

# FUND FOR ASSISTANCE

TO THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA



ANNUAL REPORT



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

V. REV. VICTOR POTAPOV



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I reflect on the past year and the activities of the Fund for Assistance to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (FFA), I am overcome by a sense of gratitude and a firm belief in the future of our Russian Orthodox Community.

2008 was the first full year that FFA has operated under a new administration and the first year in which we transitioned from a low-profile vehicle for the support of our Holy Church into an organization with a global channel and a global network of donors that builds bridges between the ROCOR communities in the whole world.

Generous donations to benefit ROCOR members have flowed to and from many parts of the world: USA, Russia, Australia, Canada, Ukraine, Germany, France, Haiti, etc.

In spite of the difficult situation most of our community find themselves in these tough economic times, I am inspired to see that we have not forgotten those in need of our care and help: our youth, our clergy and our suffering brothers and sisters.

### Youth

The year 2008 gave way to a wider range of organized global events ROCOR youth has ever seen. Through your generous support, the Fund for Assistance has been able to sponsor two pilgrimages to Russia, a music symposium in Australia, conferences in New York and San Francisco, and Montreal, Canada; summer and winter camps in Stuttgart, Germany, and the opening of a Youth Center in Berlin. According to the participants, all of these events turned out to be a great success. Our young people not only learned to make prayer ropes and cook Russian dishes; not only practiced church singing and participated in talks on confessing their faith, but most importantly learned to pray for each other and feel a part of a strong global community. Such events allow our youth to grow together in faith, to help each other on the way and build lasting relationships to strengthen them as witnesses of Orthodox love and faith in their various communities by focusing their energy and hearts on a larger goal outside the narrow world of self.

### Emergency Relief – Haiti

Another instance of generosity shown by our ROCOR parishioners came in the quick and decisive response to the dire need of our mission in Haiti, where our brothers and sisters still endure great sufferings due to the effects of three major hurricanes that swept over the island nation in the summer and the general poverty of that country.

Through your help ROCOR parishes in Haiti were able to provide their flock with food, clothing, temporary shelter, and bus fare to travel to church services.

### Strengthening ties with Russia

Last year the Fund for Assistance was able to obtain the late Patriarch Alexy II's blessing to operate in Russia. Thanks to this step, we were able to build important bridges that allow us not only to receive aid from our Russian brethren, but also to access the enormity of the best Orthodox resources Russia can boast. Our youth has already profited by this through fellowship with Orthodox youth in Russia.

We have developed other ties which will allow us to help struggling ROCOR parishes receive much needed aid through such organizations as the Moscow House of Compatriots and Publishing Board of the Moscow Patriarchate.

All of these things bring home the idea that Orthodox Christianity is not limited to the comfort zone of our parish, our friends and family. We as Orthodox Christians comprise a global community that shares values, history, and a common future. This is not only a gift, but also a responsibility: to care for our members and be good stewards of God's gifts to us, our churches, our clergy, our youth, and our neighbors in need. Especially in these hard economic times let us not forget our brothers who are in need of our care and assistance, be they as far as on a plantation in Haiti, or as near as in the altar of our home parish.

God bless,



V. Rev. Victor S. Potapov  
Executive Director  
Fund for Assistance to the  
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

# EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND - HAITI

Three major hurricanes devastated Haiti, the poorest nation of the Caribbean, in 2008. These disasters killed over 200 people, left over one million homeless, and caused severe flooding, sickness and famine.

Members of three Orthodox missions in Haiti found themselves in dire circumstances, with their family members missing, their homes destroyed, and with no means to obtain food and clothing, or to support their children's education.

With the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York, the Fund for Assistance to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia set up an Emergency Relief Fund to assist our suffering brothers and sisters in Haiti.

Despite the difficult economic situation many members of ROCOR found themselves in, over \$19,000 was contributed to the FFA for Haiti.

The initial \$8,000 that was sent provided much needed relief to our brothers and sisters in Christ.\*

In the words of the Haiti mission priests: "The money you donated was so badly needed and so appreciated that words cannot express our thanks. We are still in great need and would so very much appreciate your continued donations to the Fund of Assistance for the Orthodox Mission of Haiti. At present, our accounts are again at a zero balance; please forgive us, the survival of our parishes depends on your kindness to us!

Again, heartfelt thanks!

In Christ,  
Fr Gregoire Legoute, and Fr Jean Dumais in Haiti"

\*The rest of the donations (over \$11,000) was sent in 2009 and will be accounted for in the 2009 report.

## Breakdown of money spent:

- Tuition for 32 children
- Housing for two families
- Food and clothes for 12 children and their families
- Rent money for three parishes
- Financial aid to two Orthodox schools with 200 children
- Financed travel for two priests to get to services at their five parishes and two chapels
- Subsidized bus fare for 20 parishioners to come to church in Port-au-Prince.





