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FR. LEONID KISHKOVSKY, IN MEMORIAM

With sadness, *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* communicates to its readers that on August 3, 2021, Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky passed from this life. Fr. Leonid was well known and deeply respected in the ecumenical world for his thoughtful, reflective, and generous engagement in all he did.

Fr. Leonid was rector of Our Lady of Kazan Church (in Sea Cliff, New York) for many years, but he was more widely known for his service as the long-time director of the Office of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA). In that role, he served his fellow Orthodox by leadership in the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) and in International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC).

On a broader scale, he was a leader in several national and international ecumenical groups. In 1989, he was the first Orthodox person elected president of the National Council of Churches (NCC), after decades of Protestant leadership. Fr. Leonid also served the World Council of Churches (WCC) for many years. His ecumenical commitment and diplomatic expertise were so esteemed that at one point he was put forward as a possible candidate to become the WCC's General Secretary, but he declined to be considered for that position. He was also engaged in other ecumenical groups (such as Church World Service) and interfaith ones (including Religions for Peace USA).

Fr. Leonid traveled frequently to the headquarters of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) in Moscow and interacted with its patriarchs and other leaders. With his first-hand knowledge of the situations of the ROC during both Communist and post-Communist times, he was the most dependable and nuanced analyst of developments in the ROC and its relationship with the Russian government and with other churches in Russia.

Fr. Leonid utilized his gifts and expertise readily for others, connecting personally with them and through cooperative ventures. In 1994, he served as intermediary for the NCC delegation and others meeting with Orthodox and free church leaders in Moscow, when tensions about evangelism, proselytism, and canonical territory were described as a "soul war." In 1998, he followed this up in the USA with a presentation to a "Proselytism and Evangelism Consultation," which significantly facilitated mutual understanding and respect, and with

personal interactions with fellow participants. He also participated in an interreligious delegation to help prevent a wider war in the Republic of Macedonia in the first decade of the 21st century.

Fr. Leonid brought these same inestimable gifts to his participation as a member of the executive committee of Christians Associated for Relationships with Eastern Europe (CAREE) for many years. He attended CAREE's meetings as often as his health and busy schedule would allow. In Fr. Leonid's service and all his ecumenical endeavors, he manifested zeal and wisdom, respect for others, profound love for the Church, and both deep hope and sober realism. When he spoke, people listened: we recognized that we were in the presence, as a fellow ecumenist once said, of "an aristocrat of the Spirit." His service and memory will be treasured. As Orthodox say, "May his memory be eternal!"

James R. Payton, Jr., Former Executive Secretary. CAREE