



St. Tikhon Archdiocesan Stewards
Archdiocese of Canada

President's report to the assembly of the Archdiocese of Canada, Aug. 2013

The St. Tikhon Archdiocesan Stewards Program (STAS) has in the last seven years developed into a viable and steady source of financial support for the Archdiocese of Canada. As a program it has weathered some significant challenges to its credibility. In finding ways to address these challenges, new challenges have arisen, prompting us to find better and more efficient ways of meeting our present and future needs.

Going forward we must acknowledge the past, present and future challenges leading us to our upcoming Archdiocesan Assembly.

Past Challenges

As the Orthodox Church in America was in the middle of the drama that surrounded its financial reporting, STAS was introduced as a viable way to support the administration of the Archdiocese directly through individual giving. This concept was received positively and through the direct support of the faithful of the Archdiocese, it provided a base in which the Archdiocesan Council could seek a candidate for the office of Episcopal Secretary (Protodeacon Nazari Polataiko).

As the program developed it was clear that the initial administrative organization and banking arrangements were unable to accurately address reporting norms or eliminate unnecessary administrative duplication. A decision was made in October 2009 to formally incorporate STAS into the Archdiocesan Council and to have the Archdiocesan Executive Committee (ADEC) assume the administrative functions of STAS. This has allowed STAS's operations (including: administration, promotion and communication) to be streamlined able to better focus on its effort to promote the program.

Part of this was to close the Western account of the Archdiocese (at the Alberta Treasury Branch) and open an account with the Archdiocesan financial institution (Bank of Nova Scotia) in Ottawa. Not only did this allow for better and more transparent reporting, but gave the Archdiocesan Treasurer, Nikita Lopoukhine, a better understanding of what funds were collected and available. Through this process we lost some members however, in reality they had stopped being members years or months before. Through the transparent reporting available with ScotiaConnect we now had the tools to verify actual contributions and stopped contributions. As well, the Archdiocesan Treasurer now produces and sends the tax receipts to donors of STAS and to the general fund.

Perhaps the most significant challenge faced by STAS was when the allegations and charges of misconduct were brought against Archbishop Seraphim in the fall of 2010. When allegations of this kind are brought forward it is generally expected that financial giving stalls. Especially true if the person at the center of the allegations is the de facto face of the program (let alone the church).

But through each of these challenges the faithful of the Archdiocese were able to see that their support of STAS was not simply an issue of blind faith of an administrative system but rather the support of the body of Christ in this country. We are not just a loose association of like-minded parishes. We are members of one another as actualized in our Liturgy and by the offering of financial support beyond one's own parish walls.

Financial and Membership Review

The following is a report on the current monthly contributions and contributors (to July 2013). While STAS has seen attrition over the past seven years, the program has grown to recover and exceed past years' contributor numbers and donation amounts.

This review is focused on the monthly contributions and members. STAS does receive annual gifts on a regular basis however, this is a small percentage of the total contributions. The greatest value STAS brings to the Archdiocese is that funds flow on a consistent basis into the account. The funds are acquired from many sources with comfortable amounts for the contributor thus creating a stable and diversified income.

STAS Members (Monthly): 74

Members per contribution date

1st of the month - 32

15th of the month - 42

Members by Deanery (monthly contributors)

Atlantic Canada / Quebec - 13

Ontario - 22

MB / SK - 8

Alberta - 15

BC / Yukon - 16

Monthly Deposits (ScotiaConnect and Canada Helps): \$3566.00

Transaction amounts

Deposited on 1st - \$1721.00

Deposited on 15th - \$1845.00

Average contribution by STAS member: \$48.16 / month.

STAS members have contributed over \$250,000 since 2007.

STAS has an allotted marketing budget of \$3000 per annum, but in the last three years has yet to make any significant uses of it. Items like the STAS Banner, Steward printing and mailing costs, as well as travel expenses have being for the most part covered by "piggy backing" on existing actions, (STAS presentations being done while at Archdiocesan council meetings, or the Steward mail-out sent with Archdiocesan tax receipts etc.). Going forward, the operations committee's intention is to maximize the donations to STAS as efficiently as possible, through the prudent use of our marketing budget.

Present Challenges

As illustrated in the membership report, we as an Archdiocese are still far from realizing the potential of having meaningful membership enrollment compared to the population of the faithful. This could be attributed to the lack of formal STAS presentations in parish centers or the lack of communication of the continued need of financial support of the Archdiocesan administration. (Many in the Archdiocesan Parishes are not aware of the value an organized administration brings to the Church.) Another factor is the inability of the parish Rectors to see their presence and membership within a larger national Church. As a parish priest, I fully understand that the day-to-day life of a parish can obscure even the most important directions and elements of Archdiocesan life.

