PROPER PARISH GOVERNANCE

SHARED LEADERSHIP – NOT “CONGREGATIONALISM”

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PARISH DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY
DIOCESE OF MIDWEST
Session Goals

- Describe a proper atmosphere of shared leadership and governance within our parish communities.
- Help parish council’s and parish leadership teams to understand their proper ecclesiological roles in the parish and to execute that role.
- Make service on parish council attractive to parishioners who are interested in and equipped to help build stronger parishes.
The Motivation

- Follow through for actions and initiatives resulting from use of Parish Inventory Model.
  - “Who will coordinate this?”

A new leadership mindset is needed to help us define and implement the types of ministries relevant for today’s vibrant parishes.
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Congregationalism

Influences and Impacts
Influences on Orthodox Congregationalism in America

- Lack of hierarchical leadership
- Disrespect of Clergy/Hierarchy
- Toth Movement
- Legal requirements for property ownership
- Bldg ownership by societies
- Disconnect: Russian seminary training; inherited piety
- Nationalism
- Ethnicism
- Large distances; small numbers
- Disconnect from Diocese
- Competing Jurisdictions
- Protestant influence
- Active role/ founding by laity
- American freedom of choice; sense of democracy
Congregationalism in American Orthodoxy

Key Factors & Their Impact

Leadership Vacuum
- Bishops or priests not present/accessible
- Temporary assignments
- Poor leadership skill
- Distance
- Laity saw themselves as founders/"owners" of the parish; "our parish"
- "Board" focused on buildings/bills; budgets
- Saw priest as employee; hired spiritual specialist; isolated laity from spiritual role
- Reduced authority & leadership of clergy
- Confirmed existing/new parishes in congregational structure
- Distrust: clergy; other ethnic groups; "outsiders"
- Inward focus >> Disconnected from Diocese
- Sense of parish autonomy; diocesan responsibility optional; loyalty to our parish; sovereignty

Orthodox Turmoil
- Toth Schism movement
- Jurisdictional competition
- Nationalism
- Ethnic differences
- Communism
- "Ours" vs. "Stewards"
- Legalities, "Membership", Voting, Motions, Dues, Entitlement, Ownership, "Club"
- Isolation of laity/lay leaders from spiritual roles
- Dissociation of parish council from parish ministries

Secular Influences
- Lay Societies: Parallel leadership structure owned/funded churches; de facto authority for "material" issues
- Protestant influences ("Boards"; hiring)
- Required property ownership
- American freedom of choice; democracy; separation of powers
- “Ours” vs. “Stewards”
- Legalities, "Membership", Voting, Motions, Dues, Entitlement, Ownership, "Club"
- Isolation of laity/lay leaders from spiritual roles
- Dissociation of parish council from parish ministries

Source: “American Orthodoxy and Parish Congregationalism” Ferencz
Factors Fostering Congregationalism Today

- Bottom up mission planting
- Lack of strong consistent diocesan policies (compensation etc.)
- Sloppily run dioceses
- Standards and policies treated as optional
- Impaired leadership & “governance maturity”
  - Hierarchs, clergy & laity
- Clergy appointment process treated as a hiring process
- Internet – all have right to express an opinion -- informed or not -- and do so!
A Summary

Orthodox Ecclesiology...
- Eucharistic model
- Authority lies with Bishop
- No concept of separation of material & spiritual
- Clergy and Laity both people of God; distinct yet equal
- "Sobornost" – harmony & unity

...deviated in American practice due to...
- Leadership vacuum
- Orthodox turmoil
- Secular influences

...leading to...
- Laity needing to play a strong leadership role – "our parish"
- Sense of ownership not stewardship
- Retain control of our destiny
- Disconnect from Diocese
- Distrust/vilification of clergy

Often resulting in...

Congregationalism
- Parish exists for “us” / by us
- Separation of spiritual & material
- Priest is employee
- Parish "board" concerned with buildings; budgets
- Sense of parish autonomy; independence from diocese
- Attitude - Legalities, Membership, Voting, Motions, Dues, Entitlement, Ownership
- Primary loyalty/responsibility to the corporation
Proper Parish Governance

A Framework

OCA Parish Ministries Conference 2010
A Parish Leadership Framework

Orthodox Ecclesiology

Purpose
- Parish Purpose
- Council Mission

Qualities
- Personal
- Group

Practices
- Meetings
- “Toolbox”

Structure
- Tasks
- Ministries
- Make Up
What makes a parish governance system/framework properly Orthodox?

