



# Serving God's World, Strengthening the Church

A FRAMEWORK FOR A COMMON JOURNEY IN CHRIST

## Letting Down the Nets – A Progress Report

**A** GAIN, what is *Letting Down the Nets*? It is about stewardship – about finding the resources and tools with which to do the work that God calls us to do together. *Serving God's World, Strengthening the Church: A Framework for a common journey in Christ* is a shared vision for growth in mission and ministry across Canada for several years, a vision for **service in God's world**. The challenge of making this vision and *The Framework* real lies in finding and coordinating the resources required for the new work along with existing work.

The financial resources are available to fund the Anglican church's present and future **if we choose to respond intentionally, imaginatively and courageously with a prudent stewardship plan that engages our finest leadership within an effective organization.**

This challenge resulted in the development of the plans outlined in *Letting Down the Nets* – a plan to:

- Increase the financial resources of parishes, dioceses and General Synod that are essential for the church's renewal and restoration. In order for our church to grow in membership, faith and service, strong financial support is required at all levels.
- Raise new funds the church requires now for *Serving God's World, Strengthening the Church*.

The *Letting Down the Nets* initiative operates with four tracks under the leadership of a steering committee: Stewardship; Proportional Gifts to General Synod; Major and Planned Gifts; and Annual Appeals. This progress report covers activities to date in these four tracks.



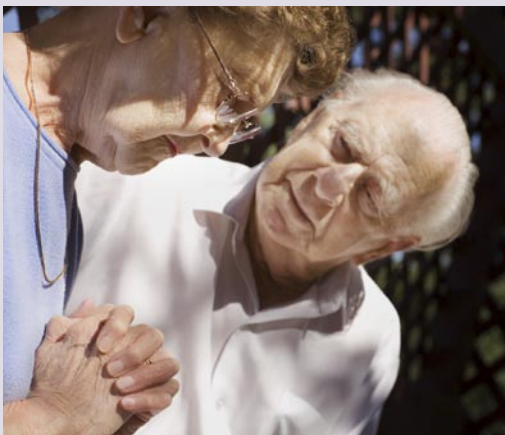
*"The best preparation for tomorrow is to do today's work superbly well."*

**SIR WILLIAM OSLER**

### STEWARDSHIP

We are working with six dioceses (pilot projects). This is the process we have adopted:

- An initial consultation in the diocese with diocesan leaders to learn about the diocese.
- The diocese then develops a "Project Overview" providing some ideas of what they would like to do relating to a stewardship initiative in the diocese.
- Two members of the steering committee then visit the diocese to hold a series of one-on-one interviews plus a number of focus group meetings, involving



*“Letting Down the Nets enabled the Diocese of Edmonton to move forward in our stewardship ministry in a way we previously could not even imagine. ... To our surprise and delight we found that by doing the requested analysis of our raw data, we entered into a far better understanding of our ministry and mission than previously. As all this happened just prior to the diocesan synod in October 2005, we found we were better prepared for our synod than ever before.”*

*The Rt. Rev. Victoria Matthews, Bishop of Edmonton*

approximately 80 clergy and lay leaders from across the diocese to “test” the Project Overview.

- The steering committee members then produce a “Planning Study” outlining what they have heard during the interviews in terms of possible support for the stewardship initiative plus potential barriers that may have been identified.
- The diocesan leaders, working with the steering committee members, then develop a plan for a stewardship initiative covering a three-year period.

The dioceses currently involved in this process are: Western Newfoundland, Fredericton, Nova Scotia & P.E.I., Ottawa, Rupert’s Land and Edmonton. Each diocese is at a different level in the process outlined above, but there is a great deal of enthusiasm in these dioceses.

The Diocese of Ottawa launched its initiative in March 2006 at a stewardship conference and is already presenting training modules on a regional basis, with our assistance.

The Diocese of Nova Scotia & P.E.I. is launching its initiative in October at its diocesan synod and will begin working in three specific areas in the diocese immediately afterwards.

A Planning Study has been prepared and presented to diocesan leaders in Rupert’s Land where a new stewardship committee has been formed. Two steering committee members met with the bishop and leadership team of this committee in late

August to assist in the development and subsequent implementation of a diocesan stewardship initiative.

In Fredericton a Planning Study document was recently tested at a series of regional archdeaconry meetings and we will shortly begin the implementation of this plan.

In Edmonton we have provided speakers and workshop leaders at three gatherings involving both clergy and lay people from across the diocese. We are now in dialogue with the bishop in determining what the appropriate next steps should be.

In Western Newfoundland a Project Overview has been completed and we will be in this diocese in early autumn to conduct the required interviews before preparing the Planning Study.

