

Church Ministries / Departments

Department of Stewardship

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Accomplishments/Progress Since the 13th All-American Council

There were three major areas of focus since the 13th All-American Council for the Department of Stewardship. The first was the drafting and publication of a new OCA Stewardship Handbook, which was completed and made available to the faithful of The Orthodox Church in America in early 2005.

The second was to provide basic instruction in biblical stewardship principles through consultations with pastors, parish councils, stewardship committees, and other appropriate groups responsible for such education. Workshops were held, articles published, and informal consultations conducted by phone and email.

The third was to provide ongoing consultation to the Chancery staff of The Orthodox Church in America on the development of the financial ministries of the Church, including the “Fair Share” system, and on the development of Church budgeting. In conjunction with this, two study papers were written at the request of the Chancellor. One was on visionary budgeting for the Church, and the other was on the place of “development” in Church life.

Parishes visited since the 13th All-American Council:

Three Saints Church, Ansonia, CT
St. Mark’s Church, Bethesda, MD
Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, IL
St. Mark of Ephesus Church, Kingston, MA
SS. Peter and Paul Church, Meriden, CT
Holy Annunciation Church, Natick, MA
St. Nicholas Church, Norwich, CT
St. Nicholas Church, Whitestone, NY

Consultations have been held with:

St. Gregory Palamas Church, Glen Gardner, NJ
Holy Cross Church, Hermitage, PA
St. Andrew’s Church, Maple Heights, OH
St. Mary’s Cathedral, Minneapolis, MN

“Biblical Foundations of Giving” Presentations were made to:

Albanian Archdiocese
Diocese of Alaska
Diocese of New England

Presentations were also made to:

Pastoral Theology class, St. Vladimir’s Seminary

Department was represented at:

OCA Conference on Mission and Evangelism, Boulder City, NV

Education completed:

“Creating a Comprehensive Church Stewardship Program”
Christian Stewardship Association, Indianapolis, IN

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Numerous articles were written for *The Orthodox Church* newspaper and various diocesan publications. In addition, an Anglican diocese in Great Britain asked permission to use one of the articles for their own stewardship handbook.

The chairman continues to be available for workshops and consultations. The OCA Stewardship Handbook is available to all parishes, institutions, and individuals of The Orthodox Church in America. A “Bible Studies” series has been developed and should be available at the 14th All-American Council. Continuing education in the principles of biblical stewardship will be planned.

The department’s work is still hindered by limited funding. There is simply no budget to do everything that could (and should) be done. A part-time director who is also a full-time parish priest with other deanery, diocesan, and national duties simply does not have the time to devote to serious writing and workshops, etc.

Plans for the Future

Projects should be done in conjunction with the Department of Christian Education to develop a curriculum in stewardship principles. Projects should be done in conjunction with the Department of Evangelization to include in-depth stewardship training as part of outreach and mission formation. The Department of Stewardship chairman and members should be able to conduct workshops in parishes, deaneries, and diocesan assemblies.

Should the funds become available, we would work to establish a full-time director of the Department of Stewardship and assist in all stewardship training. In the absence of full-time funding, the department is ready to work hand-in-hand with other departments to enhance all aspects of stewardship education and the continued development of stewardship principles as a basic Christian responsibility for each parish and individual Orthodox Christian.

Articles of a timely nature about stewardship topics will continue to be written. The distribution of the OCA Stewardship Handbook will continue. The newly developed “Bible Studies” series will be promoted as a resource for parishes and study groups.

Accountability

Understanding “adequately serving the needs of the Church” as “within time and funding limitations,” the department has offered guidance to pastors, has published an effective handbook for use in parishes, is developing Bible studies and articles that educate and inspire learners to become better Christian stewards, and always stands ready to consult with His Beatitude, the Chancellor, the Chancery staff, the Holy Synod of Bishops, and the Metropolitan Council.

In addition to additional funding, the department should have additional people working in each diocese to educate local communities about Christian stewardship. Even in the absence of those funds and people, it also must be said that the department as a resource is underused. There are parishes and pastors trying to do everything alone without availing themselves of the resources that have been produced by the OCA’s Department of Stewardship. As is the case many times in the Church, the wheel is being re-invented in numerous places across North America.