

New England Diocesan Assembly, October 24-25, 2008
Resolution adopted by the Diocese of New England
Proposed by Deacon John Zarras

- The diocesan assembly resolves to support the reduction of the annual fair share assessment of the central church from \$106 per annum to no less than \$90 per annum.

WHEREAS the Diocese of New England is painfully aware of the findings of the Special Investigative Committee that egregious and outrageous abuses have occurred over a prolonged period of time in the management of the monetary offerings of the People of God by officers and employees of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), and;

WHEREAS these abuses have not only damaged the image of the Holy Church and scandalized the faithful, but have injured the life, growth, and welfare of many of our parish communities by draining essential resources, stifling parish programs, and inflicting unnecessary poverty and suffering upon the faithful clergy, and:

WHEREAS in spite of these abuses and misuses of Church resources there remain functions which can and properly ought to be performed by the central administration of the territorial Church, and;

WHEREAS the cessation of many of these programs threatens the gradual disintegration and weakening of the Autocephalous OCA and a resulting polarization which would be an evil potentially as great in its consequences as has been our recent over-centralization, and;

WHEREAS we are the Autocephalous self governing Church in America, not autocephalous dioceses, and we need the archpastoral leadership of the Metropolitan, assisted by his administration as an “icon of unity,” providing pastoring and stewardship to the dioceses and parishes as the Body of Christ, with clear goals, boundaries and utmost accountability, and;

WHEREAS the OCA is the most effective agent for executing some of its present programs for the good of the Church, and;

WHEREAS the defense of the Church from legal threats by those who were demonstrably responsible for their majority of the aforementioned abuses, requires for a time the expenditure of substantial sums of legal fees, and;

WHEREAS the Church has acquired a substantial indebtedness in making restitution for past misappropriation of funds;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2008 Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of New England endorses and supports the reduction of the annual fair share assessment from \$106 per annum to no less than \$90 per annum with the anticipation that by the end of the ensuing triennium there can be further profound reduction in the annual assessment.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that concurrent with our support of the previously stated level of support (Head Tax), we also support (over the next 3 years) a process that will study the effects of moving away from the Head Tax system to one of percentage giving at levels necessary to support the appropriate ministries residing in the dioceses and under the central church administration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that our aforementioned support is contingent on the adoption by the AAC of the Long Term Recommendation 6) of the SIC report dated September 3, 2008 that reads as follows:

“The establishment at the 15th AAC of a long-term strategic planning committee to review: (a) the relationship of the dioceses to the Central Church; (b) the appropriate division of responsibilities and funding between the dioceses and the Central Church; (c) the separate and joint roles and responsibilities of the Holy Synod (HS) and Metropolitan Council (MC) in the governance of the Church; (d) the role, functions, structure, and funding of the Central Church Administration and its geographic location; and (e) the development, documentation, and implementation of sound business policies, procedures, processes, and practices. The committee will conduct a comprehensive review of *The Statute of the Orthodox Church in America* and all HS, MC, and Chancery policies to ensure accountability, openness, and communication to the Church-at-large. The committee will report to the HS and MC during their spring and fall sessions, beginning no later than the spring 2009 sessions and semi-annually thereafter.”