



# GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

## GOTELECOM

### REPORT TO THE 40<sup>TH</sup> BIENNIAL CLERGY-LAITY CONGRESS

#### GATHER MY PEOPLE TO MY HOME COME AND SEE

GOTelecom, Greek Orthodox Telecommunications, is the television ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese which seeks to bring people into the arms of the church by fulfilling its mission as stated below.

#### MISSION

The mission of GOTelecom is to serve the needs of the Greek Orthodox Church in America by producing and disseminating religious, cultural and educational mass media materials pertaining to Orthodox Christianity and Hellenic Culture.

The mission is three-fold –

- 1) internally – to archive the activities of the Archdiocese and the Archbishop,
- 2) to produce in-house programs that educate and awaken our faithful about the ministries of our Archdiocese and,
- 3) to produce programs of quality that can be distributed nationally on television and through video (full-length programs and public service announcements).

#### GOTELECOM PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

Throughout our twenty years, we have produced over 230 programs and have received awards from many organizations including two EMMY Awards, the De-Rose Hinkhouse Memorial Awards and various national Telly Awards.

In the past two years we have produced the following major video presentations and completed the following projects.

#### **\*Pascha: The Resurrection of Christ**

GOTelecom acquired one hour of ABC network time for a worship program aired during the Paschal Season 2009. FAITH: An Endowment for Orthodoxy and Hellenism generously donated the funding for the program. The production took place during Pascha (2008) and was simultaneously broadcast LIVE in Greece and around the world through ERT (Greek National TV). Additionally, the entire service was promoted to national news networks for download, packaging and rebroadcast. We also coordinated the LIVE webcast of these services.

The ABC broadcast took place in April 2009. Staff worked closely with ABC to insure national coverage. Over 77% of broadcast affiliates carried the program and many, many positive comments were heard from faithful and from those of other faiths.

Staff was able to negotiate a complimentary one hour time slot in 2010 for the Pascha program. This broadcast was also successful with over 50% of affiliates carrying the program.

### **\*Ionian Village – 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Presentation**

We are currently in production for an anniversary program, to be shown at the Clergy Laity Congress in Atlanta, which will highlight the tremendous success of the Ionian Village camping program. Archival documents, slides and photos will be compiled along with interviews by those who have helped make the camp what it is today.

### **\*Archbishop Michael Documentary**

GOTelecom, Saint Basil Academy and the Archives teamed up to produce a historical documentary detailing the life and ministry of former Archbishop Michael of Blessed Memory. The film premiered at the Clergy Laity Congress Banquet where it was extremely well received. Additionally DVD's were sent to each parish in country for their information and archives.

### **\*Synaxis and Pauline Symposium**

GOTelecom has completed the editing for a DVD set which chronicles the historic Synaxis and Pauline Symposium which took place in Constantinople and in places throughout Turkey and Greece. The lectures will also be posted on our website for viewing. DVDs were sent to lecturers and participants of the Symposium

### **\*Athenagoras Human Rights Award Video Presentations**

GOTelecom produces videos for the Athenagoras Human Rights Award Banquet of the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to honor the recipient of each year's award. The 2008 recipient of the Award was Rabbi Arthur Schneier and again GOTelecom produced a moving video tribute. Recent video tributes include, 2007 – Archbishop Demetrios of America and 2006 - Mr. Nicholas Bouras. Additional recipients and video presentations have included: President and Mrs. George H.W. Bush, Eli Wiesel, Mikhail Gorbachev, Alex G. Spanos, Archbishop Anastasios of Albania and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

This year to honor the visit of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, GOTelecom produced a program highlighting the Ecumenical Patriarch's environmental work and his work towards peace and reconciliation around the world. The video was extremely well received by all those in attendance and was distributed to parishes nationwide, through a grant by FAITH: An Endowment for Orthodoxy & Hellenism.

### **\*Parish Council Training Seminar**

The Department is working on the recording and editing of the Seminar which will be packaged for distribution and posted on our web site.

### **\*Clergy-Laity Congress**

The Department coordinated the video archiving, audio archiving and video production and coordination of the 2010 Clergy Laity Congress, as it has done for all Congresses since 1988.

## **DISTRIBUTION**

The Department has worked with the Archons to package and distribute *Apostle of Love, Hope and Reconciliation* along with the 60 minutes special interview with His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and also the Charlie Rose interview with our Ecumenical Patriarch. DVDs were sent to more than 3000 addresses.

The Department has continued its sales of videotapes, through ads in the Orthodox Observer, to our parishes, schools, universities and homes. Our daily duties include fulfillment of these orders. Additionally, GOTelecom has acquired the rights to distribute numerous outside productions. In addition to distribution relationships with Greek Orthodox distributors, i.e. Light & Life, we have sales contracts with Vision Video, Conciliar Press, and bookstores of other Orthodox jurisdictions. Each

parish in America should have our entire library of videotapes available in a “lending library”. Additionally, university, college and high school libraries should have our major titles available for research and information. GOTELECOM also distributes its programs through the Department of Religious Education and Orthodox Marketplace.

### AWARDS

In April 2010, GOTELECOM was the recipient of the Best of Class Award for Non-Broadcast Program for *Apostle of Love, Hope and Reconciliation* – which was initially shown at the Archon Banquet in October 2009. The award, from the Religious Communicators Council, was one of 5 awards received that evening for the Communications Department.

GOTELECOM has received two EMMY Awards for its program, *A Light Still Bright* and *Iakovos: A Legacy*. GOTELECOM has also received numerous TELLY Awards, and Film Organization Awards for its work.

### BROADCASTING

In addition to the historic broadcast of *Pascha: The Resurrection of Christ*, on the ABC Network and NBC Network, GOTELECOM scheduled another showing of *The Other Holy Land* to air in June 2009 and April 2010.

GOTELECOM staff is finalizing the digitizing all titles to DVD for phasing out of VHS. Currently, we have begun filming in High Definition formats to raise the quality of standards of the Department. In the very near future, all programming will be available to the faithful in Blu-ray formatting as well as DVD.

### VIDEO AND RADIO MESSAGES OF ARCHBISHOP DEMETRIOS

The Department staff continues to schedule, videotape, edit and distribute the Christmas and Paschal Message of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios. These short messages are sent to Greek American radio and television producers across the country, as well as select programs in Greece, for broadcast on their stations. Additionally, the messages are posted on the goarch website.

GOTELECOM has been consistently asked to provide documentary footage for PBS programs. GOTELECOM occasionally broadcasts its programs on national networks and on local cable television systems, and to an increasing extent on radio.

Marissa P. Costidis, Managing Director, serves on the Membership Board of Faith and Values Media, whose membership is composed of over 64 different faith groups. Faith and Values Media was a partner with the nationally distributed Hallmark Channel.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Marissa P. Costidis  
Nicholas J. Furriss