church constitutes for them a sign of divine favor and prophetic revival.

It is important for the Church to have Hebrew communities speaking the language of the Bible, as it has significant ramifications for the reading and understanding of the Scripture. This is important for the entire Church. We are now able to more profoundly explain the Old Testament roots of our faith and how the Gospel is to be lived in the land of Jesus.

Do you think that it is possible for Orthodox Christianity to also have a Jewish ethnic expression as it did during the time of the Early Church?

All people or ethnic groups enjoy equal rights as members of the Body of Christ. The Orthodox Churches have traditionally encouraged praying in local vernacular

Pascha in Jerusalem! Fr. Alexander Winogradsky, a recipient of OCMC support, leads Orthodox Christian faithful in Israel as they sing “Christ is Risen” on Easter Sunday.

languages. In my church of Saint Nicholas in the Old City of Jerusalem we pray mainly in Hebrew, but also include Modern Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, some Yiddish, as well as Georgian, Finnish, German, French or English as needed. It depends on who is attending the services. I call this a “symphony” a collection of voices into one. True, Christianity is linked to Judaism in a very special way. It would be good for Christians of Jewish origin and the Israelis to know that, in Israel, it is possible for the Orthodox Christian faithful to feel at home here and not to view themselves as displaced persons. The use of Hebrew among Orthodox Christians here is growing, and it is for me prophetic and resurrectional.

Being the only priest authorized to serve such a large community in Hebrew makes your task overwhelming. Do you have any hope of having other clergymen continue to build on your ministry?

We live in the Holy Land. You may find ancient artifacts anywhere. Hebrew in a sense is a living artifact or relic in the Church. With the help of OCMC, I have organized spiritual pilgrimages after the Divine Liturgies. Soon, I plan to have some young men blessed as readers and create a native Israeli Eastern Orthodox clergy who are at home here. This requires the development of educational programs that are respectful of the enculturation of Christianity in the Jewish society. Just as the Jews plant trees everywhere, we need to have local believers dedicate their lives to Jesus and plant spiritual seeds throughout the land, in full respect of personal identities. This presupposes that we need help: prayers, financial support and educational exchanges for training the future priests abroad.

In the past three years, I have developed links with some Russian institutes of theology that are very interested in our existence in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. They provide assistance in the education of readers and possible sub-deacons. It would be good to find some seminaries and institutes in the west that



Fr. Alexander Winogradsky ministers to the many Orthodox Christians in Jerusalem. As Orthodox immigrant communities acculturate to life in Israel, Fr. Alexander conducts Church services in Hebrew. In doing so, Liturgical worship serves also as a witness for Christ among native Israelis in their own language.

would also provide similar assistance, even if only through the internet or brief encounters and conferences. These efforts assume that we have funds with which to sponsor the studies. We have many visitors to our services here in Jerusalem who appreciate meeting us and receiving our warmhearted hospitality. During these visits connections are made and doors of opportunity are opened. Perhaps they will be opened wider still.

Israel would like to have Hebrew-speaking Christian communities, as they are similarly very interested in Aramaic-speaking congregations. It could pave the way towards more understanding of Christianity among Israelis. It is a real challenge, but Christ says that “nothing is impossible to God” (Luke 1:37). Continued prayer and financial support will make it happen.

For two thousand years, the Resurrection of the Lord has been proclaimed everywhere in the world. Now we renew our faith in the Resurrection here in the Holy Land among the ‘People of Christ’s Flesh,’ where it all began. May every single person here ask, “Who are you?” and discover ultimate identity in the Living God while truly following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.



10 YEARS

OF OCMC MISSIONS IN ROMANIA

FLOYD FRANTZ, OCMC MISSIONARY TO ROMANIA

Seeing the fruit of OCMC's work here in Romania is probably the most uplifting thing in my life today. When I first came to Romania in 1998 many of the programs that are available today were just starting or non-existent. The St. Nicholas Home, started by OCMC Missionaries Craig and Victoria Goodwin, was only in the early building stage. The Goodwins had moved to Romania the year before, and were in the middle of renovating an old palace so that it could be used as an orphanage. OCMC Missionaries David (now an Orthodox priest) and Mary Hudson were working on translating Dynamis into Romanian. The following year the Hudsons helped Craig and Victoria to start up the Policlinica St. Pantelimon, which is a free medical clinic for the poor. After the policlinic was up and running, Craig and Victoria opened the Protection of the Theotokos Family Center which served as an orphanage for abandoned children. By this time, David Hudson was ordained a priest and was made the director of the Christiana School which ministered to kids with a high drop out risk.

In 2000, I moved to Romania and started the St. Dimitrie Program. We started out with an outpatient alcoholism treatment program at the Policlinica St. Pantelimon, and began providing education in the community about the disease concept of addictions.

The work of these dedicated Missionaries, that started 10 years ago, continues to touch the daily lives of the Romanian people. OCMC Missionaries and OCMC funding helped make this program possible.

Every year the Policlinica St. Pantelimon continues to be a miracle in the lives of hundreds of people. These days, not only the poor from the district of Manastur go there, but many homeless and poor people of the St. Dimitrie Program are sent over to the clinic for examinations and medicines. Ever since its opening, OCMC has helped the clinic through Agape Canister grants.

The Christiana School, which Fr. David



The St. Dimitrie Program, started by OCMC missionary Floyd Frantz, provides outpatient alcoholism treatment and education about the disease of addiction as a ministry of the Orthodox Church in Romania. In 2002, the ministry expanded by offering a day program for alcoholics at a long-term care tuberculosis hospital in Savadisla.

Hudson put so much of himself into, continues its work with youth at St. Basil the Great Social Center. It now also has a soup kitchen, which not only feeds the kids at the school but also provides meals for the poor and elderly in the district. The St. Dimitrie Program sends about 15 people a day to this soup kitchen. Through your contributions, OCMC continues to support this social center's cantina.

The work which Craig and Victoria began in 2000 with the Protection Center is now carried on by my wife and good friend, Ancuța. In 2005, because of changes in Romanian legislation, the scope of that project was modified from "custody and care" to "abandonment prevention." More than 7,000 children were abandoned in Romania during 2006. In response, the Protection Center now provides physical support for children and counseling for mothers in order to preserve the family unit. Today 12 children under 2

½ years old come daily to be washed, fed and looked after while their mothers seek work or education. The mothers also attend our counseling program, and other social activities designed to help strengthen family bonds. The staff of the Protection Center includes not only care givers, but also a doctor, a psychologist, and two social workers dedicated to helping families stay together.

Today the St. Dimitrie Program continues with outpatient treatment groups at the Policlinica. In 2002 we also began a day program for alcoholics at a long-term care tuberculosis hospital in Savadisla. In 2004, we started the Casa Alba Day-Center, where individuals trying to get into recovery can come for a cup of coffee and some "12 Step" fellowship. We are also now doing counseling in Borsa, at a long-term care psychiatric hospital. Our community information programs focus mostly on conducting addiction counseling and training seminars. These courses are offered to the various dioceses around Romania, as they request them.

