

## A NEW DIRECTION

**M**ODERN COMPUTERS HAVE A lot to offer struggling writers in the twenty-first century. From spell and grammar checkers, to dictionaries, thesauri, online support groups, powerful search engines for grabbing obscure facts and figures off the internet . . . the opportunities are endless.

Even with all those marvelous aids, there is one feature I miss from the days of the old manual typewriter whose melodious taps and pings carried me through four years of college and three years of seminary.

For anyone suffering from writer's block, there is nothing quite like the emotional release of crushing the last of yet another abortive attempt at usable copy, hearing the typewriter gears spin furiously as paper disgorges from platen, wadding the results into a ball of iconic exasperation, and with flourish pitching the fruits of a half hour of frustration towards the overflowing waste can in the corner.

In case you haven't guessed already, I am having a really hard time making any progress on this editorial for AGAIN Magazine.

Why, you ask?

Because it's the last one I will be writing . . . and the last issue of AGAIN.

After thirty plus years of producing AGAIN Magazine as a hardcopy quarterly periodical, we have decided that the time has come for a bold new approach to doing what we've been trying to do. Space is precious in an editorial—so I will only direct the reader to John Maddex's article on page 35 for a clear explanation of where we are going and how we intend to make this important transition fair and equitable for our loyal readers.

So where do I begin? Maybe by saying it's a new day and age for the print industry. The uncompromising wheels of technology have proven to be a juggernaut for countless newspapers and magazines. A recent internet news story listed the top twelve major name brand institutions most likely to disappear before 2010. This shortlist

included two major magazines and a national bookstore chain among the likely candidates. The troubled Hearst Corporation, parent company of one of those magazines, "faces problems on both the newspaper and magazine fronts and will not hesitate to close down underperforming brands . . ."

Now consider, the implications of this technology shift for Orthodox publications such as AGAIN. When AGAIN first appeared in 1978, there were only a handful of Orthodox publish-

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ing houses in North America, and only a percentage of these offered materials in English. Most of the Orthodox jurisdictions sponsored their own periodicals, but these were often more "in house" newsletters than subscription-based magazines.

Fast forward that scene to 2009! With the aid of a personal computer and an internet connection, the modern inquirer can open the door to a mind-boggling cornucopia of information, ranging from the ancient (writings of the early church Fathers, digitized and fully searchable online) to the modern (today's Orthodox headlines from around the world).

Another challenge for AGAIN has been the constant pressure of finances. AGAIN always struggled to survive in the early days, let alone to grow its subscription base. In the best of times, margins were slim. Without the dedication of many volunteer and near volunteer workers, the generous support of the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America, as well as contributions from

readers and friends, an editorial such as the one I am now writing would have been written many years ago.

The challenge has always been to reach an audience of potential readers, which by and large doesn't know Orthodoxy exists, to grow and increase using only limited funds, and to be largely self supporting in the process. In other words, we always knew that at least one measure of the success of AGAIN Magazine would be . . . AGAIN Magazine. Failing was not an option.

I think that last line is the one making this editorial so hard to write. It is difficult not to look at the closing down of a magazine as a sign that we failed to achieve our goals and thus sealed our own fate. To the degree that this is true, I accept full and ultimate responsibility. I do believe, however, that we have now come to a place and time when this ministry,

and the work we all believe in so passionately at AGAIN Magazine, can be done much better and much more effectively from a different venue. From this perspective, another definition of "failure" might well be the unwillingness to step out of the way of progress.

My thanks go out to all the men and women who have been a part of AGAIN's development over the past thirty years. Several of the early figures—Father Ken Berven and Father Terry Somerville—are no longer with us, and their voices are silent. Talented artists, photographers, and technicians have given freely of time and talent. How could I not mention Father Luke Dingman, and Bill Dunniway in this list! I am grateful to all the men and women who have shared their stories, written inspiring articles, agonized to find the right words, helped to promote, to advise, to encourage. I am especially grateful most recently for Father Michael Gillis who served

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the streets on a diet of malt liquor for several years. One day, six years ago, he came into the church when I was there alone and said in broken English that he was sad and that he would die if he did not stop drinking. He told me of his sadness. In broken Spanish we prayed. He asked the Lord to help him, and he just up and got sober. I still meet with Jesús often. I love putting “Meet Jesús at 10:30” in my PDA. It reminds me that Jesus is with us when we meet the Jesúsés on our streets.

