



ANNUAL REPORT
Russian Orthodox Diocese of Alaska Diocesan Assembly
Anchorage, Alaska
November 11, 2005

MISSION: Respond to the call of our fellow countrymen, heirs to the spiritual legacy of St. Innocent as they struggle in America's Holy Land to preserve the Orthodox faith against the evil one, treacherous weather, and harsh subsistence lifestyle.

OBJECTIVE: To provide hope to the faithful of Alaska through 5 major projects inclusive of organized prayer, theological education, Church School programs, and Outreach Alaska Ambassador development. To be accomplished in unity with all Orthodox jurisdictions by sharing our God-given treasures: financial means, time, talent, energy, ability and experience.

Your Grace, Vladyko NIKOLAI, beloved clergy, brothers and sisters in Christ,
Glory to Jesus Christ! Master bless!

It is through the grace of our Living Lord that I am able to again this year provide a report to the Diocesan Assembly on the current status and achievements of **Outreach Alaska – The New Alaska Mission**. This report will update your diocese on each project and provide financial information for the past 3 years – when this program officially became an institution of the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Alaska.

- **St. Innocent of Alaska Missionary Prayer Society – First we must pray.**

This is our most needed project – prayer for Alaska. It is my hope to recruit a volunteer to assist in some follow-up contact with those who have participated in this program since beginning in 2000. We need to determine those who remain committed and to begin a small newsletter to the membership. I would also like to develop some kind of weekend retreat every 3 years to bring all together for fellowship and prayer.

- **Spiritual Travel – Come and see what the Lord has made!**

There was nothing notable this year for Spiritual Travel. Recommendations were made to the sponsors who traveled to Kodiak for this year's SHS Commencement. **Outreach Alaska** was also contacted by several inquiring on the 35th. Anniversary St. Herman Pilgrimage and did provide recommendations for lodging, routing, and travel.

- **Adopt A Seminarian – “Those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.” Psalm 34:10**

Thanks be to God, again this year, **Outreach Alaska** provided sponsors for all eligible students (2nd, 3rd, 4th. year of studies) attending St. Herman Theological Seminary. One hundred and fifty commencement announcements and insert name cards were provided to the 2005 seminary graduates and administration of St. Herman Theological Seminary. I traveled to Kodiak in June to meet with the seminarians on the project and to participate in this year's Commencement. Donations to **Outreach Alaska** made it possible to send an additional \$50 Wal-Mart Gift Card to the seminarians for Pascha. There are no new participants for the upcoming 2005/06 Seminary Year. Sponsors are being sought for 8 new seminary participants beginning August 2006. Meetings with the seminarians each year still remain crucial to the

sponsor placement and better understanding of what is working and what needs to be changed/improved. There will be a quarterly evaluation form for the project beginning in December. This will include some input on their status of grades, chapel attendance, work scholarship, sponsor communication, etc. **Outreach Alaska** hosted a luncheon for the seminary wives and staff Matushka. This was a first and – God willing - will be included in my visits each year. Some of the ladies and their children joined me in the Library following the luncheon to assist with placing “**Outreach Alaska Library Project**” labels in the books that have been provided to the seminary by our **Alaska 2094 – the New Century** project. Their help was very much appreciated. This was the first year a sponsor has traveled to Kodiak for SHS Commencement. St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Washington DC sponsored Reader Leonty Johnston and sent his Pen Pal, Adrea Lutov and her father, as their parish representatives. Thanks be to God for Father Alexei Knagin for making a special trip to Spruce Island. This was organized for the sponsors and 6 other persons including myself and our commencement Keynote Speaker Father Patrick Henry Reardon. It was a beautiful spiritual experience for all and – God willing - a private Spruce Island pilgrimage will be provided each year for visiting sponsors. As always, my participation in the Commencement Ceremonies was truly a blessing. The final sponsor check in the amount of \$450 was presented to each graduating seminarian. In addition this year, the sponsors and **Outreach Alaska** provided each graduate a large icon of their sponsor parish as they were each asked to always remember those who assisted them through their theological education. I also gave each graduate a gift – “The Prayers of St. Isaac the Syrian”. Andrea Lutov accepted the “Sponsor Certificate” for her parish and presented Leonty with a financial gift from a special parish collection. Father Alexei Knagin’s sponsor also made arrangements for a special set of vestments to be given to him for his graduation. Due so some difficulty, this is still in progress and we are hopeful these vestments will be received by the time of the Diocesan Assembly. This year my follow-up for the sponsors has included a 2 page narrative of my visit with their seminarian, a photo page of the commencements and ordinations, and an update on my summer travels – **A Pilgrim Returns – 2005**. I have been in contact with all of the sponsors and requested that those who are not participating this year due to the graduations remain on our “Waiting List” for participation again in 2006/07. Several have responded positively. Some have agreed to continue contribution to the general fund of **Outreach Alaska** while waiting for next year’s **Adopt A Seminarian** assignment. **Adopt A Seminarian** is one of the most successful projects of **Outreach Alaska**.



