

*Building Strong  
Leadership Teams*

IN THIS ISSUE:

Why Vital Teams? **1**

Church as Base Camp **5**

Teams Built on Trust

New! Try This at  
Church Resource **8**

**11**

## *Why Vital Teams?*

BY MIGUEL ANGEL ESCOBAR

Working with congregations and dioceses across our church, one thing is clear: team leadership is one of the most critical issues facing the Episcopal Church today.

Many lay+ clergy leadership teams at both the congregational and diocesan levels are searching for purpose, lack the structure needed to be effective, have become regulatory and administrative bodies rather than mission-focused, and I will argue that few are tapping into the true depth of gifts that lay members bring to the table. This lack of strong leadership isn't just unfortunate – the 2010 Faith Communities Today Survey notes that leadership and decision-making styles have been a greater source of decline than many of the hot-button issues of the past ten years.(1)

In response to this need, the Episcopal Church Foundation

(ECF) has launched Vital Teams, a program for strengthening the lay+clergy leadership teams that are at the heart of Episcopal congregations. The need for this program grew from two areas of particular concern:

**Clergy education and formation:** There is a significant gap between how clergy are formed in seminary and dioceses today and the type of leadership that is needed at the congregational level. Our beloved institutions are excellent at forming liturgists, chaplains, and theologians, but many graduates struggle with organizing and guiding a leadership team, a skill set that is critical for congregational leadership. Furthermore, as curacies go by the wayside, opportunities for hands-on leadership formation are becoming far and few between. Without the skills needed to bring together a strong team, some clergy choose either

a clergy-centric model (where they are the sole decision-maker and doer) or the absentee facilitator model (where nothing happens because no one knows who is doing what). Knowing how to gather a diverse team around a shared sense of purpose and then accomplish a great deal through this team requires extraordinary leadership skills – skills that are by and large missing from the curriculum of most of our beloved leadership institutions.

**Lay formation:** As a lay person working for one of the few lay-led organizations of the Episcopal Church, I am concerned that after 30 years of praise for the Baptismal Covenant, the Church still struggles with how to invite and employ the wide variety of gifts that lay members bring to the table. This intractable clergy-centrism is reinforced at all levels of the Church, not only by the House of Bishops (2), and not only by priests and deacons, but by we the laity as well. For, if we are honest, it's clear that many of us are all too happy with only writing checks and outsourcing our faith to the paid professionals. A different form of congregational leadership, one that invites lay members to partner with clergy in visioning and decision-making, will challenge us all to faithful discipleship in new ways.

Vital Teams focus is on:

- Providing effective training on how to structure a strong lay+clergy leadership team.
- Offering practical tools and resources for identifying strong team leaders.
- Engaging in advocacy and partnership on a church-wide level to encourage our major leadership formation institutions to incorporate a team leadership focus in their curriculum and discernment processes.

There are other reasons why a focus on lay+clergy team leadership is critical to today's Church. These include the ongoing search for more financially sustainable forms of leadership, the continuing high rate of clergy burnout, as well as the shift in wider society toward more collaborative and networked forms of leadership. And, of course, there's Jesus of Nazareth who gathered a diverse group of men and women around a shared vision of the Kingdom of God and who inspired an early church model where "there are many members, yet one body," (1 Corinthians 12).

### **'Jack of all Trades' vs. Team Leadership**

ECF is by no means the first orga-

nization to point out the fact that many of our major leadership formation institutions are not preparing lay and clergy leaders for the challenges of leading a community of faith today. Indeed, there have been many efforts – including past ECF pilot projects – to teach seminarians and the newly ordained the financial, communications, and administrative aspects that go along with being the head of a small nonprofit.

While this continues to be an important approach, we have come to believe that there are some inherent problems with it. For one, it continues to put the clergy person at the center of all things. Now they are not only supposed to be excellent preachers, spiritual leaders, and providers of pastoral care, clergy are also supposed to know how to be excellent fundraisers, communications specialists, budgetary experts, and building managers. This approach places unrealistic expectations on new clergy and is basically a set up for burnout. What's worse, however, is that it reinforces the idea that the priest must be an expert in all things.

When leaders begin from a team-centered approach, they can afford to be more honest (and humble) regarding their own strengths and weaknesses. The focus of leadership formation

formation shifts from making one individual a Jack of all Trades to teaching him/her a set of basic – and very learnable – skill sets about how to unite people with a diversity of gifts in addressing the many challenges facing communities of faith today. It's a simpler, more sustainable approach that we believe will serve our congregations well.