In such meetings there is a sweet restoration of kin that we didn’t know we had. Sweeter still is when we have seen a restoration, a healing of broken ties. One brother named Alan had lost contact with his family over twenty years before and didn’t know the way back. A ten-minute internet search and we were calling his father and his brother back East. A couple of days later, he and his brother embraced with tears in the parking lot of St. Athanasius Church.

Sometimes we are companions in

the hour of our neighbor’s death. Terry was a two-tour Viet Nam vet, a Marine gunnery sergeant, a multidecorated war hero who had become very dear to us. Cancer and emphysema were robbing his breath. He could not be cared for properly in the old VW van that was his home, so we pulled some strings and bent some protocols and got him into a hospice called Sarah House here in Santa Barbara. Terry surprised us all and took another year to finish his journey.

At the very last, as I prayed for this servant of God, he struggled to speak. I said, “Gunny, when you report to the Lord, please pray there for me.” As if replying to his last order he said, “Sir, yes sir!” The old warrior drew up a bit and said with supreme effort, “I . . . will!”

Peter Maurin of the Catholic Worker Party said, “Christ came to make the rich poor and the poor holy.” In that moment of the passing of my friend, I was made poor in the presence of a brother made holy.

We have this commission that has been given to us. To be sure, we go forth from the church and preach when we can; we invite speakers and musicians for events. We take ads in newspapers and we write articles. We lecture where we can and we teach catechism. We even debate on campus from time to time. Yet when we go forth from the altar and come near to our suffering neighbors, we find there is the unmistakable touch of the Lord reaching out to them. And when we let the Lord reach out through us, we feel Him blessing us by His companionship. When the world sees that we have cared for the least and most vulnerable, perhaps they will begin to see the Lord. If they are to see His love, we must go forth. ❖

*Fr. Jon-Stephen Hedges serves as assistant pastor at St. Athanasius Antiochian Orthodox Church in Isla Vista, California. He has been in Isla Vista since he came to UC Santa Barbara in the sixties.*

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#### *Editorial, continued from page 4*

as Managing Editor for the past year. And to Katherine Hyde for her expert hand at editing, copy editing, and proof reading. I am grateful to my wife, Kh. Carla, for her hours of thankless labor doing the layout and graphic design for AGAIN. And I am grateful to Metropolitan PHILIP for allowing me to be a part of this ministry that has composed such a large part of my life for nearly three decades.

I fully support the work of John Maddex and Conciliar Media Ministries, and look forward to many, many good years ahead as the new avenues of evangelism and outreach become available. By all means, I believe our best days are ahead. May this work, and this precious ministry, be blessed in all ways!

Glory to God in all things! ❖

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#### *Letters, continued from page 5*

to “fix” or “rescue” the received tradition from itself.

Richard seems to imply that the prospect of transcribing the eight modes into Western linear notation necessarily means that we have reduced the functional modality to two modes: major and minor. We know, however, that there are 12 major keys and natural, harmonic and melodic versions of each of the 12 minor keys – totaling 48 different keys. Each of these 48 keys (or tonalities) has its own unique nuance, mood, or color; otherwise composers would not write in different keys. While I would acknowledge that their scale intervals do not reflect the subtle nuance of the microtonal Byzantine system, nevertheless, each of these Western European keys has its own ethos, and they should not be equated, in their pure vocal or orchestral forms, with the equal-tempered scale of the modern piano.