His Grace, Bishop NIKOLAI with 2005 graduates and their sponsor icons.

- **Sister Parish – Alaska is our own!**
“....So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”
Romans 12:5

Sister Parish is now a partnership that will develop Church School programs in Alaska parishes with assistance from parishes in the lower 48. The objective is:

*“Build Church School programs for Alaska’s youth, for Alaska’s future. **Sister Parish** partners will work with Outreach Alaska to provide training for Church School Coordinators, teaching materials, and supplies to remote village communities.”*

Our first partnering is with St. Sophia Russian Orthodox Church in Bethel, AK and Annunciation Church in Brick, NJ. **Outreach Alaska** coordinated training for Amelia Savinova, a teacher living in Bethel and

a member of St. Sophia parish, as the newly assigned St. Sophia Church School Coordinator. This was through the Antiochian Archdiocese and the OCA Archdiocese Office of Christian Education Commission (OCEC). Arrangements were made for Matushka Betty Randolph, a certified Church School Trainer with OCEC, to meet with Amelia and provide the certification training. The training was completed and the stipend was provided by Father Gary Breton and Matushka Mary Buletza from Annunciation parish. Amelia returned to Bethel in early June from her training and is now the first Certified Church School Coordinator in the diocese. Father George Berezkin inspired and assisted her by requesting participation from the parish. A letter from him went out to all parish members announcing a meeting to discuss how the Church School Program would be developed. With parish input and Father George's spiritual leadership, classes began in September. Amelia and Father George led the first classes and she is now being assisted by him and Matushka Marie. We are in the process of completing the shipment of Church School materials to Bethel for this program. However, Amelia started the project with the IOCC Prayer Journal and found this most helpful for the first few classes. The classes are held on Sunday following Divine Liturgy and are attended by mothers, grandmothers, and children from ages 2 years and up. The adults bring food for the children and are as interested in learning as the youth. On the second Sunday of classes, Amelia taught on the Good Samaritan. There were 10 children and 4 adults attending. They all worked together to make 39 packages for IOCC relief. They will continue more of this charity work. It is planned that **Sister Parish** will coordinate certification training for Church School Coordinators and that Amelia will become an intricate part of this project. She will have additional training with OCEC and ultimately become a trainer in Alaska. However, this will take time and the Bethel program needs to be in operation for a year before she will be able to expand her efforts to others in Alaska. We will strengthen this project and plan for the next partnership for **Sister Parish**. OCEC and **Outreach Alaska** will work together to provide the certification for RODA Church School Coordinators.



The Training Materials



The Student and the Trainers

- **Alaska 2094 – The New Century**

“For this you were called.....that you should follow His steps.” 1 Peter 2:21

The criterion for this project has been fully developed as follows:

“Outreach Alaska Ambassadors and ongoing projects will build on those first called for America – the Saints of Alaska. This sure faith foundation focuses on St. Herman Theological Seminary, the Russian Orthodox Museum, ongoing projects and campaigns that will strengthen Holy Orthodoxy in America.”

As of the beginning of this year, **Alaska 2094 – the New Century**, committed to complete needs for the St. Herman Theological Seminary Library. As a priority, the Library Project accomplished the following:

- **Phase 1:** (\$2,100 +) Raised funds for and purchased all of the “Titles” requested by Father Chad Hatfield as presented to the SHS Board of Trustees during the November 2004 meetings. This included a library scanner and stand. Was completed and shipped in February 2005.
- **Phase 2:** (\$5,000) Raised funds for and purchased all new tables (9), accent chairs (2), and (20) chairs for the library and adjacent classrooms. Was completed June 2005.



