



25 May 2011

Dear Fellow Member of OTSA:

2010 OTSA Officers:

President

A. Gregg Roeber

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Secretary

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The Orthodox Theological Society in America was organized under the auspices of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) for the promotion of Orthodox theology, the cultivation of fellowship and cooperation among Orthodox Christians, and to coordinate the work of Orthodox theologians in the Americas.

On behalf of the officers of the Society, I write today to make an announcement and to request your attention to a procedural matter of some importance to the future of OTSA. First, as you will recall from the letter of 15 December 2010, we will be launching a new and vastly-expanded website for the Society (in stages) in the next few weeks. By means of this new site, we will be able to take care of registration for annual meetings, update membership details, make announcements on upcoming conferences related to the Society's interests, and encourage networking by areas of interest among the membership. We will also be launching at a somewhat later date this year the new, refereed academic journal *Diakrisis: A Journal of Orthodox Christian Theology, History, and Culture*. Because of the expanded duties and costs these ventures entail, however, we will need to invest a modest amount of our funds currently held in the Venture Account for launch and maintenance of the site and journal. Because this step has to be taken carefully, we may have to ask your patience into the month of June before the launch and before we are able to post the final version of the program for the September meeting. Let me also urge any of you who have not yet paid dues for the current year to do so as soon as possible.

Second, we need to ask our members (under Article IV Section 5) to increase their yearly membership dues in the amount of \$10.00 effective for the coming year, 2012. Furthermore, the website and accompanying journal cannot be maintained on a purely volunteer basis. The officers and our interim editor, The Very Reverend John Jillions (who will serve until an editor can be formally nominated and elected) have asked our current Society Secretary Maria McDowell to take on this task since she is building the new site and will have the expertise to develop it in conjunction with Father John and the Board of Editors of the journal. In all of this, however, our bylaws (Article IX: "Amendments") stipulate that changes of this magnitude must be submitted to the membership thirty days in advance of our yearly meeting (scheduled for 15-17 September at Holy Cross Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA.) I am therefore, in what follows, proposing for your consideration in addition to the request for an increase in dues, the following amendments to the by-laws:

Under Article II "Purpose" Section 1: An addition of language to reflect the replacement of SCOBA as follows:

"with the blessing of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, and continuing under the successor to that body, the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North America."

Under Article IV "Membership":

"In order to promote the maximum exchange of contact among Orthodox scholars in North America, the Society shall encourage other groups of Orthodox who are not formally engaged in academic scholarship but are pursuing historical, cultural, and theological study to meet yearly under our

auspices jointly and to attend OTSA sessions. The normal rules that govern membership in OTSA shall not be applied to these groups.” (This will be section 9.)

Under Article IV “Membership”:

“Subscription to the OTSA Journal Diakrisis shall be an automatic benefit of membership. Nonetheless, non-Orthodox scholars shall have the right to subscribe to the journal for a fee set by the Society. All scholars, regardless of religious affiliation, are encouraged to submit articles, publication of which will be subject to the judgment of the Advisory Board and upon the recommendation of referees selected by the Editor and the Board. All contributors of accepted articles shall retain copyright over their essays and assume the accepted academic standards of responsibility for the accuracy of sources, citations, and related issues of permissions. Non-OTSA scholars shall have access to the journal and any discussion of articles published therein that may be conducted in a monitored Forum on the Society’s website, subject to the approval of the Editor and the Advisory Board.” (To become Section 10.)

Also Under Article IV “Membership”:

In order to promote a pan-Orthodox theological discussion site for North America, the Society hereby creates the category of “associate member-non-voting.” This category is open to Orthodox clergy (hierarchs, presbyters, deacons), lay holders of the M.Div. degree, and current seminarians who shall enjoy the benefits extended to non-Orthodox scholars with regard to access to the journal and the monitored Forum.” (To become Section 11.)

Under Article VI “Officers”:

“The Society authorizes the founding of its blind-refereed, electronic journal Diakrisis: A Journal of Orthodox Christian Theology, History, and Culture. This journal shall appear twice yearly under the guidance of an Orthodox editor who is a member in good standing of the Society. Candidates for the position of Editor shall be selected by a nominating process. This process shall include the posting upon the website of a job description, and an estimated time commitment. Each person nominated, either by self-nomination, or by any member in good standing of the Society, shall submit a brief statement of background and indicate willingness to commit to the position for a minimum term of three years. In addition, an Advisory Editorial Board shall also be created, to consist of the officers of the Society ex officio. As is the case for the position of Editor, a position of Associate Editor, and additional members of an Editorial Board shall be solicited from the membership by the Advisory Board to serve as peer reviewers and book reviewers for the journal. Those interested shall likewise submit a brief statement of background and commitment to a three year term. Service on the Editorial Board may be renewed for a second three-year term upon mutual agreement of the Advisory Editorial Board and the person serving. A webmaster shall be compensated by the Society’s Treasurer for maintaining and further developing the site. All such persons except the webmaster must also be members in good standing of the Society and shall be chosen from the membership with the current officers serving as the nominating committee for said positions. The Society welcomes the participation of all canonical Orthodox hierarchs in theological discussion, provided that no attempt at pre-censorship or veto power is envisaged on any qualified article or subject of debate.” (This would become Section 7.)

I apologize for the length of this letter, but the expansion of the Society's activities requires the endorsement of the membership with sufficient advance notice for pondering the importance of these steps. Please make every effort to arrange your schedules in the Fall to enable you to attend the annual meeting in person. The officers have been very gratified to hear already of several Orthodox groups who would like to meet jointly with us this year in what promises to be an exceptionally rich and stimulating annual meeting. On behalf of us all, thank you for your submissions, your interest, and continuing support of the Society.

Praying all the blessings of the balance of the Paschal Season and looking forward to seeing you all in Brookline in September I remain

Sincerely in Christ,

(The Reverend Deacon) Gregory Roeber,
President, Orthodox Theological Society in America