# A REPORT ON THE FFA YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN 2008

## “THERE IS A HUGE HOPE FOR ORTHODOX PEOPLE”

V. REV. ANDREI SOMMER,  
VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE SYNODAL YOUTH DEPARTMENT

In 2008, thanks to the generous support of the Fund for Assistance (FFA), the youth of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia experienced events never before presented to them in the history of ROCOR. They were able to see their religious and cultural roots come alive as many of our young people visited Russia for the very first time. With the signing of the Act of Canonical Communion in 2007, the gates of separation were opened. Not only did this allow more freedom for the clergy to interact with each other, but it allowed for a more active participation of our youth in the life of the Church.

Among other events, the FFA sponsored two youth pilgrimages to Russia.

### Concord of Orthodox Youth – Holy Places of Russia - July 17-August 8, 2008

With the blessing of Metropolitan Hilarion, young people from all the dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia visited a number of holy places of Russia and participated in an international conference called “Concord of Orthodox Youth,” held at the Kursk-Root Hermitage. They were accompanied by Protopriest Andrei Sommer, clergyman of the Synodal Cathedral of Kursk-Root Icon of Our Lady of the Sign in New York, and Priest Quentin de Castelbajac of Lyon, France.

The 13 youth assembled in Moscow from North and South America, Europe, Canada and Australia. They visited and prayed at places dear to the heart of every Russian Orthodox Christian, including: St. Sergius-Trinity Lavra, St. Seraphim-Diveevo Convent, the Moscow Kremlin, and Voronezh. The young pilgrims venerated miraculous icons and relics of saints, received a blessing from His Holiness, Patriarch Alexii II, and had a chance to talk to the famous Russian director Nikita Mikhalkov. They also met with representatives of local governments and made friends with like-minded Russian Orthodox youth. Participants’ testimonials attest to the profound impact this trip had on participating youth:

*“Right away I felt that this is my native people, and this is my country. Everything we were taught at home and in Russian School came to life. I did not want to leave, and I will definitely go back again.”*

*Eugene Krassovskiy, California*

*“We saw the spot where the Kursk-Root Icon was originally found. One of the most interesting parts of the conference for me was that we were at the original home of the most significant holy icon of the Church Abroad – here we saw countless copies of the icon which I had venerated many times before. One of my strongest memories was of an elderly woman who approached me and was almost brought to tears because she met someone who had venerated the original icon. She said this was an incredible gift for her on her namesday, and asked that I pray for her at the icon.”*

*Andrei Muraviev, New Jersey*

*“During this trip, I really developed a want to become closer to God and realized that my life is flying by, and it’s time to really get focused. The monasteries we visited made me realize also, that there is still a huge hope for Orthodox people.”*

*Katya Wolkow - New York*

Upon returning back to their home towns and parishes they shared their memories with their peers without hesitation. Many with the blessing of their priest set up small presentations to the parishioners and to the youth of the parish portraying their feelings and thoughts, supporting the important concept that we as Orthodox faithful are not alone in the world. There are many young adults who have the same pressures and anxieties as them, and are able to turn to their faith and their peers for support.

The friendships and connections that were made during the trip continue through correspondence via e-mail and the Russian version of Facebook (vkontakte.ru). A network of relations between young Russian Orthodox Christians is stretching to all the corners of the world.

#### Missionary Trip to the Moscow Region - August 16-27, 2008

This missionary trip involved 10 young men and women from three ROCOR dioceses including New York, California and Australia. The ROCOR youth, guided by Archpriest Alexei Kotar from Seattle, WA, participated with youth from St. Tatianna parish of the Moscow State University in Moscow. The youth stayed for three weeks at the Egoriev Monastery in the village of Kolechev, working together to restore the church that was once destroyed.

They spent their mornings cleaning the grounds and restoring the inside of the church. Their efforts included sawing, nailing and building interior walls and the iconostas.

During the afternoons their missionary work extended to expressing their faith to the elderly and needy. They travelled the region, hosting both spiritual and cultural concerts in hospitals, retirement homes, orphanages and prisons. After each concert they answered questions from the audience concerning faith and their own personal experiences. The youth were not only able to share their feelings with the audience, but filled their own hearts with the love expressed by their hosts. As one young participant described: "After one of the concerts at a nursing home with very poor elderly, two young girls were found standing in a corner crying. A small group rushed to them wondering what had happened. The young girls answered that this was reaction to the hardships that occur in our world. Today we were able to put all our efforts in a special repertoire comforting the sick elderly and they applauded our efforts and even sang with us – this was truly glorious."