This year we have started doing some work in the Republic of Moldova, which was separated

from Romania by Russia at the end of WWII. It became an independent country in 1990, but is still partially occupied by the Russian army. Moldova is the poorest country in Europe and it suffers from all of the problems associated with poverty. Work is scarce in Moldova, and those able to find employment only earn \$120 per month on average. About 25% of the adult population of Moldova works outside the country. The Romanian Orthodox Church has about 500 churches in Moldova. We helped start an alcoholism treatment program at the village parish of Leova. The local hospital and parish priest welcomed our assistance. I consider it a great blessing that we have been able to expand our work into this country.

RIGHT: His Grace Bishop Vasile of the Romanian Archdiocese of Vad, Feleac and Cluj, baptized the first baby of the Protection of the Theotokos Family Center on March 1st, 2003. The ministry of the Orthodox Church in Romania was started by OCMC Missionaries Craig and Victoria Goodwin and is now being directed by OCMC missionary Ancuța Frantz.



BELOW: Begun by OCMC Missionaries Craig and Victoria Goodwin in 2000 as ministry of the Orthodox Church in Romania, the Protection of the Theotokos Family Center was founded to care for Romanian children. Ancuța Frantz now directs the program which works towards abandonment prevention by providing physical support for children and counseling for mothers.



people are making in the United States, and they demonstrate an incredible "harnic," or work ethic, remaining dedicated the Church's many programs.

Ancuța and I love our work here in Romania. It is a privilege to be here and to serve our Lord with these most wonderful people, in this most beautiful country. Of course, we also have the joy of getting to know many of you, the people who pray for us and who support us. Our service is enriched by knowing of your dedication for missions, and your love for the people we serve.

LEFT: OCMC Missionaries Floyd and Ancuța Frantz love the people they serve. This love is reflected in their ministry work and in the opportunities they take to fellowship with the Romanian people. The Frantzes are but two of six OCMC missionaries that have served in Romania over the past ten years.



OCMC Missionary Team Leader to Albania, Nathan Hoppe pictured with Fr. Christodulos Papadeas during a visit by an OCMC Mission Team in August. On August 27th, he and his children Tristan (pictured) and Katherine celebrated the one year memorial of his wife Lynette. May her memory be eternal!

I also sat on the examining board for new students at the Resurrection of Christ Theological Academy. The school has faced a dwindling enrollment over the past several years and I was gratified to see a significant increase in candidates.

MELANIE LINDERMAN

I continue to teach English to the second and third year students who are studying to be catechists or priests at the Holy Resurrection Seminary in Shen Vlash. I also offer an advanced special class for the professors and staff who teach at the seminary. I further assist in the academy's efforts to publicize its education program by designing slide and video presentations to be shown to potential students throughout the country of Albania.

My work also includes teaching English to the priests at the Metropolis and a weekly discussion group in my home for advanced students to practice conversational English.

Additionally, I work with fellow Albanian teachers to broadcast an English-learning program on the "Radio Engalia" radio station in Tirana. This is a half hour program devoted to grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and a short Christian-based story, poem or essay. It has become a very popular program with listeners, who enjoy being instructed in English.

THE HOPPE FAMILY

In August, we celebrated the first anniversary of Lynette's home going. Archbishop Anastasios led a beautiful memorial service at the Cathedral here in Tirana and then proceeded to the graveside where the Trisagion service was sung again followed by a lunch at the theological school. It was all a beautiful tribute to Lynette's life and work and most of all a celebration of the joy which Christ gives us through His resurrection.

Over the course of the summer, I led two groups of young people to Kosovo to do day camps in five different public schools involving more than 1500 children. These camps were very well received by school administrators and local government officials and most of all by the children.



Anastasia Pamela Barksdale, 2007 OCMC Mission Team member to Albania and graduate of Holy Cross Seminary, recently received a blessing from His Eminence Archbishop Anastasios to serve as an OCMC missionary in that same country. Anastasia will minister to children in her role at the National Children's Office in Tirana.

THE RUSSELL FAMILY

From August 6th until August 15th, we helped host an OCMC short term mission team that came to Albania to put on the 2nd annual English Camp. I (Pauline) was the organizer and director of this event once the team reached Albania. I think the phrase, "learning experience" sums up my time with the short term mission team and English Camp. I must have told myself every five seconds, "I need to remember that, or change that, or do that, for next year."

Ultimately, we are in Albania to give people the Good News and to try to bring them to Christ. Never does that seem so real as when you are asked to serve as a sponsor

for someone who has chosen to be baptized. This is especially true with an adolescent who has eagerly learned all the lessons of her catechism classes and now has asked you ask to stand with her, in joy, as she starts her journey as a Christian.

On August 1st, I (George) was the sponsor for a 14 year old Albanian girl named Lydia Muca. After getting to know Lydia's father from talking to him in our neighborhood, I found out that Lydia was interested in catechism in the Orthodox Church. After she completed her catechism, the family asked me to be her Godfather.

I also ran in the Detroit Free Press Marathon to increase awareness of Orthodox Missions and to raise funds for our mission work in Albania. We have created a new web site specifically for this event at: www.runforalbania.org. Please visit this site for a full update on the event.

GEORGIA GILMAN

Thanks be to God, I have just celebrated the beginning of my 4th year in Albania! I continue to teach at Protagonist School, which recently celebrated its 5th anniversary. Last year I oversaw the English program and was a teacher to 1st, 4th, and 5th graders. In 2007-08 our school will expand again and I will teach the upper grades (4th - 6th). I also look forward to leading two advanced groups in our after-school activity, "Spiritual Food," where we will focus on the Feast Days of our Church and lives of the Saints with these groups.

Aside from teaching, I have enjoyed working with the church offices to translate, from Albanian to English, news articles that are posted on the church website (www.orthodoxalbania.org). I also continue to edit documents written in English.

THE LUISI FAMILY

A major milestone in serving abroad long-term is learning the language and acclimating to the culture of a host country. These skills facilitate the work of missions, making communication possible between missionaries and those they are serving. We are well on our way to grasping the Albanian language and understanding this beautiful country's rich culture. As we continue our training we are assisting the other OCMC missionaries serving in Albania with their various ministries to provide a living witness to the love of Christ.



Anastasia Pamela Barksdale, 2007 OCMC Mission Team member to Albania and graduate of Holy Cross Seminary, recently received a blessing from His Eminence Archbishop Anastasios to serve as an OCMC missionary in that same country. Anastasia will minister to children in her role at the National Children's Office in Tirana.

ANASTASIA PAMELA BARKSDALE (NEW MISSIONARY CANDIDATE TO ALBANIA)

Following my participation in an OCMC Mission Team to Albania, I have received a blessing from His Eminence Anastasios to serve as an OCMC missionary to Albania. I will dedicate my experience and training in working with children to the National Children's Office as a facilitator and trainer. Because

nearly a third of the Albanian population is under the age of 15, this ministry of the Orthodox Church is vital; it conducts youth outreach in all of Albania and works directly with the children in the city of Tirana.