### Vision and Measuring Effectiveness

ECF believes that it is critical to have a long-term vision – or a clear and hopeful picture – of what the Church will look like once Vital Teams' mission has been realized. In partnership with other leadership institutions across the Church, ECF is aiming for a Church where:

- **All Episcopal communities of faith, regardless of size or budget, will have access to effective and innovative lay+clergy leadership training.** At this early stage, ECF is focused on two critical leadership skill sets for lay+clergy leadership teams – practices for discerning and sustaining a sense of shared purpose and the practical basics on how to build strong group structure so that the team can effectively carry out its mission.

- **The concept of effective lay+clergy leadership teams will be incorporated into leadership formation institutions throughout the Church.**

While some seminaries and dioceses already incorporate elements of team leadership into their focus, it is clear that the Church as a whole has a long way to go. ECF is engaging in advocacy and partnership to encourage major leadership formation institutions to incorporate a focus on team leadership into their curriculum.

- **Congregations and dioceses will be highly skilled at identifying strong lay+clergy team leaders.** ECF will provide tools and resources for identifying strong lay and clergy team leaders, a program activity that sounds more banal than it actually is. This final piece is rooted in the question “How can we incentivize individuals to become strong team leaders?” Our approach is to help search and discernment committees focus on those individuals with the proclivity and training to lead teams effectively. A simple example might be a set of ten interview questions about team leadership for a clergy search committee to use when interviewing potential candidates.

Finally, I want to note that ECF

does not see Vital Teams as a short-term project, a faddish initiative that is here today and gone tomorrow. I believe that one of the most remarkable things about ECF is the strength and longevity of our programs. ECF's Fellowship Partners Program celebrates 50 years this year and ECF Vital Practices began nearly 20 years ago as Cornerstone newsletter. Our vision for Vital Teams is long-term and intentionally bold: We have committed ourselves to a difficult and meaningful task - the patient and persistent work of changing how we form and identify leaders in the Episcopal Church.

*Vital Teams is led by Miguel Escobar, program director for leadership resources, Kate Adams, special projects director, and two lead consultants, the Rev. Rosa Lindahl and the Rev. Ronald C. Byrd, Sr. [Click here to learn more about the launch of Vital Teams.](#)*

***Miguel Escobar** serves as the Episcopal Church Foundation's program director for leadership resources. He coordinates the lay+clergy team responsible for ECF Vital Practices, the Fellowship Partners Program, ECF's educational workshops and webinars, the Vestry Resource Guide, Strategic Solutions, ECF's Spanish language initiatives, and the newly launched Vital Teams. Miguel graduated from Union Theological Seminary*

with his MDiv in 2007. Write Miguel at [mescobar@episcopal-foundation.org](mailto:mescobar@episcopal-foundation.org) or follow him on Facebook and Twitter.

## Resources

- 2010 Faith Communities Today Survey [http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/Episcopal\\_Overview\\_FACT\\_2010.pdf](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/Episcopal_Overview_FACT_2010.pdf)
- ECF Announces New Initiative: Vital Teams to Help Strengthen Lay+Clergy Leadership Teams <http://www.episcopalfoundation.org/news-and-events/news-detail?newsID=f13ffcc9-c3f7-4a68-8fe5-f53a166cd2a8>

## Footnotes

- (1) The 2010 Faith Communities Today Survey of the Episcopal Church noted that “declining congregations tended to have more overall conflict and more areas of serious conflict”, that conflict over “leadership and finances were the areas most strongly related to decline in Average Sunday Attendance” (pg 3).
- (2) The House of Bishop’s 2014 “Primer on the Government of the Episcopal Church and its underlying theology” summarizes the roles of clergy and

laity in the congregation as follows: “The ordained assist the whole Church by accepting responsibility for worship, the Church’s principal act; the faithful proclamation of the Gospel, the teaching of the Faith, and the administration of all the sacraments. The laypeople take responsibility for finances, and for maintaining the properties of the congregation for the use by the rector for ministry. Most importantly, they do the work of God’s mission in the world” (pgs. 9-10).

This narrow interpretation of the laity’s role hardly describes the wide range of creative ministries that lay leaders can (and do) fulfill within congregations, particularly when lay leaders partner with clergy in visioning and decision-making. It does, however, capture the essence of the clergy-centric model; note that the second sentence describes the rector alone as engaged in ministry.

## Editor's Letter

Across our church, familiar clergy and lay roles are changing. Just as our understanding of church changes with changing times and circumstances, so do our models of leadership. How are these changes impacting our effectiveness as lay+ clergy leadership teams?