Source: American Orthodox and Parish Congregationalism

Fr Nicholas Ferencz
Orthodox Ecclesiology

Governance is an Extension of Eucharistic Assembly

Bishop is source of authority
Flows from Bishop to Priest

Clergy and Laity collaborate
Share responsibilities

Eucharistic Assembly

No separation of spiritual and material

Conciliarity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Eucharistic Model</strong></th>
<th><strong>Governance Model</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Real work with common purpose</strong></td>
<td><strong>Real work with common purpose</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bishop /Diocese is source of Authority &amp; Fullness.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Extension of Eucharistic assembly</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Prerogative to serve from Bishop (antimens)</td>
<td>□ Mandate/prerogative to exist comes from bishop</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Bishop presides</td>
<td>□ Priest is leader of parish; appointed by hierarch</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Priest: Bishop’s deputy;</td>
<td>□ Priest authority flows from Hierarchal authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Commune with all parishes as liturgy is served</td>
<td>□ Integral part of Diocese; expressing fullness locally</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Clergy &amp; Laity Work in Synergy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Clergy and laity need/require each other. No private liturgies</td>
<td>□ Different roles — all important; none isolated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ All are laos – people of God; Different roles – all important.</td>
<td>□ Not authoritarian nor democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Not authoritarian, individualistic, democratic</td>
<td>□ Co -responsible; shared leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Active collaboration; NOT laity passive “receivers”; clergy active “givers”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No separation: Spiritual &amp; Material Issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Offering: material blessings (bread and wine; behalf of all and for all”) to commune with God; God’s kingdom at hand here on earth.</td>
<td>□ Deal with material matters through the eyes and teaching of the Church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Collection: material resources are linked to God.</td>
<td>□ “Temporal/material matters” are not “different”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Seek Kingdom of God while in this world -- material &amp; eternal. (…”commend all our lives unto Christ…”’)</td>
<td>□ Priest and laity actively collaborate -- need each other;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Priest and laity deal with spiritual and material – no separation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Consensus and Conciliarity is the Norm</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consensual, unanimous praise of God. Not a vote! (“…that with one accord we may confess…”’)</td>
<td>Consensus preferred decision making model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Parish Models
### A Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trusteeship/ Congregational Model</th>
<th>Eucharistic/ Conciliar/ Steward Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parish exists for “us”</td>
<td>Parish exists For Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- On its own; for its own</td>
<td>- Mandate to exist comes from hierarch</td>
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<tr>
<td>- “Sovereign”</td>
<td>- To do work of Christ in the World</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Diocesan responsibility is almost optional</td>
<td>- Integral part of Diocese</td>
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<tr>
<td>Priest is the employee; a hired specialist</td>
<td>Priest is leader is leader; appointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>Parish Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Concerned with material issues – building/budgets</td>
<td>- Extension of Eucharistic Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Priest is “Spiritual advisor”; observer</td>
<td>- Led by priest; fully participates, approves decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Elected “officers”</td>
<td>- Co -responsible; shared leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>Material &amp; Spiritual concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Legalities, Membership, Voting, Motions, Dues, Entitlement, Ownership</td>
<td>Attitude: stewardship; sojourners, consensus; Eucharistic</td>
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7/7/2010
The Parish Council

A Shared Leadership Body

- The Parish Council is co-responsible under the guidance of and in collaboration with the rector for the health & vibrancy of the parish. Working together they drive & inspire growth, change & development to fulfill the parish’s total mission as a Christian community.

Practical Ramifications

- Stands in the stead of the parish community
- Parish Council is NOT solely involved with the material/ “temporal”
- Priest is NOT solely involved with “spiritual”

- Led by the priest -- collaboratively
  - Presides over Parish Council; fully participates in decisions; final approval of decisions
  - Priest runs parish council & parish meetings unless he chooses to turn chair over to an appropriate leader.
- “Board of Trustees” >> “Parish Council” >> “Council of Ministries”
- Consensus, whenever possible, is desired approach to decision making.
Parish Council Responsibilities
One Person’s View

- Managing...
  - the real assets of the parish -- all things done in good order.

- Preparing...
  - for the parish’s brighter future

- Stimulating, Creating, Implementing
  - essential, ongoing ministries to harness parish gifts, engage parishioners in the work of the Church, ring out the Good News and mirror parish priorities.
Parish Council Tasks
One Person’s View

**Administration**

MANAGING…
the real assets of the parish
-- all things done in good order.

*Tasks*
- Finance
- Bldg & Grounds
- Secretarial
- Communication
- Administrative Policies

*Often done well*

**Planning & Development**

PREPARING…
for the parish’s brighter future

*Tasks*
- 3-10 yr Vision
- Annual Priorities Planning
- Stewardship
- Equipping -- Leader Development
- Gift planning

*Often NOT done well*

**Ministry Coordination**

STIMULATING, CREATING & IMPLEMENTING…
essential, ongoing ministries to harness parish gifts, engage parishioners in the work of the Church, ring out the Good News and mirror parish priorities.

*Tasks*
- Ministry definition
- Staffing
- New member integration
- Follow through
- New Ministry Development
So, You May Ask…

Why Is This Better?

- **Continuity with belief**
  - If you believe something you live it; you don’t behave in a way counter to the norms simply because mutations crept in unwittingly.

- **Unity with others**
  - This is the norm in many, not all, parishes.

- **Right stuff/next level**
  - The model we’ve followed for decades was understandable for its time…
  - A new leadership mindset is needed to help us define and implement the types of programs and ministries relevant for today.
  - While probably not practical in the “world”, such a system should be effective in a community of love (church) -- and become a distinctive quality by which Christians are recognized.
  - Makes the church attractive to current members, youth and new persons.

- **Trust**
  - A system based on trust – which is after all more enjoyable than distrust.
  - A system that seeks behavior centered on the Gospel should seem inherently attractive.

- **Continuity with/ learning from past**
  - Parish forefathers built an Orthodox community for their time, in the best way they knew how. That continues as today’s job.

- **Speed & Effectiveness**
  - Should make decisions and their implementation faster/ easier.
  - Better decisions and results
  - More people with correct skills would be motivated to serve on parish council and other leadership positions.
THE END

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Thank You for Your Attention