FLOYD AND ANCUȚA FRANTZ

Fr. David Rucker, OCMC Associate Director, paid a visit for a few days in early May. His visit was very nice, and we really enjoyed having him here with us as we worked on field planning and ministry strategies. Also in May, our friends from GOAL, (Global Outreach for Addiction Leadership) came over and we did a week long training course on addictions for the archdiocese in Iasi.

In June, OCMC Mission Team member Sheila Fox came to Romania and provided tremendous assistance to us for two weeks. She visited with the patients in our hospital groups and with the group in Casa Alba. She offered strength and hope to our patients and friends in recovery as she shared her experience with us

I (Floyd) was in the States for 3 weeks in July making a presentation at a parish life conference and visiting my parish and friends in Wichita,



Partners in missions! OCMC Missionary family Floyd and Ancuța Frantz stand before a wall of pictures containing the faces of the many children that have been cared for at the Protection Day Center. This ministry of the Church in Romania strives to keep families together by offering childcare services for mothers who have to work or attend school.

Kansas. Seeing what people in the States are doing in addictions recovery programs only reminds me how much work we have to do here in Romania.

OCMC sent a Mission Team in August that taught the people from both the St. Dimitrie Program and the Protection Center about quilting. My wife and some patients in Savadisla are now quilting regularly. One of the patients in Savadisla has already finished a quilt. I spoke to about 800 priests at a conference in Iasi as well. My book has been published and I have been asked to introduce it to the priests in Moldova.



EDWIN PIER

I have accepted my next assignment with OCMC after completing a one year term of service at the Hogar Raphael Orphanage in Guatemala. Following Pre-Field Orientation at the Mission

Missing Persons!



TANZANIA

- Administrator for the Diocesan Office with organizational and publishing skills
- Experienced Translator
- TESOL/ESL teacher, administrator to work at seminary office
- Construction manager or engineer

- skills to serve in field leadership
- Theological educator
- Woman catechist with theological education
- Lawyer

ROMANIA

- Substance abuse counselors

UGANDA

- Priest or deacon to serve in field leadership
- Priest or professor to provide continuing education for priests

KENYA

- Priest to serve a parish and teach at seminary
- Medical nurse or doctor to work at clinic and provide HIV/AIDS prevention education
- Contractor, builder or engineer to supervise church construction
- Health care administrator
- Secondary school teacher to train other teachers
- Seminary teacher to teach one or more of the following: accounting, agriculture, philosophy, and counseling

GHANA

- Seminary teachers

These specific requests for missionaries have come to the Mission Center directly from Orthodox hierarchs around the world. Our prayer is for each position to be filled by the end of 2008.

Are you one of these "Missing Persons?" Is there someone you know who has talents and gifts for these ministries? Want to learn more? Contact the OCMC Missionary Department today via e-mail at missionaries@ocmc.org or by phone at 1-877-463-6784.

How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!"
—ROMANS 10:14-15

ALBANIA

- School administrator and teacher
- Youth and young adult worker
- Seminary teacher to work with catechists and university students

CAMEROON

- Construction supervisor with engineering or construction experience
- Mature priest with finance/management



Share
IN A JOURNEY OF FAITH

All Orthodox Christians
seeking to share in a
journey of faith and fulfill
the mandate of our Lord
Jesus Christ are invited
to participate on OCMC
Orthodox Mission Teams.

Teaching

Share the Orthodox Faith with youth, adults, catechumens, ministry leaders, and faithful. Clergy, seminarians, teachers, youth leaders, students and those willing to teach the Faith are urged to apply.

- Alaska
- Romania
- Tanzania
- South Africa

Youth Camp

Help facilitate and organize a youth camp program in communities that have

requested religious education for the youth. Camp counselors, youth ministry directors, students and those with camp experience are encouraged to apply.

- Albania
- Romania
- Uganda

Construction

Help build an Orthodox church for a growing community by offering your service. Engineers, construction workers, contractors, carpenters, painters, electricians and all hard workers are invited to apply today.

Construction experience is welcomed, but not necessary.

- South Africa
- Tanzania

Health Care

Provide a holistic witness of the Gospel by ministering to the physical needs of children and adults while providing basic health care and education. Health care personnel—doctors, dentists, nurses, counselors—are especially needed.

- Uganda
- Romania

Apply Today!

All hard workers willing to the share the Faith and wishing to serve on an Orthodox Mission Team are urged to participate.

Participation Requirements

A completed Mission Team application with a recommendation from an Orthodox Priest; An active member of the Church; Spiritually mature individual with good social skills, motivated to learn and serve; At least 18 years of age and in good physical health. All participants are expected to cover costs of their participation and travel on the scheduled Team dates.

Contact

Information and applications are available online at <http://www.ocmc.org/teams>.
p, or contact: Orthodox Christian Mission Center, PO Box 4319, St. Augustine, FL 32085-4319, Tel: 1-904-829-5132, Toll Free: 1-877-60-FORTH (463-6784), Fax: 1-904-829-1635, Email: teams@ocmc.org.

Thank You OCMC

The privilege of participating in our Church's work in Albania this past summer cannot be overstated. The now obvious and prudent decision of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to send Archbishop Anastasios there is a testament to the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit in this world. Nearly every day since our return, a certain memory of our trip comes to mind, whether shared in a one-on-one conversation, in sermons I've given, or in my unworthy personal prayers. The persons who shared in this short ministry for the Church in Albania are to be highly commended; as are the people we met there (indigenous and foreign) who showed us over-flowing hospitality and unconditional love. To Father Martin and the entire staff of OCMC, we can simply say "thank you" for pressing on in your unique role with piety and the fear of God.

May the Only-begotten Son and Word of God, Who said "Go forth..." grant us all grace gained by dying to sin and a continued good repentance and as we seek to fulfill our various responsibilities in the Church.

—Priest-Monk Christodoulos Papademas



Hearing Christ: *Reflections on My Trip to* Romania

Sheila Fox

Claudia, Basil (two social workers for the St. Dimitrie project) and I are going to the village of Borsa. It is a little town about an hour and fifteen minutes away from Cluj. The trip is to the state-run mental hospital located there. The drive through the countryside is beautiful, with lots of rolling hills, small farms and quaint villages along the way.

Everywhere you look something is growing: corn, tomatoes, carrots and potatoes. Grass is being cut, with a scythe, not a tractor, and is being turned by hand to dry or piled in giant haystacks. This is prime growing season and everyone who can, grows something. Miniscule front yards are transformed into tiny gardens with roses as large as your hand climbing a trellis. Lilies, hydrangeas, hostas, balsam and flowers of all colors vie for space and light. In the backyard, there may be row after row of corn or cucumbers, onions, parsnips and beans. Some gardens are laid out and tended with great concern while others are willy-nilly affairs which seem to grow as vigorously as their well tended neighbors. Cherries are ripe and you meet them at every turn. Friends have an abundance and want to share. They are so good.

