



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF STEWARDSHIP OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

REPORT TO THE 40TH BIENNIAL CLERGY LAITY CONGRESS ✦ JULY 2010 ✦ ATLANTA, GA

STEWARDSHIP, OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

Liaison to the Holy Eparchial Synod:

Outreach & Evangelism Committee: His Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh
Stewardship Commission: His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos of Chicago

Archdiocesan Council Committee Chairs:

Outreach & Evangelism: Mrs. Catherine Lingas
Stewardship: Ron Harb & Fr Theodore Barbas

Staff: Fr. James Kordaris, Director of Stewardship, Outreach & Evangelism

BACKGROUND

On March 18, 2009, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios announced the appointment of Fr. James Kordaris to the position of Director of Stewardship, Outreach & Evangelism. Since 2003, Fr. Kordaris has served the Archdiocese as Director of Outreach & Evangelism.

Fr. Kordaris works together with the Stewardship Commission and the Outreach & Evangelism Advisory Board of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. Both are comprised of representatives from each Metropolis and the Direct Archdiocesan District formed to share best practices from parishes throughout the country and support Archdiocesan efforts to provide guidance and practical resources to the parishes.

THE 2010 STEWARDSHIP RESOURCE PACKET

The Stewardship booklet and the materials that accompany it are directed to parish leadership throughout the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America as part of an ongoing effort to provide practical and inspirational ministry resources. Stewardship Ministries, in coordination with the other national ministries of the Archdiocese, offers these resources under the unified theme of *Gather My People to My Home: Come and See*. Efforts will be focused on expanding the scope of these resources and delivering the core resource packet in a timely manner through the mail and posting to the Stewardship website. Every effort is made to support the parish in utilizing these resources for communicating with parishioners. Brochures have been provided for parish mailings, and text and graphics are provided for those parishes designing their own materials based on the Archdiocesan theme. The resource packet will be expanded to provide additional inspirational materials and items for reflection on Orthodox Christian Stewardship. Greek language materials will be updated and provided to parishes as needed.

STEWARDSHIP & OUTREACH: A PERSON-TO-PERSON PROCESS

Effective stewardship & outreach ministry is going out to our people wherever they are in their walk with Christ, helping them to realize their importance as members of the body of Christ, and encouraging them to offer their gifts in His service. Although we can use the mail to support our efforts, unless we meet with our people face-to-face, sincerely listen to their concerns and share a vision for the future of the parish, our efforts will not reach their full potential.

NATIONAL STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION

Stewardship Ministries is supported by the National Stewardship Commission, made up of clergy and laity from each Metropolis and the Archdiocesan District. The Commission meets on a regular basis to

share best practices as well as the needs and concerns of the regions they represent. The members of the Commission also encourage and support stewardship ministry at the local level

PLANNED GIVING

Resources are being developed by the Stewardship Commission's Committee on Planned Giving. The initial resource will be a brochure/handout and poster that encourages people to consider whether they have included the Church in their estate planning, and to speak to their priest for guidance. A network of Orthodox Christian professionals in the field of estate planning will be assembled locally and the parish priest will be able to direct individuals to these professionals for further guidance. Additional resources will be developed to support the parish priest and the metropolises and NY District in this effort.

NATIONAL STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION TRAVEL TEAM

The National Stewardship Commission includes a Travel Team which offers Stewardship Seminars, and has initiated a program to train stewardship teams in each metropolis/district which will then train local parish stewardship teams.

PARISH MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

The Stewardship Commission has established a Committee on Parish Management Software. Committee goals are to evaluate Parish Management Software programs currently available and to make recommendations to the parishes on the most suitable programs for their needs. Additional benefits might include favorable pricing due to number of users, greater ease of reporting to the Metropolis and Archdiocese through compatible formats, and better support through improved communication between parishes and software providers. A most favorable outcome would be the choice of a single package/program, a mandate from the Eparchial Synod for installation in the parishes, with funding provided to the parishes for implementation. This effort is being carried out in coordination with Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Departments of Administration, Finance and Information Technologies.

PARISH WELCOME FOLDER

To assist and encourage the parishes in reaching out to new members and to inactive members who may be returning to church for a service or sacrament, the department has developed a Welcome Folder which may be personalized by each parish with local information, directories, letters and more.