At ECFVP we are seeing congregations thrive as a result of successful lay and clergy leadership teams. We are also hearing from congregations eager to learn how others are approaching new realities that often mean a change in leadership. In this issue, we'll share stories, examples, and resources of how congregations and dioceses are creating environments that facilitate people discovering – and acting on – their vocation as a person of faith and at the same time opening doors for broader lay participation across the church.

This month in Vestry Papers:

■ Forming and identifying effective lay and clergy leadership teams continues to be challenge for many of our congregations. In "Why Vital Teams?" Miguel Escobar introduces Vital

Teams, the Episcopal Church Foundation's new program for strengthening the lay+clergy leadership teams that are at the heart of Episcopal congregations. Available in English and Spanish.

■ Effective congregational leadership teams include members with a strong sense of Christian vocation and the gifts they bring to the table. Fletcher Lowe's "Church as Base Camp," explores the ways a vestry might stretch its vision to help its baptized discover and claim their ministries in their lives beyond the church doors.

■ Our capacity to move into the future depends on the ability of our congregational leaders to function effectively as a team. In "Teams Built on Trust," Rosa Lindahl shares the process she and the vestry are using to strengthen their leadership team as they prepare to move from full- to part-time clergy on staff. Available in English and Spanish.

■ In this issue, we introduce a new feature, "Try This at Church," an exercise you and

your organization can use to strengthen and support team efforts in your congregation. This month's resource, a tool for measuring team effectiveness arises from Rosa's article, "Teams Built on Trust." Available in English and Spanish.

■ In "A Blueprint for Change," Birdie Blake-Reid shares the story of how the laity in her church, in partnership with the bishop and their new rector, reclaimed the leadership roles they had given away over the years. The result? A congregation that turned itself around and once again serves as a beacon of hope in their urban neighborhood. Available in English and Spanish.

■ In our second "Try This at Church" we share an exercise from Howard K. Williams' and Birdie Blake-Reid's workshop from last month's New Communities Conference. This seemingly simple exercise proved to be a great conversation starter, helping people talk about how they view their church. Available in English and Spanish.

■ When a school is part of your congregation's ministry, leadership responsibility expands. Schools and congregations each need strong staff/volunteer teams and good communication between the two is essential. In "Making it Work," Ann Mellow asks two heads of school to share what makes their church-school relationships work.

■ Rosa Lindahl continues to report on the work her congregation is doing to prepare for their transition from full time clergy to part time. The vestry is working on strengthening their skill in working as a team, and, as she notes in "The Slow Work of God," building trust and a deeper relationship is "not for the faint of heart." Available in English and Spanish.

In addition to these new Vestry Papers articles, ECF Vital Practices' offers other resources related to building effective teams, including those featured in our September 2013 digest, Building Leadership Teams

(<http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/building-leadership-teams/>).

Do you have a resource you'd like to share with other congregations? Consider posting it on Your Turn: If you've a subscriber, click on the Make a Submission button. Not a subscriber? It's easy; look for, and click on the Subscribe button in the top right hand corner of the homepage: [www.ecfvp.org](http://www.ecfvp.org).

If you are interested in seeing our Spanish language content, please visit our searchable index for our Spanish content at <http://www.ecfvp.org/topics/language>; then click on the "ECFVP en Español" button on the right side of the page.

And, please remember to share this issue of Vestry Papers with others in your congregation, along with an invitation to subscribe to ECF Vital Practices and Vestry Papers. Subscriptions are free; visit [ECFVP.org](http://www.ecfvp.org) and click on the Subscribe tab on the upper right hand corner of this page. New subscribers are asked to fill out a short registration form to

have Vestry Papers and ECF Vital Practices content delivered twice a month to your email inbox.

Faithfully,

*Nancy*

Nancy Davidge

PS: To make it easier to find the resources offered through *ECF Vital Practices*, please consider adding a link to ECF Vital Practices to your website. Here's how: Using your websites 'add a link' tool, insert our full URL – <http://www.ecfvp.org/>.

PPS: Do you live in an area with limited Internet access? If you have a smart phone, consider browsing ECF Vital Practices from your mobile device; the site has been optimized for smart phones which makes it easier to search for content.

# ¿Por qué Vital Teams?

POR MIGUEL ANGEL ESCOBAR

A trabajar con feligresías y diócesis en toda nuestra iglesia, hay algo que queda muy claro: el liderazgo en equipo es uno de los asuntos más críticos que la Iglesia Episcopal enfrenta actualmente.