This time of year, getting enough sunlight isn't a problem. Sunrise is officially at 5:30 am, but it gets light much sooner than that. Sunset comes around 9:30 pm but it is still light enough to work outside until almost 11:00 pm. The long days surely contribute to the massive growth you see, but the dirt is something else. I garden a bit in

Florida, working hard to amend the soil...I mean sand, for that is really what it is. But in Romania, just holding the earth in your hand gives you the impression that something might grow from it as you stand. I envy their good dirt.

We arrive at the hospital around 11:00 am. The front gate is opened for us by the guard and we drive into a scene from a Hollywood horror film, except here it's very real. Everything around me has a ramshackle appearance, including the patients, who sit and stare into the distance or walk aimlessly about. They are all dressed in pajamas, more or less, and all of the clothes need a good wash. Two wear strait-jackets and their eyes are wild, faces contorted into obscene masks and they make me afraid. I am happy Basil is here. He is a large man, sincere and good. He has been here many times before, so I feel safe with him. Claudia warns me that at times they might crowd around, wanting to touch us, wanting to talk to us, needing attention. I desperately do not want that to happen, but I try to act as if none of this is bothering me. "I was sick and you visited me..." comes to mind again and again, and becomes my prayer for the day. Some sleep in the grass, so heavily medicated with benzodiazepines that they can do little else. Valium is cheap and, given

Ministry worker, Ritchie (second from the left) with patients at a state-run mental hospital in Borsa, Romania. Many of the institution's patients suffer from alcoholism. OCMC missionary Floyd Frantz has been conducting addiction treatment programs at the hospital for years. In 2007, Sheila Fox visited Borsa as part of a substance abuse counseling Mission Team.

enough, even the most violent become more compliant, which is the goal. One urinates in the hedge over here while on the other side there is a couple getting to know each other much better.

I smell the outhouses before I see them. There is a row of five underneath the trees to our left. Some of the doors are open and I look in as we walk by. I promise you that your wildest concept of filth is beaten by the sight I see. Yes, they use them all the time. Suddenly, in this setting, urinating in the hedge as others look on becomes the act of a sane man.

A large white workhorse is loose, pulling a long length of chain behind him. He feeds on the tall grass behind the buildings further back. I am told he is used for a variety of tasks here. Later, I watch as he drags timber to be split and cut to length. Winter is coming and the entire facility uses wood for heat. Every room has a tile-covered wood-burning furnace in the corner. The main kitchen here employs a large wood stove for cooking, so wood is a year-round necessity.

In front, someone has recently cut the grass and tried to trim the hedges, which have seen better days. The main building, I am told, was once a palace for a baron and then was "donated" to the state during the revolution, which I believe was the last time a coat of paint was applied. Windows are broken. There is a general air of neglect and hard use. We step inside. Remodeled offices open off of newly-placed tile which covers the floors and goes up the walls to shoulder height. I am happy to see improvements here. We visit the office of the administrator who is on vacation that week. Her assistant explains that we need to be careful about what we touch while we are there and to wash our hands before we leave. You see, there is a diarrhea outbreak through the whole facility. I am not a doctor, but I think I might have predicted that just by having a look at the outhouses.

Basil and Claudia ask me if I would like to see the dormitories. I think to my self, "no," but answer, "yes". After all, I am here. I should see. On the first floor there twenty beds fill a small room. Surprisingly, the beds are made and the sheets are fairly clean. Claudia tells me it is a good day. Paint peels from the walls and the amazingly high ceilings everywhere. It smells...bad. Patients step in front of me, crowding me, wanting to talk, but I speak no Romanian and it confuses them even more. Some touch me and I am repulsed. "I was sick and you visited me...I was sick and you visited

me..." We press on and climb a beautifully ornate marble staircase, a leftover relic of much better times and reach the second floor. I see thirty beds, placed head to foot in well ordered rows, looking cleaner than I expected. We visit with two nurses in a spotless, closet-like corner office. Unlike myself, they are not distressed by what they see. It is a normal day for them. They are kind to me, and the younger nurse knows a little English. We make light conversation, as if the chaos outside the closet door does not exist. We tell them we brought medication for the patients as a donation: vitamins, healing salves and a few other items. They are grateful. It is time for our meeting, so we must go. On our way out, a lady, freshly showered, greets Claudia and Basil. She is coming to the meeting and will be right there, she tells us.

There is little in the way of real "therapy" in Borsa as we know it. What the state runs here is a hideous warehouse for lost souls, a place to store those who don't or can't fit into society, a place for those for whom no treatment is available anywhere else. Many are abandoned, dropped off by family no longer able or willing to care for them. I am told there are 230 psychiatric patients with varying diagnoses all chronic: schizophrenia, dementia, epilepsy and alcoholism.

Yes, alcoholism. For some, it is not their only diagnosis. Perhaps they are schizophrenic, but first they are untreated alcoholics. They self-medicate, mixing their prescriptions with alcohol daily. I ask how the patients get the alcohol. Claudia says that getting it is not a problem. Some of their families bring it to them, thinking that they are doing them a favor, like giving a child a favorite treat. Some slip out to the village and buy it for themselves and others. For these patients, the prognosis is grim. Their symptoms magnify, they may become violent or suicidal, and they die at a frightening pace. The staff does little to mitigate the issue. They lack proper training and so there is little they can do to stop it.

As awful as this is, there is an even more horrifying diagnosis. There are some here for whom the only problem is alcoholism. There is no other place available to treat them, so their families commit them to this asylum when they have tried every other cure. Trust me, here in Romania where help for alcoholism is hard to find, it doesn't take long to exhaust the short list of options. These unfortunates are housed alongside the severely mentally ill with little hope of ever being well enough to leave. Borsa becomes their

prison and their life sentence, long or short.

This was the sad reality for many until Floyd Frantz brought AA meetings to Borsa. At first, few attended. Now there are 5, 10, 12 at a time who come. All are welcome, none are turned away. The only qualifier is the desire to stop drinking. See the OCMC Missionary Updates section and "10 Years of OCMC Missions in Romania" to learn more about OCMC Missionaries Floyd and Anuța Frantz.

Today we are here for a special meeting. One of the patients here is getting out soon. After living here in Borsa for three years he will be released within days. This is almost unheard of. People don't get well here. People don't go home, but he is. He has been sober for over a year now, with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous and the St. Dimitrie project that brought AA meetings to him. Claudia and Basil spend extra time talking with him today. He is moving to Cluj. His brother has bought an apartment for him and will look after him when he gets out. Basil makes sure he knows where Casa Alba is so he can continue going to meetings and getting the support he will so desperately need.

I look at him as he speaks but I don't understand little of what he is saying. His eyes are bright and he jokes with the others in the group. Claudia translates the important parts now and then for me. He says he is so grateful for the St. Dimitrie project. He is so grateful for AA. He promises to find Casa Alba, the project headquarters the day he is released. I try to imagine what it has been like for him for the past three years, kept in a hell hole of a prison with no hope of escape...Dirty, filthy surroundings to demoralize during the day and the horrors of an asylum at night...No safety, no peace, no hope...but not any more. He is going home.