The danger is that these attitudes reduce parish life to an independent expression of being the church and not the fullness of being the Church the Body of Christ. We ask that parish Rectors look beyond their present and even future to see an Archdiocese that is striving to assist in the proclamation of the Gospel regardless of the age and heritage of the community, language and makeup of the population.

The next five years of STAS

STAS has seen enough modest growth while replacing STAS members who cancel their participation. While this is enough to maintain the expenses of the only paid position in the Archdiocese, growth must be achieved to realize future needs.

STAS Growth (spring 2012 to summer 2013)

Membership: + 0.97%

Contribution: + 0.93%

Average contribution / member: + 0.92%

Membership loss: - 0.07%

If we use the commonly accepted population of Archdiocesan faithful of 4000+/-, STAS has achieved 2% enrollment. This percentage has been consistent of the past several years and therefore, allowed the STAS Committee to better understand, change and expand administrative and promotional requirements. This is largely important from the perspective of low cost contributor services and marketing.

The STAS committee acknowledges that the best way to reach the faithful of the Archdiocese is through the Parish. The Rector's assistance in this cannot be understated. By promoting over and above monthly giving (beyond what individuals tithe to their parish) STAS has not only achieved a stable income but more importantly, offered a program that is accessible to all levels of income, responsibilities and financial position. (Contributions vary from \$600/ month to \$5.) This in a very tangible way assists the faithful in participating to the best of their ability.

STAS presentations have worked efficiently with good results at a low cost. We recommend that more parishes make time for presentations by representatives so that more people see what the Archdiocese is and the importance of funding it.

Since the Archdiocesan Assembly in Victoria the Episcopal secretary has filled the role of an Archdiocesan Secretary. Protodeacon Nazari Polataiko's job description has indeed swelled in the last three years. When one considers the growth and maturity of our Archdiocese, the present challenge of supporting him and his work is an ongoing concern

The biggest challenge facing STAS presently is the lack of individuals to carry out its day to day operations. When STAS began the committee consisted of seven members however, through a number of circumstances that number dwindled to three full members and the additional help of another while the work load has increased. The balance of the promotions, communication, and clerical work of STAS is still being done by members whose lives are just getting busier. This is not to say that the work of STAS is too overbearing for the present operations group, but rather that if STAS is to meet the current and future needs of this Archdiocese it will more committed members. For STAS to be as effective as it can it needs men and women from around this Archdiocese who have the time and energy to work within a team.

Future Challenges

The future needs of the Archdiocese from an administrative perspective can be summed up in financial terms. Going forward we will need priests for our parishes, funding to plant missions, proper compensation for clergy, proper insurance coverage... the list could go on.

Although STAS might not be the answer for any or all our future needs, STAS certainly has the potential to financially assist in preparing the foundation. As our Archdiocese grows so too will its needs. We pray that STAS might have the support from the faithful and from every Parish to grow as well.

Thanksgiving.

I am truly thankful for the commitment of the faithful of this diocese. Considering the challenges and the resources available to facilitate this program, we are in a position to further build up, and not have to build "back" up.

This says something about the resolve of the faithful of this diocese, and their vision of a country saved by the love of Christ, through His holy Church. May the Lord bless each of those members who have seen fit to offer to Him, that which is above and beyond what they offer in their own parishes, and continue to strengthen them in their witness.

STAS operations committee.

It was thought that this would be my last term as the STAS president, but my tenure has been extended by ADEC. I guess that is a vote of confidence, but that confidence should be directed to the operations group. Fr. Mathew Francis who despite serving the mission of St. Nikolai in the Yukon, as well as St. Herman's Sobor in Edmonton AB. (not to mention having a full time job and family), has helped with his work input over these last few years. His love of Christ and his zeal for the witness of the Gospel within Canada has always being a source of inspiration to me, and our group. I pray he can in some small way sill contribute to STAS. The same could be said for Dn. Jesse Isaac from St. Herman's Sobor in Edmonton AB. The heavy lifting for this program has come from Subdeacon Jeremy Scratch, who has worked with the banks, processed new

memberships, and entered our monthly numbers, along with providing council and direction in the day-to-day, and long range support of this program. STAS could not function without his dedication and the offering of his time and talent to the building up of the Body of Christ in Canada.

May the Lord continue to bless all their work and time, and by the prayers of St. Tikhon, Metropolitan Leonty, and our blessed Archbishop Arseny, and all the saints, known and unknown that ministered in this diocese, they might all be strengthened in their love of the Lord.

Priest Gregory Scratch
STAS President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory Scratch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.