Muchos equipos de liderazgo lego-sacerdocio, tanto a nivel de feligresía como diocesano, están buscando un propósito, carecen de la estructura necesaria para ser efectivos, se han convertido en organismos regulatorios y administrativos en lugar de centrados en misión, y yo hasta diría que pocos de ellos están aprovechando la verdadera profundidad de dones que aportan los miembros legos. Esta falta de liderazgo fuerte no es sólo desafortunada: la Encuesta Faith Communities Today de 2010 señala que los estilos de liderazgo y de toma de decisiones han sido una mayor fuente de decadencia que muchos de los temas candentes de los últimos diez años. (1)

En reacción a esta necesidad, la Fundación de la Iglesia Episcopal (Episcopal Church Foundation, ECF), lanzó Vital Teams, un programa dirigido a fortalecer los equipos lego- sacerdocio que son el verdadero pilar de las feligresías

episcopales. La necesidad de este programa surgió de dos aspectos especialmente preocupantes:

**Educación y formación del sacerdocio:** Hay una brecha significativa entre la manera en que el sacerdocio se forma hoy en día en seminarios y diócesis y el tipo de liderazgo que se requiere a nivel de feligresía. Nuestras bienamadas instituciones son excelentes en la formación de liturgistas, capellanes y teólogos, pero muchos graduados luchan cuando se trata de organizar y orientar un equipo de liderazgo, una destreza fundamental para el liderazgo a nivel de feligresía. Además, a medida que las coadjutorías se van quedando a mitad de camino, las oportunidades de formación práctica de liderazgo están siendo cada vez menos frecuentes. Al carecer de las destrezas necesarias para formar un equipo fuerte, algunos sacerdotes escogen ya sea un modelo centrado en el sacerdocio (en el que ellos son los únicos que toman decisiones y actúan) o el modelo de facilitador ausente (en el que no pasa nada porque nadie sabe quién está haciendo qué). Saber reunir un equipo diverso alrededor de un sentido de propósito compartido y después lograr mucho mediante

ese equipo requiere destrezas de liderazgo sobresalientes, destrezas que por lo general están ausentes del currículo de nuestras bienamadas instituciones de liderazgo.

**Formación lego:** Como lego que trabaja en una de las pocas organizaciones de la Iglesia Episcopal encabezadas por legos, me preocupa que tras 30 años de alabanzas del Pacto Bautismal, la Iglesia sigue luchando con a quién invitar y cómo emplear la amplia variedad de dones que aportan los miembros legos. Todos los niveles de la Iglesia –no sólo la Casa de los Obispos (2) - refuerzan este obstinado centrismo en el sacerdocio en todos sus niveles, y no sólo los sacerdotes y los diáconos, sino también el laicado. Porque, si fuéramos honestos, quedaría claro que muchos de nosotros nos contentamos con limitarnos a girar cheques y tercerizar nuestra fe a los profesionales remunerados. Una forma diferente de liderazgo de feligresía, una que invite a los miembros legos a trabajar conjuntamente con el sacerdocio en la definición de misión y en la toma de decisiones, nos retará a todos a ser fieles integrantes del discipulado de nuevas maneras.

Vital Teams se concentra en:

- Proporcionar capacitación efectiva sobre cómo estructurar un equipo de liderazgo fuerte constituido por legos y sacerdotes.
- Ofrecer herramientas prácticas y recursos para identificar líderes de equipo fuertes.
- Participar en fomento y asociación a nivel de toda la iglesia para estimular a nuestras principales instituciones de formación de liderazgo a que incorporen una concentración en liderazgo en equipo a su currículo y procesos de discernimiento.

Hay otros motivos por los que una concentración en un equipo de liderazgo lego-sacerdocio es tan fundamental para la Iglesia de hoy en día. Ellos incluyen la búsqueda constante de formas de liderazgo más sustentables desde el punto de vista financiero, la tasa permanentemente elevada de agotamiento del sacerdocio, así como el vuelco de la sociedad más en general hacia formas de liderazgo más colaborativas e interconectadas. Y, por cierto, fue Jesús de Nazaret quien reunió a un grupo diverso de hombres y mujeres alrededor de una visión compartida del Reino de Dios y que inspiró un modelo de iglesia incipiente en el que “son muchos

los miembros, pero el cuerpo es uno solo”, (1 Corintios 12).