In addition to working with diocesan leaders in developing a stewardship initiative we have provided assistance in the areas of strategic planning, communication plans, revisions to apportionment/allotment systems as well as keynote speakers and workshop leaders at various conferences and seminars.

Recognizing that we received requests from more than six dioceses for assistance under this track, we are also assisting other dioceses as follows:

- Kootenay – assisting with the development of a diocesan strategic plan and partial funding for a full-time gift planning consultant
- Saskatoon – assisting with the development of a diocesan strategic plan

- Montreal – providing speakers for a stewardship conference in November
- Moosonee – providing a speaker for a clergy conference this autumn
- Ontario – providing consulting and gift planning support to the diocesan stewardship committee
- Saskatchewan – providing consulting services re stewardship and financial development
- Toronto – providing a workshop leader for a stewardship conference in October

In addition we continue to dialogue with bishops in other dioceses to see if we can find appropriate ways to assist them with their ministry.

We are grateful to the Diocese of Toronto which has provided the services of their director of stewardship development for ten days per year to add to our consulting team.

#### **PROPORTIONAL GIFTS TO GENERAL SYNOD**

The objective under this track is to encourage all dioceses to contribute at the minimum level of 26% of diocesan income. We are taking every opportunity to speak to diocesan synods and other diocesan gatherings to promote this concept. It has been encouraging to see some dioceses increasing their contribution. Others, however, which have reduced their contribution, have offset this. At least diocesan leaders tell us that there is a desire to reach the suggested level and we will continue to work with them to achieve this objective. We believe that there is a need for a clearer plan relating to the ministry of General Synod that can be communicated more effectively across the country. We are currently working with the management team at Church House to produce such a plan.

#### **MAJOR AND PLANNED GIFTS**

One of our objectives is to ensure that every diocese has at least the part-time services of a gift planning officer. This is to expand the ministry that has been in place through the General Synod annual budget for the past 12 years. Assistance is provided to the diocese through partial funding as well as resources. Since we commenced the *Letting Down the Nets* initiative we have been able to assist the following dioceses with



*“Every member of diocesan council realizes there are few alternatives for the future without a common shared vision and goal for ministry in keeping with the gospel during these changing and challenging times. Without the leadership of General Synod, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to realize the vision of this necessary and excellent initiative.”*

*The Rt. Rev. Claude Miller,  
Bishop of Fredericton*

the services of either a full- or part-time gift planning consultant: Ottawa, Western Newfoundland, Central Newfoundland, and Edmonton.

We are currently in discussion with Qu’Appelle, Huron and Kootenay and expect to complete agreements with these three dioceses within the near future. There are other dioceses that we would like to assist, but funding, of course, is the major difficulty.

Although it is not easy to monitor the exact results of the ministry of the gift-planning consultants as parishes often do not advise when bequests or gifts are made, there is no doubt the consultants are producing excellent results. In the main it is the parishes that benefit the most but also dioceses and General Synod plus related groups such as The Primate’s Fund and the Anglican Foundation.

We have begun a process in order to obtain eventually



some major gifts for the church. This is a long term process in that a potential donor has to be identified first and then cultivated over a period of time before the “ask” is made. At present the regional gift planning consultants are working with their diocesan bishops in identifying potential donors and then we will conduct the necessary research from the Office of Financial Development and begin the cultivation/educational process. This is a long-term process, but it has to start before results can be obtained!

In our original planning we expressed the belief that it would be beneficial to establish a number of endowment funds for various ministries, so that potential donors could assist in areas that they are particularly interested in. To this end an endowment fund to support ministry in the Council of the North has been established with the Anglican Foundation acting as the administrator. We hope that other endowment funds will be established in due course.

## ANNUAL APPEALS

The main focus of this track is to find ways to enhance the existing annual appeals of The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund, Anglican Appeal, the Anglican Journal, and the Anglican Foundation, in addition to seeking ways to develop closer cooperation between these partners.

To this end an independent study was commissioned and undertaken by Lorna Somers, one of Canada’s leading experts in this area of financial development. The “Somers Report” has now been received and circulated to appropriate personnel. One of the outcomes has been the formation of a task force in Church House, under the chair of the General



Secretary, comprising members of the partners, including representatives of *Letting Down the Nets*. To date three meetings have been held and we are reviewing the recommendations of the Somers Report with a view to implementing the recommendations as far as possible. The separate incorporation of some of these partners produces some challenging aspects as we move forward, but with the spirit of cooperation that is developing we feel confident that some positive results will occur.

## FUNDING

When *Letting Down the Nets* was approved at General Synod in 2004 it was on the understanding that funding would have to flow from sources outside the General Synod annual budget. The steering committee continues to seek funding from a variety of sources and appreciates the support it is receiving from individual donors, parishes and dioceses across the country.



*For information about General Synod’s  
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