These are the kind of trips that have the power to make a positive impact on our community. In the words of one participant:

"The enormous amount of gratitude that I feel, for having been given this opportunity, is inexplicable. I can honestly say that this trip has changed me as a person in so many ways and for that I will always be in debt to those who made it possible for me attend. I truly look forward to the future for more opportunities such as this one and for another chance to return to Russia to keep these doors of friendship and understanding open".

Ksenia Sachevskaya – Canada

2008 brought many new exciting possibilities to ROCOR youth. Not only did they get a chance to officially visit their historical homeland as representatives of our Church while praying and communing with their Russian peers, and venerating relics of Russian saints; they were given the opportunity to be fully engaged in missionary work, rebuilding destroyed churches, comforting the old and the sick, and acquainting their new friends with the history of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

These pilgrimages and missionary efforts give our young people a true sense of participation in the spiritual rebirth of Russia, strengthening their faith, and inspiring them to work for the good of Orthodoxy in their home countries, thus ensuring a brighter future for Russian Orthodox communities in the West as well as Russia.

Your generous support is encouraged so that more such meaningful youth events can be planned!

*For details on all FFA-sponsored youth activities, please visit our website [fundforassistance.org](http://fundforassistance.org)*

## Concord of Orthodox Youth July 17-August 8



*Young pilgrims from all the dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia made a pilgrimage to the holy places of Russia and participated in an international conference called "Concord of Orthodox Youth" held at Kursk-Root Hermitage.*



*Members of ROCOR and other Concord groups sing at liturgy together in the convent of St Alexis, Man of God in Kursk, Russia.*



*Gregory Kotar (Seattle) waits in line to dip in the spring of St Seraphim of Sarov in Diveevo.*

## St Herman's Youth Conference December 24-26



*Protodeacon Serge Arlievsky gave an insightful lecture on the difference between the Old and New Calendar.*



*Over 100 Russian Orthodox youth gathered in Montreal for the annual St. Herman's Youth Conference and for four days of prayer, lectures and discussion about their faith, culminating in the Divine Services on the feastday of St. Herman of Alaska.*



*The week ended on a high note with a Talent Night, at which many sang songs and performed skits.*

## Sydney Choral Conference July 2-6



*Trio at Pontifical Liturgy in Strathfield Cathedral.*



*Participants of 2008 Choral Conference gathered outside Church Hall in Strathfield, Australia*



*Georgi Safonov director of Danilovsky Monastery Choir conducts at a rehearsal with Conference participants.*

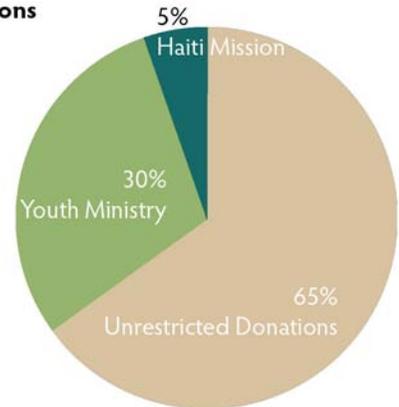


<b>2008 Financial Report</b>		4/11/2009
<b>INCOME</b>		
<b>TOTAL INCOME.</b>		<b>\$ 367,035.44</b>
Unrestricted Donations	\$ 240,490.22	
Appeals	\$ 132,673.72	
Individual Donations	\$ 99,948.00	
Opening Balance & Other Donations	\$ 7,868.50	
Youth Ministry Donations	\$ 106,973.00	
Haiti Mission Donations	\$ 19,572.22	
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$ 259,484.71</b>
Benevolent Disbursements	\$ 56,530.12	
Youth Ministry*	\$ 44,735.97	
Haiti Mission*	\$ 8,434.15	
Other Needs	\$ 3,360.00	
Survey of Church Members to define priorities	\$ 55,000.00	
Fundraising Appeals Expenses	\$ 32,680.45	
Insurance	\$ 1,280.40	
Legal Fees	\$ 525.00	
Meals & Entertainment	\$ 2,699.33	
Office Expenses	\$ 21,553.95	
Equipment	\$ 17,123.28	
Repair	\$ 3,972.55	
Other Expenses	\$ 458.12	
Tax	\$ 6,380.34	
Travel	\$ 23,115.21	
Wages	\$ 56,766.68	
Web Site	\$ 1,079.46	
Bank Fees	\$ 1,873.77	
<b>2008 TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>\$ 107,550.73</b>
<b>Financial Status at End of 2008</b>		
2008 Income (Loss)	\$ 107,550.73	
Balance from 2007	36,564.26	
<b>AMOUNT CARRIED FORWARD TO 2009</b>	<b>\$ 144,114.99</b>	
In Checking Account	\$ 150,407.71	
Outstanding Checks	(6,292.72)	
<b>ON DEPOSIT AS OF 12/31/08</b>	<b>\$ 144,114.99</b>	