Tears come to my eyes and I try to will them away without much effect. Oh, but he is only one. There are so many others who need to be reached. What can I do? I want to multiply Floyd and his wife Anuța, Basil, Claudia and Laura, Nicolette, Patrizia and Father Christy, Marin and Ritchie until there are hundreds of them, thousands of them. There is so much to do and so few hands and hearts to help.

My time in Romania is coming to a close. My plane ticket tells me the day is drawing near but I think, "Surely I can't leave now". There is



From the left: Sheila Fox; OCMC Missionary, Floyd Frantz; Dr. ____; and Ritchie, a Romanian who works with the Frantzes. Floyd Frantz has been offering substance abuse counseling, a ministry of the Orthodox Church in Romania for 5 years. Many of the people in Floyd's program are institutionalized for their condition. Sheila Fox, working with Dr. ____ and Ritchie spent three weeks with Floyd as an OCMC Team member assisting him with his vital ministry work.

so much work left undone. I must stay. How can I leave? These missionaries have opened their lives to me. They have hidden nothing. The work is hard. The hours are long and the pay is lousy. The living conditions are very different and inconvenient, and yet, I want to stay. I am irrevocably changed. I have seen faith make a difference. I have seen people living the great commission to "go". Daily, people in need reach out to them, saying, "I am hungry, naked, thirsty, or in prison." They answer, "I will feed you, clothe you, give you a drink of Water that is Everlasting and bring you hope in places devoid of all hope." That is the spirit of the St. Dimitrie project. The joy they have in doing the work is amazing to experience

I thank you all for the opportunity to be touched this way. I miss all of the team members and so many of the people I came to know through them. I pray for them daily and wonder how they are. I think of them as family and want desperately to go back.

There is one thing I pray for all of you who supported my trip to Romania whether by prayer or with your gifts. I pray that you, too, get to experience the change which has taken place in me. The OCMC has a variety of missions around the world that need your support and prayers. Take literally the challenge that Christ gave us and consider a short-term or long-term missionary trip. I promise that you will be changed forever by your face-to-face encounter with God's work.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

—MATTHEW 28:19-20



Being Sent

APC President, Fr. Steven Tschlis

Fr. Steven Tschlis serves as president of the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council and parish priest at St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church in Irvine, California. Earlier this year Fr. Steven led a team of his parishioners on an OCMC Mission Team to Tanzania where they helped build a church for the people of Kobunswa in the Bukoba Diocese. Fr. Steven's community not only provided Team members, but also raised all of the funds needed for the church's construction. The following article is Fr. Steven's reflection on his Team experience and the importance of foreign missions. It first appeared in the August 2007 issue of *The Presbyterian*.

I've just returned from Tanzania. My parish is funding the building of a church in the village of Kobunswa, part of the Diocese of Bukoba, in conjunction with the OCMC. Tanzania is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. More than twice the size of the state of California, it has a population of roughly 40 million people, mostly farmers. In Tanzania only 30% of the people are Christian; 35% are Muslim and 35% are members of various traditional African religions. Only 10% of the roads are paved, which often makes travel difficult. Only 9% of the population has electricity. Clean drinking water is a major problem. AIDS is on the rise. Medical care is scarce to the point of being practically non-existent.

The average life expectancy in Tanzania was reported several years ago to be 50, but Father Anastasios, the priest-monk and 1983 graduate of the University of Athens Medical School who has spent the last 10 years of his life in Africa and operates a small

My perspective on many things has been broadened and deepened in ways I hadn't imagined before, and therefore forever changed.

My two weeks in Tanzania with 11 members of my parish as part of a larger construction crew composed of locals was both exhilarating and exhausting! It was, to use the old cliché, lifechanging. From Orange County to Kobunswa: not merely two different worlds, but two vastly different universes. My perspective on many things has been broadened and deepened in ways I hadn't imagined before, and therefore forever changed.

Bukoba, the seat of the Diocese, is a town of nearly 40,000 situated on the west coast of Lake Victoria, one of the largest freshwater lakes in the world - the size of Ireland. Bishop Jeronymos of Bukoba, who was our host, moved things along at a fast yet somehow unhurried pace that was hard to keep up with. There is no time in Africa, I was told. The Church is growing in Tanzania, as Christianity is in Africa generally. The Diocese of Bukoba now has 170 communities, with 70 permanent churches constructed (soon to be 71) but only 32 priests. Each priest is responsible for as many as four communities, usually within a 20 kilometer radius. Most priests travel by foot or by bicycle to serve the communities assigned to them.

When I asked Bishop Jeronymos what the greatest problem is that he faces, he began by describing himself specifically as a missionary bishop and then said that his greatest challenge is personnel: qualified men to serve as priests. He also needs doctors

Ministry worker, Ritchie (second from the left) with patients at a state-run mental hospital in Borsa, Romania. Many of the institution's patients suffer from alcoholism. OCMC missionary Floyd Frantz has been conducting addiction treatment programs at the hospital for years. In 2007, Sheila Fox visited Borsa as part of a substance abuse counseling Mission Team.

to staff the hospital he's building, architects and engineers to assist in the design and construction of churches, nurses, office workers, translators and more. No surprise concerning his need for well trained personnel to serve Christ's Church. One of my parishioners, concerned that she was neither a



A Perfect Day in South Africa

John Diamantis

It was an honor to be a member of the first-ever OCMC team sent to South Africa. Our three member team seemed to be a perfect fit in so many ways for this trip.

Being able to spend time in such a variety of communities in and around Johannesburg was a real blessing. South Africa is a very diverse place; this diversity is reflected in its Orthodox Communities. One of the churches we visited was a new mission parish in Shoshanguve. Our time with these beautifully vibrant people was one of best memories I brought back from South Africa.

We arrived in Shoshanguve on June 24th and made our way to the church. The next thing I knew a line of soldiers came running toward us and opened fire. Happily, these soldiers were children and their bullets were cherubic faces and angelic voices singing beautiful music to us.

I then saw person after person filing out of this tiny tin shack of a church. They all began singing, swaying, and smiling at us. A familiar face-that of Fr. Johannes- greeted and welcomed us. My jaw dropped when I saw that they had not yet received the Holy Eucharist...even though we were delayed for two hours, they were waiting for us to arrive so that we could partake of our Lord with them!

As if that wasn't humbling enough, Diakonnisa Kathy (who drove us) told Fr. Johannes that it was my name day. He invited me up front and handed me a hand-written icon of St. John the Baptist! This building was held together by scraps of wood and insulated by plastic bags, but he took joy in offering this icon to me. I felt my face turn beet red, and all I could do was offer thanks to God and to the community. For about 30 more minutes or so everyone sang and danced in the tiny house of God.

In a gesture of true South African hospitality, they offered us cookies and juice. As we enjoyed our refreshments we got to know some of the people in this growing Orthodox congregation. After about two hours, baptisms began and we

Major Gifts Fund Endowments for the Work of Missions

JOHN-PAUL CONNERS, OCMC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Many years ago, a bold initiative known as the Mission 1000 Endowment Program was launched to ensure that funds would be available for the work of missions. To participate, support team members were asked to contribute \$1,000. Since its inception, the Mission 1000 Endowment has helped fund a variety of projects that strengthen church infrastructure abroad as well as the general operations of the Mission Center. This endowment, however, can only help fund a fraction of what is needed to fully proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all nations.