### **‘Hombre orquesta’ o liderazgo en equipo**

La ECF no es de ninguna manera la primera organización en señalar el hecho de que muchas de nuestras principales instituciones de formación no están preparando a los líderes legos y sacerdotales para afrontar los retos de liderar una comunidad de fe hoy en día. De hecho, se han realizado muchos esfuerzos – incluyendo proyectos pilotos anteriores de la ECF – para enseñarles a los seminaristas y a los recientemente ordenados los aspectos financieros, de comunicaciones y administrativos que van junto con ser jefes de una pequeña entidad sin ánimo de lucro.

Si bien este enfoque sigue siendo importante, ahora creemos que tiene ciertos problemas inherentes. Uno de ellos es que sigue poniendo al sacerdote en el centro de todas las cosas. Ahora los sacerdotes no sólo deben ser excelentes predicadores, líderes espirituales y proveedores de cuidados pastorales, sino que también deben saber cómo ser excelentes recaudadores de fondos, especialistas en comunicaciones, expertos en preparación de presupuestos y administradores de edificios. Este enfoque crea expectativas irreal-

istas en los nuevos sacerdotes y básicamente es una vía directa hacia el agotamiento. Pero lo peor de todo es que refuerza la idea de que el sacerdote debe ser un experto en todo.

Cuando los líderes parten desde un enfoque centrado en equipos pueden darse el lujo de ser más honestos (y humildes) sobre sus puntos fuertes y débiles. La concentración de la formación del liderazgo pasa de formar un hombre orquesta a enseñarle un conjunto de destrezas básicas – y muy posibles de aprender – sobre cómo unir a personas con una diversidad de dones para que afronten los muchos retos que las comunidades de fe enfrentan actualmente. Es un enfoque más sencillo, más sustentable, que creemos que servirá bien a nuestras feligresías.

### **Visión y medición de la efectividad**

La ECF cree que es imprescindible tener una visión a largo plazo – o una imagen clara y esperanzada – de cómo lucirá la Iglesia cuando la misión de Vital Teams se haya realizado. En asociación son otras instituciones de liderazgo a lo largo y a lo ancho de la Iglesia, la ECF tiene por objetivo una Iglesia en la que:

■ Todas las comunidades episcopales de fe, independientemente de su tamaño y presupuesto, tengan acceso a capacitación innovadora y efectiva de liderazgo lego-sacerdocio. En esta etapa temprana, la ECF se está concentrando en dos conjuntos de destrezas fundamentales para los equipos lego-sacerdocio: prácticas para discernir y mantener un sentido de propósito compartido y de conocimientos prácticos básicos sobre cómo crear una estructura de grupo sólida para que el equipo pueda realizar su misión con efectividad.

■ El concepto de equipos de liderazgo lego-sacerdocio se incorpore a las instituciones de formación de liderazgo en toda la Iglesia. Si bien algunos seminarios y diócesis ya incorporan elementos de liderazgo en su concentración, está claro que a la Iglesia le queda mucho camino por recorrer. La ECF está participando en fomento y asociación para estimular a las principales instituciones de formación de liderazgo a que incorporen concentración en liderazgo en equipo a su currículo.

■ Las feligresías y las diócesis estén altamente capacitadas para identificar líderes fuertes de equipos lego-sacerdocio. La

ECF proporcionará herramientas y recursos para identificar líderes fuertes de equipos lego-sacerdocio, una actividad programática que suena mucho más banal de lo que realmente es. Esta parte final está enraizada en la pregunta “¿Cómo podemos incentivar a personas para que se conviertan en fuertes líderes de equipos?” Nuestro método es ayudar a los comités de búsqueda y discernimiento a que se concentren en las personas con la propensión y la capacitación necesarias para liderar equipos de manera efectiva. Un ejemplo sencillo puede ser un conjunto de diez preguntas sobre el liderazgo que un comité de búsqueda de un sacerdote pueda emplear al entrevistar posibles candidatos.

Finalmente, deseo señalar que la ECF no considera que Vital Teams sea un proyecto a corto plazo, una iniciativa pasajera que hoy está y mañana desaparece. Creo que una de las cosas más notables de la ECF es la fortaleza y la longevidad de nuestros programas. El Programa Fellowship Partners de la ECF celebra este año su cincuentenario y Vital Practices de la ECF comenzó hace casi 20 años como el boletín Cornerstone. Nuestra visión para Vital Teams es a largo plazo e intencionalmente audaz: Nos hemos com-

prometido a realizar una tarea difícil y significativa: el trabajo paciente y persistente de cambiar la manera en que formamos e identificamos líderes en la Iglesia Episcopal.

