

Financial Sustainability

The focus of our work on financial sustainability was narrowed primarily to the OGA and PMA. The conclusion of this committee is that while the analysis predicts difficulty sustaining OGA in the near future, the primary concern is that the current allocation of funding between PMA and OGA is not sustainable.

Agencies collaborate regularly, but there is no systemic instrument or authority in place to ensure coordination and cooperation between agencies, particularly between PMA and OGA, and between Assemblies. ASG only exists as a service provider, and there are no facilitators for the relationship (including finances or mission) at a structural level. Additionally, mission priorities are set by biennial assemblies comprised of elected commissioners who often have little understanding of the outcome and true financial implications of their votes. This leaves staff and boards scrambling to meet the discerned needs and priorities of the body. While financial sustainability appears relatively stable for now, the structure is not set up for the projected needs of a 21st century church.

If OGA does not get another way to access needed revenue beyond raising per capita, the pressure on mid-councils will increase, which is a primary source of stress according to the committee's research/data-gathering. Seeing OGA and PMA as part of "One Church" instead of two competing agencies would help address questions of improving fiscal management and sustainability from a cultural and structural standpoint.

A broader issue impacting sustainability is communication. Many in the PC(USA) are unaware of the four councils that make up the national church, and most do not understand the varying ministries and roles of the six agencies. Mid-council leaders and other church leaders do not understand how per capita is used and what, for lack of a better phrase, they "get" out of per capita. Communicating use of per capita funds, program/ministry effectiveness, and helping mid-councils and church members see clearly what their funds from mission giving or per capita support would be vital to shifting culture and educating the church. It would reduce the number of priorities competing for attention.