

SAMPLE: Organizational Interview Writing

SUBJECT: leadership communications, development, fundraising

Douglas Cramer, Writer | Editor; douglasramer.com, douglasramer@live.com

The subject of this interview, Ronald Nicola, praised my interview with him and the results in his annual report to the organization's Board of Directors, writing in part: "The Dept. of Stewardship wishes to express its sincerest thanks to the Dept. of Online Communications, and its chair, Douglas Cramer, for their excellent and expert help ... [they] provided an opportunity for us to participate in an interview session titled, "Giving is Part of our Spiritual Life." The interview enabled the Department of Stewardship to further one of its most important goals, to help fellow Orthodox Christians explore the notion that tithing is an act of spiritual commitment consistent with the teachings of the Holy Orthodox Church. ... May God continue to guide and bless their good work."

Stewardship Interview: "Giving is Part of our Spiritual Life" [EXCERPT]

The Antiochian Archdiocese Department of Stewardship's Chair Ronald Nicola taught high school social studies and served as a vice-principal for many years. A California native, he grew up attending St. Nicholas Church in San Francisco. He and his family have been members of [St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Church](#) in Orinda, California since its founding in 1978.

Ron has been active in many ministries of the Archdiocese, from SOYO to parish council to a twenty-year period of service on the Board of Trustees. Through these experiences, he developed an interest in Christian stewardship and the Scriptural teachings that guide the faithful in their offerings of time, talents, and treasure. Recently, the Department of Stewardship added two substantial resources to the web: [The Fifty-Two Week Parish Giving Campaign](#), and the [Parish Council Guidebook](#). The department is also responsible for the upcoming [Parish Council Symposium](#) in November.

Antiochian.org spoke with Ron about the ministry of the [Antiochian Archdiocese's Department of Stewardship](#).

1. What is the Department of Stewardship—when was it founded, and why?

Metropolitan Philip established the Department of Stewardship in 1975 and he appointed the late Ernest Saykaly of Montreal, Quebec, as its first chairperson. Mr. Saykaly, who was also the vice-chairman of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees, developed initial materials for the department under the banner, "We Believe." Both Metropolitan and Mr. Saykaly had the foresight to see that an enhanced understanding of the concept of Christian stewardship could improve the quality of member participation in the life of their parish and in the life of the Antiochian Archdiocese.

The "We Believe" campaign laid the foundation upon which the work of the Department of Stewardship has been built. It established the message that all aspects of member participation in the life of the church must be scripturally based. Whether attending Divine Liturgy, attending a parish council meeting, helping with a parish clean-up day, or preparing the parish budget for the coming year, scriptural teachings guide all of these activities. Certainly the professional training and personal experiences of a parishioner play a role guiding their involvement in parish activities, but the influence of scriptural teachings must always be the main guiding principle in these endeavors.

In 1977, Metropolitan appointed Dr. George Dibs and me to continue the work started by the late Ernest Saykaly. Since the passing of Dr. Dibs, I have continued to serve as chairperson of the Department of Stewardship.

2. When we think of stewardship, we usually think of money. How do you define stewardship?

In my view, the term stewardship can be defined using different combinations of words as long as a central message is reflected in any definition. Christian stewardship involves the offering of time, talents, and resources to the Church in thanksgiving for the many blessings God has bestowed upon His children. We give not because the Church needs our time, our talents, or our resources, but because we need to offer these blessings in acknowledgement that these gifts are a blessing from God. We offer them to the Church in thanksgiving to Him for blessing our lives so many ways.

3. Can you explain for us the purpose of the 52-Week Giving Campaign?

[The 52-Week Member Giving Campaign](#) is designed to change the perspective in many parishes about why and how much individual members give to the church. *Why* we give should be based on the reality that all we have in life is a gift from God. *How much* we give should be a measure of our thanks to God for His love for us, His children. ...

Dept. of Stewardship annual report archived online: <http://ww1.antiochian.org/2013-general-assembly-report-dept-stewardship>

Original interview archived online: <http://ww1.antiochian.org/stewardship-interview-giving-part-our-spiritual-life>