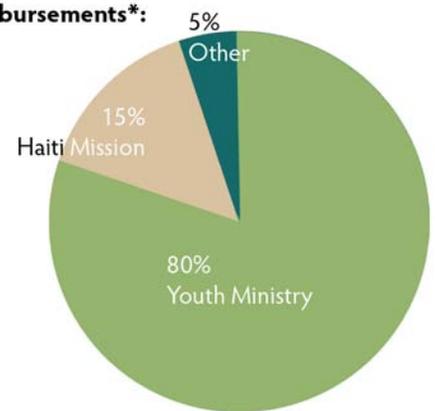
\*Balance of dedicated donations for Youth Ministry and Haiti Mission will be sent in 2009 & accounted for in the 2009 Financial Report.

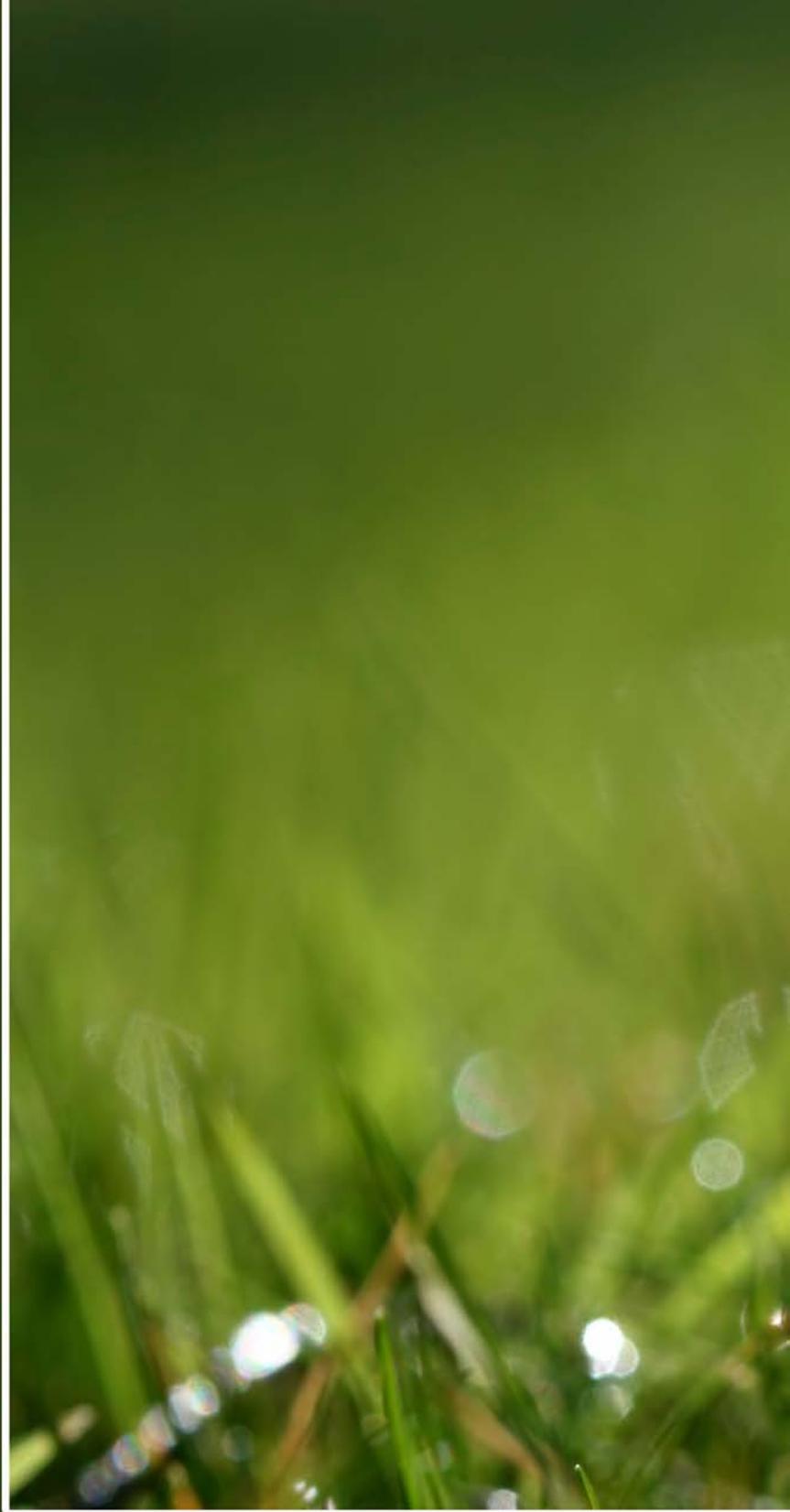
A. D. Kulesha - Treasurer

**Donations**



**Benevolent Disbursements\*:**





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