



This is the written STAS report for the Edmonton Assembly. My apologies if those in attendance don't remember it this way as it ended up diverging rather far afield.

STAS report at Edmonton Assembly

This is our 10-year anniversary, almost to the day July 18/ 2007. We owe a big thanks to the initial group, **Fr. Matthew Francis; Sub. Dn. Peter Ewanchuk; Mark Petasky, Sub. Dn. Jeremy Scratch; Fr. Gregory Scratch; Fr. Alexie Vassiouchkine; Michael Luciuk and Alexandra Lopoukhine.** These were the 8 pre-STAS brain-stormers who ended up not only identifying our needs but came up with the concept of STAS to help meet those needs.

Upon rolling out STAS at the Ottawa Assembly, they were quickly joined by 7 more STAS pioneers;

Dr. John Hadjinicolaou; Fr. Alexander Pihach; Fr. Cyprian Hutcheon; Dn. Peter Choi; Sava Duran; Colin Justin Grimmond; and Dn. Jesse Isaac.

Thank You to all the pioneers who saw the vision and became the pioneer members of STAS! Through your faith and vision we have been able to raise more than \$300,000 over the last 10 years to support the Canadian Archdiocese in spreading the gospel and growing the Church.

Just so you understand how STAS operates; We answer to and are directed by our ruling Archbishop Irénée and the 16-member Archdiocesan council. The council meets at least twice a year and at every meeting the priorities and activity of STAS is reviewed and discussed. At our last council meeting in March, we worked out the priorities that are listed on the latest STAS pamphlet insert card.

- Mission parishes and clergy in need: 40%
- Future Auxiliary Bishop fund: 20%
- Education of clergy, seminary students: 15%
- Clergy pension fund: 10%
- Dean's travel and other expenses: 10%
- STAS operational expenses: 5%



We operate STAS on a very slim budget of less than 5% for expenses. In the world of charitable giving organizations this is unheard of; a 20% expense budget is considered exceptional. This allows STAS to commit 95% of every dollar donated to go towards top priority needs in our own Canadian Archdiocese. You will not find a better opportunity to invest in the kingdom of God - supporting your own Canadian Orthodox Church & your Archbishop!

Dr. John Hadjinicolaou is the Eastern Canada STAS coordinator, and Fr. Andrew Applegate is the Western Canadian STAS coordinator. He and Matushka Sonia, keep up the STAS records of active members, do the bi-monthly auto deposits through Scoria bank, send out STAS donation tax receipts for the Archdiocese, and tend to STAS information communications and questions. They work very closely with the OCA treasurer Fr. Justin Mitchell, and of course with Dr. John in all this.

Fr. Matthew Francis and then Fr. Gregory and Sub. Dn. Jeremy Scratch did a huge amount of work managing STAS for many years and then passed the torch on to Dr. John and Fr. Andrew a couple of years ago. Since the last Assembly, STAS has grown a little:

Last Assembly - 2013, we had **79** members and were generating a monthly income of **\$3,570** and had an average monthly donation amount of **\$48/mo.** per member.

Currently (as of July 15 and Aug. 1st. auto transfer periods) we have **93** members and **\$4,660** in monthly income averaging **\$50/mo.** per member.

It is a constant challenge to bring on new STAS Stewards. There is always natural attrition as we lose faithful members as their circumstances change, and we lose too many as they finish their earthly course. We are slowly going in the right direction, but we really haven't even scratched the surface of what we should be doing to support our Archbishop and his vision for growing the Canadian Church.

We are just now, at this 10 - year anniversary Assembly, rolling out a new organizational structure to breath new life and growth into STAS. Through the prayers of our patron St. Tikhon may it be blessed. In Western Canada, there are now additional STAS coordinators in all three of our Western deaneries. I would



ST. TIKHON

ARCHDIOCESAN STEWARDS

like to thank Fr. Matthew Francis from the BC deanery, Melanie Samaroden from the Alberta deanery, and Gregory Rychlo from the Saskatchewan/Manitoba deanery for agreeing to fill these positions. They are all looking for individual STAS representatives in the parishes of their deaneries who would commit to about 4 hours per month, promoting STAS within their individual parishes. Please do consider talking to them if you feel that God is leading you to serve in this way. Dr. John is presently doing the same in the East.

There is so much more we could all be doing to fulfill St. Tikhon's words "*The spread of Christ's faith ought to be near and dear to the heart of every Orthodox Christian... Orthodox people, Let us devote ourselves to the Orthodox faith not in tongue only, but in deed and truth,*" I don't know of a better way to tangibly support your Archdiocese and ruling bishop than joining us as a STAS steward. We are offering you a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate your love for Christ and His Church in a very real and consistent way! This type of investment pays great eternal everlasting compound interest and is guaranteed to withstand any market crashes as well as thieves and decay. Your guardian angel will be sure to be pleased as you invest in the kingdom of God!

Less than 100 out of around 5000 or so active OCA Church members have committed to supporting the work of the Archdiocese through STAS. That is only 1 in 50 or less than 2% of active OCA parishioners. Some parishes are doing far better, and some don't even manage a 2% STAS membership ratio. A case in point would be the little mission parish of St. Aidan in Cranbrook BC which has more than a 40% STAS enrollment rate. Just pause for a moment and imagine what we could achieve together as the Church if we could duplicate this 40% rate throughout the Archdiocese, and have an extra \$1.2 million annually to work with. Won't you join us, and commit perhaps \$50/mo. towards that vision?

We aren't asking for any of your tithing commitment to your local parish, but surely most of us could afford an additional monthly donation of 1% of our income to support the Canadian Archdiocese? We are asking you to dedicate the funds from 1 or 2 hours of your employment income each month. This would allow



Archbishop Irénée and the Archdiocese to have the funds to help support the needs of our fledgling mission parishes and our struggling young priests and seminarians. To have the funds set aside to be able to support an auxiliary bishop to take some of the load off our constantly traveling Archbishop Irénée. This is the largest Orthodox Archdiocese in the world! To be able to fund the priest pension plan we unanimously voted in at the last Assembly. We have many long serving priests who are past the age of retirement but have insufficient income to live on.

STAS is a critical and significant part of the strategic plan of the Archdiocese of Canada. This is how the Church has operated from the beginning. In Corinthians, we see the Apostle Paul commending the saints for sending financial help to the struggling church in Jerusalem. Instructing them that “*your abundance may supply their lack.*” The Russian Church supported the entire North American Mission to the tune of more than ½ million dollars in 1916 alone (about 12 million in today’s dollars) until the Bolshevik revolution destroyed this help. This is all that STAS is, a vehicle to allow us to help our struggling Orthodox family wherever they may be.

We have many needs, but we need your support to meet them. We are a family. Look around, these are your true brothers and sisters. Some are hurting and in need. When one hurts, we all suffer. Our dear Father of this branch of the family, Vladyka Irénée, sees where the needs are as he travels throughout our archdiocese. He wants to be able to do more to help, but he needs us to share our abundance to do this. There is no other source of income available to us but you. We welcome you in joining us as a STAS steward; for the good of your soul and the love of your Archbishop and your brothers and sisters. You will be blessed!