ORTHODOX NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

The Department is piloting a program for objectively evaluating, assessing, and measuring church health using a process called Orthodox Natural Church Development (ONCD). This program has been in existence for almost 20 years, and its implementation among Orthodox Christian parishes here in North America is increasing. The process itself is simple while the benefits of ONCD are many -- a select number of active parishioners take a survey which evaluates their parish's health in 8 different areas of ministry. The program is currently being piloted in several Long Island parishes. An article summarizing the program appeared in the most recent edition of the Orthodox Observer.

OUTREACH TO INACTIVE ORTHODOX

The Department is piloting a program designed to reach out to inactive Orthodox Christians -- baptized Orthodox who have fallen away from the Church for a variety of reasons. The program was presented to a group of parish clergy for review, suggestions and implementation. More recently, the program was sent to clergy of the Direct Archdiocesan District. Sometimes referred to as "Inreach," this ministry uses a variety of resources to find, contact and encourage these individuals to return to active life as members of the Body of Christ.

PARISH LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL CONTACT IN STEWARDSHIP, OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

The Director has made presentations to San Francisco, Boston and New York District Clergy-Laity Assemblies emphasizing the importance of parish leadership and personal contact in Stewardship, Outreach and Evangelism.

OUTREACH TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Department supports parish outreach to people with disabilities, also known as Inclusion Programs. This effort includes sharing of information on appropriate language and etiquette, outlines of successful parish programs, accessibility issues and more.

VISITOR CARDS & DISPLAY

There has been an excellent response from the parishes for the parish Visitor Card Display which incorporates the visitor card on a display welcoming the visitor to the parish. A supply of 100 personalized visitor cards is included with the display.

WELCOME BANNERS: GENERAL / NATIVITY / GREAT LENT / COME AND SEE

Many parishes are utilizing a series of 3 by 6 foot vinyl outdoor welcome banners developed for the parishes. DOE offers a general welcome banner which states "Find Your Spiritual Home in the Orthodox Christian Church," a Lenten banner which states, "Join us on a Lenten Journey to the Resurrection," and a Nativity banner which states, "Christ is Born. Glorify Him!" One mission-minded priest has commented that he is not sure if the banner has brought in new parishioners but it is serving to instill a missionary mindset among his parishioners.



COOPERATIVE INITIATIVES

FAMILY OUTREACH SUNDAY

Research has shown that 96% of unchurched individuals in America would attend church if invited. The Outreach Sunday program encourages active parishioners to invite inactive family members and Orthodox Christian friends for a special day of fellowship and spiritual renewal. Family Outreach Sunday was developed in cooperation with the Ladies Philoptochos Society and the Center for Family Care at Saint Basil Academy. The Director has been in contact with National Philoptochos and the Center for the Family regarding further development of this program

LOW-COST BIBLES FOR OUTREACH

The Department is working cooperatively with the Department of Religious Education to provide low-cost Bibles to the parishes for outreach ministry. DRE is able to offer certain Bibles from their inventory at a price that allows the parishes to give them to inquirers as part of their parish outreach ministry. This program should be in place by late summer of 2010.

PARISH COUNCIL TRAINING: *The Parish Council is a Ministry*

The Department of Stewardship, Outreach & Evangelism is working with the Administration Committee in the development of a national Parish Council training program including revision of the Parish Council Handbook. Parish leadership is critical to effective outreach and evangelism. It is important to instill an outreach mindset in our parish leaders. This program is being rolled out throughout the Archdiocese, with seminars having been held in the Atlanta & Boston Metropolises and the New York Direct Archdiocesan District. The Department has also edited an abridged version of the program to serve as a Parish Council Candidate Seminar as required by the Uniform Parish Regulations. The Director has participated in Parish Council Seminars in the New York District, and the Boston Metropolis. Plans are underway for a follow-up training program under the theme of Gather My People to My Home: Come and See, focusing on parish leadership and outreach.

INTERFAITH MARRIAGE: *Opportunity for Outreach*

With the rate of intermarriage in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in excess of 50%, it is imperative that we serve our parishioners and their current or future non-Orthodox spouse. The DOE Director meets regularly with Fr. Charles Joanides of the Department of Interfaith Marriage and together they have developed an educational program and accompanying ministry resources focusing on the needs of intermarried couples (one Orthodox / one non-Orthodox).

Respectfully submitted, *Bring your family & friends to church for special days of worship and fellowship.*

Father James W. Kordaris, Director
Stewardship, Outreach & Evangelism