New Tables and Chairs in Library



New Accent Chairs for discussion groups

- **Phase 3:** Will provide new carpet and painting of the walls inclusive of the adjacent classrooms. Carpet was selected and pricing was quoted by Ardinger's in Kodiak – June 2005. This should be completed by the end of summer 2006.
- **Phase 4 (FINAL):** Will raise funds for a Dictionary Stand and other requested furnishings.
- Currently there is a balance of \$7,000 available for the completion of this project.

In order to complete Phase 3 and 4, it will be necessary for the seminary to provide a total amount of funds needed for the carpet, carpet laying, paint, dictionary stand, and any additional furnishings. Until the Library Project is completed, there will be no other projects for **Alaska 2004 – the New Century**.

It was reported last year that WOMEN (Women Orthodox Missions and Evangelism Network) would assist in the development of the Ambassador program for **Outreach Alaska**. To date there has been no effort on their part, and this has been disaffiliated. The Ambassador Program needs to be planned according to last year's report and submitted to His Grace, Bishop NIKOLAI for a blessing to move forward. Once this is completed and with Vladyka's blessing, the Ambassador program will become a major fundraising and development instrument for the diocese.

Travel this year included the following:

- June - Kodiak for the SHS Commencement Activities
- June - Sioux City, Iowa for the Antiochian Diocese of Wichita and Mid America Parish Life Conference

An exhibit was set-up during the conference.

- July - Toronto for the OCA All American Council

An exhibit was set-up during the council.

- July - Troy, Michigan for the Antiochian Archdiocese Convention

Attended meetings, networked with potential donors and **Adopt A Seminarian** sponsors, and distributed **Outreach Alaska** brochures, etc.

- October – Oklahoma City, OK for the Antiochian Diocese of Wichita and Mid America Fall Gathering.

A presentation on **Outreach Alaska** was given to the Diocese Antiochian Women meetings. Brochures and copies of my June Alaska travel report (**A Pilgrim Returns – 2005**) were distributed.

The **Outreach Alaska** website has been developed and all has been donated by a volunteer. Keeping the site updated has become a challenge, but we are thankful for this service and know it will all come to fruition as God wills. The address is www.outreachalaska.org.

An accountant is providing monthly financials and annual reports at the cost of \$20 per month. Since 2002, **Outreach Alaska** has raised over \$123,000 through October 2005 for the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Alaska. The majority of these funds have been expensed out for **Adopt A Seminarian** or other projects affiliated with St. Herman Theological Seminary. The Diocese has provided \$5,000 directly to **Outreach Alaska** for travel expenses. Additional travel and lodging expenses have been provided by the diocese over the past 2 years and are not reflected in our accounting reports since these funds did not run through our accounts. Complete financial information for 2002 – Oct. 2005 accompanies this report. Other funds raised from December 1999 until this became an official project of the diocese in 2002, averaged a total of more than \$7,000. Except for \$2,500, these funds were raised for St. Sophia Russian Orthodox Church in Bethel, AK. **Outreach Alaska** maintains checking and savings accounts in Wichita, KS. These accounts are currently being reviewed and will be moved to a bank charging no service fees. This will allow 100% of the funds raised to be utilized for the projects.

This past year, **Outreach Alaska** has maintained all seminarian sponsors, developed the first Church School Program in Bethel, AK, trained and Certified the first Church School Coordinator for the diocese, accomplished Phase 1 and 2 of the SHS Library Project, developed the website, and acquired a very reasonable accountant – to mention a few. Thanks be to God for all that He has provided. Please remember me in prayer that I may accomplish His Will for your Russian Orthodox Diocese of Alaska.

“Active love without submission cannot exist. How can you love and serve if you don’t first submit to the other’s will? Every movement of active love is service, and so those who obey serve in two ways. On the one hand they show their faith in the one giving the order, and on the other hand they show their love through the service rendered.”
Elder Joseph the Hesychast

Respectfully Submitted on November 11, 2005

Mary Ann Khoury, Coordinator
Outreach Alaska