My exhortations to continue the work of

transcribing Byzantine notation into modern Western linear notation, to adopt modern Western scale intervals, to simplify the melodies in connection with the texts, and to encourage congregational participation and the harmonization of the melodies, come simply from observing the emerging organic phenomenon [that Richard refers to] already taking place. The end result may be a type of ecclesiastical music which goes by some new name or label other than “Byzantine.” In other words, the received tradition will undoubtedly remain, but a new form of authentic Church music in North America is already blossoming from that immersion in the received tradition.

V. Rev. John David Finley

#### **From the Editor:**

Thank you to all our readers for the contributions to the Letters to the Editor column you have sent to us over the years!



B Y J O H N M A D D E X

# The End of an Era

**W**HO COULD DENY THE RICH heritage AGAIN magazine? “A Call for the People of God to Return to their Roots in Historic Christianity Once . . . AGAIN” began over thirty years ago as the official newspaper for a group of 2,000 evangelicals who were searching for the historic Church. Over the years, their search through the early Church fathers led them to a stunning conclusion: that the early Church still lives today, and that it is in fact the Orthodox Christian Church.

This group of seekers—led by several former Campus Crusade for Christ leaders, including Peter Gillquist—became Orthodox Christians in 1987 when they joined the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church of North America. Metropolitan Philip Saliba commissioned this group to continue on a larger scale what these pioneers had been doing independently for over ten years—to carry the story of the ancient faith to the modern world. That has been effectively carried out over the years through book publishing, and the distribution of magazines, icons, greetings cards, and gifts from an office and warehouse in Ben Lomond, California, nestled in the mountains between San Jose and Santa Cruz. More recently it has included an internet radio and podcast ministry known as Ancient Faith Radio.

As is true in most publishing organizations, Conciliar Media Ministries must now adjust to the

realities of today’s economy and the digital revolution. This will—and has—involved some necessary decisions to streamline our operations. To be specific, we are discontinuing both AGAIN and *The Handmaiden* magazines, at least in their current printed forms, in recognition of the decline in printed journals and the need for a business model that can be sustained. At some point we hope to reintroduce an Orthodox periodical with a new name and format that will be economically viable. In the meantime, Conciliar will be concentrate on maximizing our impact through our books and internet radio outreach. We are also embracing new technology that will reduce our costs by utilizing digital and audio for-

mats where possible, as well as print on demand technology. While such decisions are difficult, these adjustments represent a necessary pruning and will result, I believe, in a new lean model of operations with a continued strong evangelistic emphasis.

In his editorial found in the early pages of this issue, you learned of the departure of our Vice President and Editor in Chief, Fr. Thomas Zell. I know you join me in expressing our deep gratitude to Fr. Thomas for his many years of faithful service at Conciliar Press. Fortunately, he will continue on our board and maintain an active association with us. Fr. Thomas is the Pastor of St. James Antiochian Orthodox Church in Modesto, California, and will now be able to devote more of his time to the parish. Kh. Carla Zell will continue to serve on the Conciliar Media team as our Production Manager.

In anticipation of your questions about your paid subscription to AGAIN, we will be communicating with you by mail with an offer of a choice of a select number of Conciliar Press products that will be of equal or greater value than your remaining subscription. Final details will be mailed to each individual subscriber in the days to come. We would also encourage you to check out the wide array of Ancient Faith Radio podcasts at [ancientfaith.com](http://ancientfaith.com) as a source for receiving a similar type of information that has previously been made available in the pages of AGAIN. We will also be working on adding more of the best articles from previous years of AGAIN to our website reading room.

In a darkening society where God and faith are relegated to irrelevancy, we have a message that must be heard. The need has never been greater for what Conciliar Media has to offer through the printed page and digital media. The hunger for Orthodoxy is evident everywhere you turn, and our current and future products will be there to help meet those needs.

Thank you for your patronage.

John Maddex,  
CEO, Conciliar Media Ministries



The cover of AGAIN Volume 20 Number 1, which in turn featured photos of a variety of other earlier AGAIN covers.