In September, an anonymous benefactor gifted the Mission Center \$100,000 to establish another endowment, named Find Orthodox Spirituality (FOS), to further support the work of foreign missions. The donor insisted the money is God's. With his gift came the hope that the endowment would grow to two-million dollars or beyond. Recently, his donation was graciously matched providing the FOS general fund endowment with \$200,000 to support the work of foreign missions.

Giving is addictive and contagious! Immense satisfaction and spiritual fulfillment can be gained from answering the call to witness for Christ. How can we, the Orthodox faithful of North America grow endowments like Mission 1000 and FOS so that everyone may come to know Christ? Desiring to do more in response to the great need that exists in the world, many people have begun to give to the OCMC in some very creative ways. Known as Planned Giving, these strategies enable you to give more to support the work of missions than you may think. In fact, endowments like the Mission 1000 and FOS can be fully funded through a planned gift.

Gifts of cash and pledges to the Mission Center will always be needed because they are available for immediate use. But did you know that you can donate assets like stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and IRAs to OCMC as well? These gifts can be used by the Mission Center to address immediate needs and are a great way to support all of OCMC's many ministries.

Life insurance is a great way to give a large gift to the Mission Center. Literally, for pennies on the dollar, it is possible to leave a personal legacy or give back to the Orthodox global community what has been made available to you during your lifetime. After caring for loved ones, consider naming the OCMC as either a partial or sole beneficiary of an existing or new life insurance policy. Including the OCMC in your will is another way to make a significant and lasting impact on the world. Making a donation through life insurance policies and wills gives you and your loved ones the peace of mind that

Mission Center Accomplishments in 2006

In 2006, the OCMC had 25 missionaries serving abroad. It sent over **120 volunteers** on **14 Orthodox Mission Teams** around the world and found support for **288 mission priests** serving in **21 countries**. Additionally it supported **11 foreign seminaries** and facilitated projects in **24 countries**. None of this could be done without the Mission Center's dedicated professionals and the many resources they employ to train, coordinate, and equip the faithful who answer Christ's call to missions. Donations to OCMC's general fund help the Mission Center to accomplish all of these ministries. **Please visit www.ocmc.org to learn more about the work of the OCMC.**



Attention:
All IRA Owners Age
70 and Older!

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows individuals over the age of 70 to gift up to \$100,000 directly from their IRA to OCMC without having to recognize the value of the IRA distribution as income. Even more advantageous, qualified distributions to charity may be applied to offset the IRA owner's required minimum distribution for the year!

• **Congress made this allowance, however, the deadline to take advantage of this law is December 31st, 2007. Please call us at 1-877-463-6784 if you qualify!**



Christ's life-saving gift of salvation will be brought to others.

As Orthodox Christians, it is important for us to realize that growing the Body of Christ will continue to be our Church's responsibility until His second glorious coming. To do this, organizations like the OCMC will need to continue to grow so that disciples can truly be made of all nations. There are several ways that you can make a lasting gift to this vital work of salvation. Pray, therefore, and evaluate seriously your level of commitment to the Church and its mission ministries then contact us here at your Mission Center!

Call us toll free at 877-463-6784 (877-GO-FORTH) or locally at 904-829-5132: John-Paul Connors, M.B.A., Director of Development

Workers build St. Paul Orthodox Church in Tanzania's Bukoba Diocese. The church was built with funds donated through OCMC. The Mission Center also coordinated a Mission Team that traveled to Tanzania to help with the church's construction.

WHAT DOES LOVE LOOK LIKE?

Living Models of PHILANTHROPY

Kenneth Kidd, OCMC Agape/SAMP Program Coordinator

Funds raised through the Agape Canister Program play a vital role in the growth of the Orthodox Church around the world. They are allowing OCMC missionaries, mission priests, and mission churches to become manifestations of philanthropia – a living example of God’s love for mankind. These funds are enabling those in the mission fields to emanate His love by meeting many of the development and humanitarian needs in their surrounding communities. In other words, Agape Canister funds are helping mission churches put faith into action.

Philanthropia has a rich history in Orthodoxy. According to Rev. Dr. Demetrios Constantelos, the Greek word philanthropia is defined as “sacrificial love for mankind.” Acts of philanthropy are what defined early Christians as being Christian. Prior to Christ’s earthly ministry, assisting those less fortunate was common, but helping those outside of one’s own culture, including strangers, was very rare. Christians were noted as individuals who reached out to the poor and infirmed regardless of their religious background or cultural heritage. Christianity, Dr. Constantelos concludes, “did not replace any ancient idea of philanthropia, but instead fulfilled it, because now, ‘there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.’” (Galatians 3:28)

The idea of philanthropia as fulfillment can be found throughout the Scriptures, most pointedly in John 3:16 which reads, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Here we see the definition of “philanthropy” come to life in the Lord’s ultimate love for mankind. Christ translates this sacrificial love into a directive for each of us in our daily lives when He states, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.

The children of St. Thomas House, an orphanage in Bali, Indonesia, are seen here gathered in their chapel. The orphanage is one of many programs that receive Agape grants for its continued operation and service to children.



Agape Canister partners like Amanda Goodwin and Niko Kelly distribute and collect Agape Canisters all over the country. The change that these Canisters collect helps the Church to feed the hungry, treat the sick and care for the elderly in mission lands.

And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:43-45) Likewise, throughout the Book of James, we are warned about partiality in whom we acknowledge and serve. We are to be hospitable to all we encounter, and take note of the Divine spark of Christ within everyone we meet. Nowhere does Christ express this more clearly than in Matthew 25:40 when He states, “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me.’”

As I reflect on these words found in the Holy Scriptures, I think about the Agape Canister Program projects underway in many of the countries where OCMC serves.

In Madagascar, His Grace Ignatios is responding to the need of the neglected and lonely elderly population. Under his guidance, the Orthodox Church is developing a nursing facility to complement an Orthodox Medical Clinic already in operation. This will be the first facility of its kind in the entire region of Madagascar near the capital city. This year, Agape funds will assist in furnishing this facility.

In Albania, OCMC missionaries George and Pauline Russell operate the Fellowship of Love Soup Kitchen in Tirana. This ministry of the Albanian Orthodox Church serves the unemployed and poor in a country where the economy is still stabilizing following decades of Communist rule. Each day the Russells feed approximately 110 people, and at least 50% of these individuals are elderly. Regularly, the Russells go beyond feeding individuals to seeing that other physical and spiritual needs are met. Agape funds assist in the general operations of the Soup Kitchen.

In Indonesia, Fr. Stephanos Boik oversees the operations of St. Thomas Orphanage House on the island of Bali. Fr. Stephanos provides food, shelter, clothing, and spiritual guidance to 25 children who would otherwise be living on the street. He utilizes Agape funds to assist with school tuition and school transportation for the children there.

