

Organizing a High School OCF: A to Z  
Anastasios Sarikas  
Upbeat  
V.3, n. 5-6, 1970

Some time ago, a group of students at Brooklyn Technical High School decided to start an Orthodox Christian Student Organization. In September of 1968, this organization finally came into existence and dubbed with the name of "Brooklyn Technical High School Orthodox Christian Fellowship."

Now fate, it seems, would not let this little organization (grand total of three members) prosper in peace. Shortly after the club was started, we received a polite but firm letter from the school administration "asking" (politely ordering) us to change the names of the club; according to school regulations, organizations may not have names pertaining to religious "sects."

We were faced with a catastrophic problem – it so happened that we were very fond of the name....In desperation, we put our highly technical minds to work and soon reached an ultimate solution – the name had to be changed. Now you all know why we are called the *Alpha Omega Society* instead of that 54 letter long title.

With this problem out of the way, we launched a schedule much more ambitious than we actually were able to achieve. It consisted of lectures, field trips, community programs, and a series of concerts.

We have a lecture almost every week. Our first one on "Christian Sex Ethics" came off surprisingly well, and ever since then the club's popularity and membership increased considerable (we now have over 20 registered members). More recent topics include: Contemporary Patterns of Atheism; Lent as a Preparation; Sex, Sexual Abnormalities and Psychology; and Draft, the War and Conscientious Objection. Future topics include: The Hippie Movement in Light of U.S. Religious Tradition, and Christianity in the Soviet Union.

Our Folk Rock Festival last year at Three Hierarchs Church in Brooklyn initiated our concert sponsoring career. Last February we sponsored another Folk-Rock Concert at Brooklyn Tech. Performers from both Erasmus Hill High School and Tech supplied the enthusiastic crowd. The concert was an unforgettable event. Without a doubt, it was a terrific success. "Folk Festival 2" will be held at St. Mary's Church in Brooklyn on May 30.

As our interest in Folk Festivals indicates, quite a number of our members are talented folk singers. Because of this, we are attempting to initiate a program in which club members will go to Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry and participate in entertainment programs. We have also started a similar program in cooperation with Fr. Stephen Plumlee, chaplain to Orthodox patients in New York City area. Members are now going to Brooklyn State Hospital, entertaining and talking to the patients.

In looking back, I can safely say that our little society has gone far in the short span of one year. To anyone interested in starting a similar organization, a few words of advice: the planning for this organization must be done by a small group of sincere students. Second, a faculty advisor is needed, preferably one who is an Orthodox Christian like ours, Mr. John Boojamra. Third, define responsibilities, officers, etc. Fourth, set up a schedule of activities. As soon as this is all set up – you're in business – so good luck!