



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
of North America, Metropolitan PHILIP, Primate

DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Carole A. Buleza, Director

September 5, 2007

Bulletin Insert Series by Mr. John Truslow

Staff Members

V. Reverend George Alberts
Diocese of the East
Diocese of New York and
Washington, DC

Mr. Robert Snyder
Diocese of Toledo
and the Midwest

Mr. Joseph Tersbay
Diocese of Los Angeles
and the West

Kb. Linda Funk
Diocese of Eagle River,
and the Northwest

Ms. Jacquelyn Fadel
Diocese of Ottawa and
Upstate New York

Mrs. Vasiliki Oldziej
Diocese of Wichita and
Mid-America

Kb. Anna Timko-Hughes
Diocese of Worcester and
New England

Kb. Betty Randolph
Diocese of Miami and
the Southeast

Kb. Leslee Abud
Associate

Kb. Gail Meena
Associate

Ms. Catherine Sullivan
Associate

Mrs. Sandy Mitchell
Associate

Subj: Priest's Resource Site: Tithing

Beloved Pastors and Parish Leaders,

With the permission of Mr. Ronald Nicola, and Mr. John Truslow, our website will begin to build a page called, "Priest's Resource Site: Tithing," to assist priests in helping the faithful fully understand how giving and tithing witnesses their dedication to God. I have gathered articles from the last several years from *The Word* magazine written by Mr. Truslow and by Mr. Ronald Nicola, which will enhance the page.

At present, materials include a 15-part bulletin insert series from St. Elias of Atlanta, two articles, and a poster, which is sized at 8 1/2 x 14. I will also be providing posters, book-mark, a keyword index and cross-reference with the lectionary. I pray these efforts will lead to children and adult to the realization that, "**Where your treasure is, there your heart is also.**" (Luke 12:34).

Please let me know if this is helpful, and share any ideas of your own.

Your Fellow-Worker in Christ,

Carole A. Buleza
Director

Pledging to Give in Stewardship
We continue to consider **pledging** (promising) to give (to transfer in love for faith) in **stewardship** (to those who manage value in trust for the true owner).

The History of Stewardship

Stewardship has a long history in the Church. Four thousand years ago, Abraham **tithed** as recorded in the first pages of the Bible (see Genesis 14:18-20). **Offerings** appear even earlier (see Genesis 4:3-4).

In the book, *Good and Faithful Servant: Stewardship in the Orthodox Church*, Dr. John Erickson of St. Vladimir's Seminary, explains why the faithful from traditionally Orthodox countries have trouble adjusting to stewardship. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the governments of Greece, Russia, Serbia, to name a few, were Orthodox. This meant the Church was supported by the State, which was supported by the taxes of the people. As Jaroslav Pelikan has said, "Before the 324 A.D. Byzantine Emperor, stewardship might have meant giving your life; after Constantine, stewardship consisted of paying your taxes."

Taxation is not God's way of providing for His Church—it robs us of the chance to *choose to give*. Because of state-supported churches, Orthodox who migrated to America had *lost the idea of "tithes and offerings"*. A further financial blow to the churches in the new world occurred after the Russian Revolution of 1917. Russia stopped sending support to the Orthodox Churches in America. By the 1920's parishes had adopted the methods of social clubs and charities, namely, "dues and fundraisers."

In 2005, the Self-ruled Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese voted to *return Orthodox to tithing*, by stipulating that parishes are to support the Archdiocese by tithing, rather than by assessment. By extension, families are to support their parishes by tithing. In the years since 2005, parishes and the Archdiocese have become stronger. Those who tithe have given God top priority in their lives, and have placed themselves squarely in His hands. They have discovered the peace that comes from trusting God, and being in the center of His will.

Pledging to Give in Stewardship
We continue to consider **pledging** (promising) to give (to transfer in love for faith) in **stewardship** (to those who manage value in trust for the true owner).

The History of Stewardship

Stewardship has a long history in the Church. Four thousand years ago, Abraham **tithed** as recorded in the first pages of the Bible (see Genesis 14:18-20). **Offerings** appear even earlier (see Genesis 4:3-4).

In the book, *Good and Faithful Servant: Stewardship in the Orthodox Church*, Dr. John Erickson of St. Vladimir's Seminary, explains why the faithful from traditionally Orthodox countries have trouble adjusting to stewardship. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the governments of Greece, Russia, Serbia, to name a few, were Orthodox. This meant the Church was supported by the State, which was supported by the taxes of the people. As Jaroslav Pelikan has said, "Before the 324 A.D. Byzantine Emperor, stewardship might have meant giving your life; after Constantine, stewardship consisted of paying your taxes."

Taxation is not God's way of providing for His Church—it robs us of the chance to *choose to give*. Because of state-supported churches, Orthodox who migrated to America had *lost the idea of "tithes and offerings"*. A further financial blow to the churches in the new world occurred after the Russian Revolution of 1917. Russia stopped sending support to the Orthodox Churches in America. By the 1920's parishes had adopted the methods of social clubs and charities, namely, "dues and fundraisers."

In 2005, the Self-ruled Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese voted to *return Orthodox to tithing*, by stipulating that parishes are to support the Archdiocese by tithing, rather than by assessment. By extension, families are to support their parishes by tithing. In the years since 2005, parishes and the Archdiocese have become stronger. Those who tithe have given God top priority in their lives, and have placed themselves squarely in His hands. They have discovered the peace that comes from trusting God, and being in the center of His will.

Sample of half-page bulletin insert page. The series is also offered as a single document if you wish to review the content with your parish council.

"Pledging to Give in Stewardship," Bulletin Series Titles

- 1 Pledging to Give in Stewardship I
- 2 Pledging to Give in Stewardship II
- 3 "For Those Who Would Give, God Will Provide"
- 4 Expectations of Our Parish
- 5 The History of Stewardship
- 6 Tithes and Offerings
- 7 With Tithing as the Goal
- 8 Frequently Asked Questions about Tithing
- 9 What is an Offering?
- 10 Offering Your Tax Break
- 11 Prayer, Fasting and Giving
- 12 Pledging Opportunities
- 13 Answers to Quizlet
- 14 Knowledge, Practice and a Bibliography
- 15 Give and Grow Closer to Him

105 Leader Heights Road, Suite 130, York, PA 17403

www.antiochian.org/christianeducation E-mail: AODCE@aol.com Phone (717) 747-5221 FAX (717) 747-5832