In the United States, over 200 Agape Canister Partners assist OCMC by raising money for these philanthropic projects. They take responsibility for one or more canisters in their communities by working with local business owners to place them, then collecting and forwarding this money to the Mission Center. These partners realize that they are assisting the Church to help individuals thousands of miles away. They know that love knows no distance.



Philanthropy represents so much more than just humanitarian acts. It is an expression of Christ’s love for each of us. As His Eminence Archbishop Dmitri (OCA, Diocese of the South) recently urged in an article on love, “Our work as missionaries ultimately must have no other goal but the salvation of the neighbor, sought after out of love.”

As you consider your personal response to Christ's philanthropia, I invite you to become an Agape Canister Partner and become involved in expressing Christ's sacrificial love around the world.

Every year, money deposited in Agape canisters fund philanthropic projects of the Church abroad, including: orphanages, nursing homes, food distribution programs and schools to name a few.



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FROM THE FIELD

Re entse eng? What was the wrong we did?

DAVID NTHAKO WA MODUPI

Re entse eng? What was the wrong we did? Is a poem written by David Nthako Wa Modupi, a young South African poet born on November 30th, 1987. The OCMC Mission Team that served in South Africa this year met David at the catechetical school in the Johannesburg suburb of Yeoville. The Team was moved by the power of his words which provided an invaluable look into the life of a young man coming of age in such an incredibly rich and diverse country.

David Nthako Wa Modupi began his journey as an Orthodox Christian at a shelter in downtown Johannesburg, South Africa. He is now a student at the St. Rafael Catechetical School in Yeoville. David uses his poetry to describe life in his country and to express his Orthodox faith. Though bleak and filled with seemingly unanswered questions, David uses his poetry to make sense of the unbearable tragedy and inescapable loneliness that surround him. David expressed, to OCMC Team members, his hope that South Africans will not to be lost to grief and mourning. His prayer is that they find God – the only true healer of humanity’s many infirmities.

The Orthodox Church in Johannesburg and Pretoria, under the guidance of His Eminence Archbishop Seraphim, is working hard to address the many issues that face the people of South Africa, including poverty, disease, and crime through education, social outreach, and prayer.

RE ENTSE ENG? WHAT WAS THE
WRONG WE DID?

“Ke tla bana ka bokgopo
ba batswadi ba bona,” meaning,
“I shall visit the iniquity of the fathers upon their
children,”
says the Lord our God.

RE ENTSE ENG? WHAT WAS THE
WRONG WE DID?

My country has become the ruin
of orphans, widows, and widowers
The grave yards are as full as
the sky filled with stars
Is this a fulfillment of Revelation?
The fall of the new generation?

RE ENTSE ENG? WHAT WAS THE
WRONG WE DID?

The gaseous mixture of diseases
as the piercing winds of brutality
whirl to us and reap our lives
like sickles, razor-blades and knives.
Chopping down the vegetation in the field
like lightning striking down the trunk
of a tree

RE ENTSE ENG? WHAT WAS THE
WRONG WE DID?

My eyes have grown dim with sorrow
sorrow to behold my homies' guitar-like
bodies.
Their flesh runs loose from their bones.
Their eyes are horribly swallowed
inside the shallow holes of their out-
reflected skulls.
Our cries are like the thunder bolts
while our tears are like heavy showers
of rain.

RE ENTSE ENG? WHAT WAS THE
WRONG WE DID?

“Listen,” they say, “you can still do it,
approximately ten to fifteen years.”
Imagine the days of your life’s fate
being speculated by scientists.
What a pity it is? The hope of dreams
is drowned in an ocean of medicines.

RE ENTSE ENG? WHAT WAS THE
WRONG WE DID?



David Nthako Wa Modupi began his journey as an Orthodox Christian at a shelter in downtown Johannesburg, South Africa. He is now a student at the St. Rafael Catechetical School in Yeoville. David uses his poetry to describe life in his country and to express his Orthodox faith.

This Christmas CONSIDER GIVING AN AGAPE GIFT!

Perfect for Godparents, Sunday School Teachers, friends and family, Agape Gifts allow you to donate to OCMC's Agape Program on anyone's behalf. We will send you a gift card to present to your loved one acknowledging the work that has been made possible in their honor. Gifts can be made in any amount. Here is an idea of what your donation on another's behalf can do:

\$5.00 Can provide five meals for poor and/or unemployed individuals who depend on the Fellowship of Love Soup Kitchen in Tirana, Albania, directed by OCMC Missionaries George and Pauline Russell.

\$15.00 Can get transport for two children residing at the St. Thomas Orphanage in Bali, Indonesia, to and from school every day for a month.

\$30.00 Can pay for one month of kindergarten for a child at the Protection of the Theotokos Center directed by OCMC Missionary Ancuța Frantz in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.



Please order your loved one's Agape Gift by December 10th so that we can send you their gift card before December 25th. For more information, or to order Agape Gifts, please contact Kenneth Kidd, Agape Canister Program Coordinator, by telephone at 877-GO-FORTH or by e-mail at kenny@ocmc.org.

From the Field: Mission News

FALL 2007



MISSIONARY TO KENYA OF 30 YEARS FALLS ASLEEP IN THE LORD

On September 15th, Fr. Martin Ritsi and Fr. David Rucker of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) participated in the funeral of the late Very Reverend Archimandrite Fr. Johannes Charles Eko in Nairobi, Kenya—a missionary of the Finnish Orthodox Church for the past 30 years. The Late Fr. Johannes is an example of the dedication of Orthodox missionaries and the universality of the Church. Having served in Kenya for nearly half his life, it was Fr. Johannes' wish to be buried among the people he served. Over 60 Kenyan clergy, a Cathedral full of those whose lives he had touched, representatives of the Finnish Orthodox Mission Society and OCMC attended the services conducted by Archbishop Makarios of Kenya.

In 1978, Fr. Johannes moved to Kenya where he established a primary school and then helped build a church through the assistance of the Finnish Mission Society. In Kenya, he learned about the people of Nandi and then established a home at the furthest end of this region.

His Eminence, Archbishop Makarios of Kenya presided over the funeral of Fr. Johannes Eko this past September. Fr. Johannes, a missionary of the Finnish Orthodox Church, ministered to the people of Kenya for 30 years. His funeral was attended by the Mission Center's Executive Director, Fr. Martin Ritsi and Associate Director, Fr. David Rucker.

He was the first white person to live in these villages.

Throughout his ministry, Father Johannes served many parishes focusing on unreached areas, such as the Mubare area at the furthest end of the Nandi bishopric and the Ewaso-ke-dong. Fr. Johannes will be remembered for his love and his humanitarian and philanthropic work. He was a great teacher, missionary and a father to many. May his memory be eternal.

MASS BAPTISMS IN ZIMBABWE

Surrounding the great Feast of Pentecost on May 26th, 2007, with the help of God and the blessing of His Beatitude Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all of Africa, Theodoros, there was a group baptism of 133 newly illumined Africans of the Mission Center of St. Nektarios of Harare. The baptisms were

performed by His Eminence Georgios, Metropolitan of Zimbabwe. His Eminence was assisted by Protopresbytos George Sagani (an assistant in the Metropolis) and Fr. Augustinos Moeketsi (an African priest) at the Holy Altar of St. Nektariou. After the baptisms a feast of love followed. These baptisms are some of the many that happen each month as more and more people are drawn to the Orthodox Church throughout Africa.

