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Firm Helps Return 9th Century New Testament to Greek Orthodox Church

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On Nov. 15, 2016, George Tsougarakis and Pavlos Petrovas attended a special Thanksgiving ceremony in Chicago to mark the return of the oldest complete version of the New Testament to its home in Greece, which they and Michael Salzman helped arrange through their pro bono representation of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

The Kosinitza manuscript, which dates from the mid-ninth century, was looted in 1917 from the Monastery of Panagia Eikosifoinissa near Drama, Greece following the Balkan Wars five years earlier. The manuscript was purchased in 1920 by Levi Franklin Gruber, who later became president of Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary, a predecessor of the seminary that is now handing it back to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Among the attendees at the ceremony were representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, including His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios and a representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople (Istanbul), along with officials from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and local academic institutions.

The ceremony drew coverage in the Chicago Tribune.