CHAPEL CONSECRATED AT THE ECCLESIASTICAL SEMINARY IN LAGOS, NIGERIA ON THE ARCHDIOCESE'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY

On September 23, 2007, the Orthodox Archdiocese of Nigeria consecrated the Chapel of St. Anthony, on the grounds of the Ecclesiastical Seminary of Lagos. The occasion was one of the hallmark events meant to serve as a harbinger to the Archdiocese's 10th anniversary and commemoration of the 10 year Episcopal ministry of His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander.

The seminary was established to provide a theological academic environment for the existing clerics and laity of the archdiocese and for aspirants to the priesthood. It has enjoyed hosting Orthodox scholars from Greece, Cyprus, the United States and neighboring African countries. Indeed, the visits of these remarkable teachers have left an indelible Orthodox ethos in the minds of some of the students who have studied under them.

The presence of the seminary has been immensely influential towards the growth of the mission. Thanks to support from OCMC, the clergy and laity who comprise the seminary's alumnae have excelled in their various areas of ministry and in their academic pursuits abroad. In a correspondence with the Mission Center Archbishop Alexander offered, "I communicate with you and with OCMC to express as the apostolic administrator



His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander of the Archdiocese of Nigeria during the consecration of the chapel at the Ecclesiastical Seminary in Lagos. OCMC supports the ministries and theological training of many of Nigeria's indigenous clergy.

and pastor of this local Church my warmest and heartfelt gratitude for all that you have done and you are still doing for the Orthodox brethren of our Church in Nigeria, Benin and Togo. Especially your selfless and ceaseless care for the Orthodox clergy of our Archdiocese, its daily survival, its education, its dressing, things that I consider as the most important contribution, I will dare to say even to the building of churches."

LAND PURCHASED FOR A MISSION COMMUNITY IN SHOSHANGUVE, SOUTH AFRICA

Soon after His Eminence Archbishop Seraphim was enthroned as Metropolitan of the Archbishopric of Johannesburg and Pretoria, he appointed the first members of the Mission Committee.



One of the first tasks of the committee was to purchase land on which to build a church for the community in Shoshanguve. Shoshanguve is one of four mission communities that have begun in the townships surrounding Pretoria and Johannesburg.

After 3 years of negotiation with local government officials, land was finally purchased for the Orthodox community in Shoshanguve. In August of 2007, an OCMC Teaching Team conducted seminars for the newly illumined of this community. When the permanent church is built on this property it will be one of only two permanent Orthodox Church buildings that exist in the Johannesburg/Pretoria townships.

SOUTH KOREAN PUBLISHING HOUSE EXPANDS EFFORTS TO PUBLISH ORTHODOX TEXTS IN THE KOREAN LANGUAGE

A new five-member Committee was appointed in Korea for the further expansion of the work of the Publishing House of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea, "Orthodox Editions". A reorganization of this ministry is being undertaken to better serve the publishing house's goals for the publication of various Orthodox books in the Korean language. This is significant in that translation of liturgical texts and catechetical materials are a long-standing principle of Orthodox Missions as it allows people to learn and pray in their mother tongue.

The beginning of Orthodox Editions goes back to the early eighties, when Korean Priest Rev. Antonios Woo, utilizing his experience from having been previously employed by a printing company, and being in charge of this sector, he worked diligently for the publication of various liturgical texts. For the translation of these texts, His Eminence Metropolitan of Korea, Soterios, assisted by Savvas Lee of blessed memory as well as other missionary collaborators worked hard for many years and for long hours in order to carry out this important

Orthodox Christians from the Pretoria township of Shoshanguve gather outside the entrance of their temporary church building. From the left, parish priest Fr. Johannes, Fr. Athanasios Akunda, and seminarian Chrysostome Lucé lead the faithful in prayer.

task. The fruit of their endeavors was truly pioneering work which will always remain alive in the history of the Korean Orthodox Church.



The South Korean publishing house "Orthodox Editions", produces Orthodox books in Korean like the one pictured. It does this in accordance with the long-standing Orthodox missiological principle of translating the Holy Scriptures and texts into the language spoken by the people.

OCMC BUILDS MORE CHURCHES IN AFRICA

The church building for the Presentation of the Lord in Eshiem, Ghana was completed in July. This church, complete with a baptismal font, was built by OCMC. On the 21st of July the doors of the new church were opened with the blessing and sprinkling of Holy water followed by a Divine Liturgy.

OCMC Executive Director, Fr. Martin Ritsi and Associate Director, Fr. David Rucker attended the consecration of St. Dionysios in Kanyana, Tanzania. The churches in Ghana and Tanzania are but two of seven under construction or completed by OCMC in 2007. Every year, OCMC funds the construction of churches and sends Orthodox Mission Teams to assist indigenous workers in building permanent houses of worship for the newly illumined in mission lands.

Matushka Suzanne Aleandro applies mortar to the walls of St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Lodwar, Kenya. Matushka Aleandro and twelve other Orthodox Christians from across North America served on an OCMC Mission Team to the region in July 2007. The church in Lodwar, is one of seven presently being built by OCMC in Africa.



Books on Missions from Conciliar Press



D R I T A

For years the citizens of Albania lived under repressive Communist rule, the borders of the country closed and religion strictly forbidden. In 1992 the Communist regime collapsed and it is then that we find Drita, a young Albanian girl, at last able to discover the faith of her ancestors. As she experiences God's love for her through the example of her grandparents and the teachings of the missionaries, she turns her heart toward Christ. At the story's joyful conclusion, Drita is baptized, and lives in an Albania where all are free to openly worship, praise and glorify God in His Church.

A children's picture book for all ages.

Lynette's Hope: The Witness of Lynette Katherine Hoppe's Life and Death

"Now we have to live whatever we have ever preached to others," Lynette Hoppe wrote in her diary. "I have been classified as having Stage 4 cancer (of 4 stages), and my prospects are rather grim. Nonetheless, I remain cheerful and hopeful and want to spend what years God grants me in joy and thanksgiving, serving wherever I can."

With these sober yet hopeful words, OCMC missionary to Albania Lynette Hoppe began the last journey of her fruitful life. In poignant, honest prose, Lynette's diaries, newsletters and website chronicled her struggles in the "valley of the shadow" as she faced impending death. In the upcoming book release from Conciliar Press, close family friend and fellow OCMC mission-

ary Fr. Luke Veronis retells the story of her life, and then lets her writing speak for itself. In the midst of such heartache—a young missionary wife and mother ill and dying—how did she live? How did she die? The answers to those questions will astonish, and move readers to agree with those who witnessed her passing, that truly hers was a "beautiful death." No one who reads this book will come away untouched; all will be stirred to a new resolve to live life as she did, in the presence of God, with joy and faith.



ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION CENTER
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