*Vital Teams estará encabezado conjuntamente por Miguel Escobar, director de programas para recursos de liderazgo, Kate Adams, directora de proyectos especiales, y dos asesores principales, la Rev. Rosa Lindahl y el Rev. Ronald C. Byrd, Sr. Haga clic aquí para aprender más sobre el lanzamiento de Vital Teams.*

**Miguel Escobar** es director del programa de recursos de liderazgo de la Fundación de la Iglesia Episcopal. Coordina el equipo lego-sacerdocio a cargo de *Prácticas Vitales de la Fundación de la Iglesia Episcopal* (abreviada en inglés como ECF), el *Programa Fellowship Partners*, talleres educativos de la ECF, la *Guía de Recursos para la Junta Parroquial*, *Soluciones Estratégicas*, las *iniciativas de la ECF en español* y el recientemente lanzado *Vital Teams*. Miguel obtuvo su maestría en teología en el *Union Theological Seminary* en 2007. Escriba a Miguel a [mescobar@episcopal.foundation.org](mailto:mescobar@episcopal.foundation.org) o sígalo en Facebook y Twitter.

## Recursos

- Encuesta 2010 Faith Communities Today [http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/Episcopal\\_Overview\\_FACT\\_2010.pdf](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/Episcopal_Overview_FACT_2010.pdf)
- ECF Announces New Initiative: Vital Teams to Help Strengthen Lay+Clergy Leadership Teams <http://www.episcopalfoundation.org/news-and-events/news-detail?newsID=f13ffcc9-c3f7-4a68-8fe5-f53a166cd2a8>

## Footnotes

- (1) La Encuesta Faith Communities Today de la Iglesia Episcopal de 2010 señaló que “las feligresías en decadencia tendían a tener más conflictos generales y más áreas de conflictos serios”, que los conflictos por “el liderazgo y las finanzas eran las áreas más estrechamente vinculadas a la reducción de la asistencia dominical promedio” (página 3).
- (2) La publicación House of Bishop’s 2014 “Primer on the Government of the Episcopal Church and its underlying theology” resume los roles del sacerdocio y el laicado en las feligresías de la siguiente manera: “El ordenado asiste a la Iglesia en pleno al acep-

tar responsabilidad por el culto, el acto principal de la Iglesia; la proclamación fiel del Evangelio; la enseñanza de la fe y la administración de todos los sacramentos. El laicado asume responsabilidad por las finanzas y el mantenimiento de las propiedades de la feligresía para el uso del rector para ministerio. Lo más importante es que realiza la labor de la misión de Dios en el mundo”. (páginas 9 y10).

Esta interpretación estrecha del rol del laicado describe insuficientemente la amplia gama de ministerios creativos que los líderes legos pueden cumplir (y cumplen) en las feligresías, especialmente cuando los líderes legos trabajan conjuntamente con el sacerdocio en la formulación de la visión y la toma de decisiones. Sí capta, sin embargo, la esencia del modelo centrado en el sacerdocio; nótese que la segunda oración describe al rector como el único que realiza ministerio.

# Church as Base Camp

BY J. FLETCHER LOWE

There is a story of a man racing up to the church door one Sunday morning just as the rector was greeting the people on their way out. Out of breath, he asked, "When does the service begin?" Before the rector could answer, an astute woman responded- "The service begins now!" She got the Sunday-Monday connection, the link between liturgy and life. The Dismissal was sending her out "to do the work God had prepared for her to do."

Believing that God is most interested in how lovingly and justly we live Monday to Saturday, how are we using Sunday, and all of our church life, to help us do this better? How might a congregation support, encourage, challenge, equip, empower, affirm the laity in their daily lives? After all, it is the dismissal in the liturgy that "sends us out to do the work you have prepared for us to do." How might a vestry stretch its vision to help its baptized claim their ministries in their lives beyond the church doors?

Let me suggest a metaphor and some ways and means.

First the metaphor. Think of base camps like those on Mt. Everest. What are they for? Guidance, stories, repairs, nourishment, maps, equipment, supplies, encouragement, etc.. Now think of our congregations. Are those the same things that a congregation could supply for its "hikers?" As a Presbyterian pastor, Stephen Jacobsen, puts it:

*"One image that may be useful is that of the church as a base camp.... The church is a base camp in which a community of people gathers to reflect on life, be reminded of their identity, and make plans for exploration. From there, each person goes out during the week to take on that part of the mountain that is theirs to explore. The base camp exists to serve the climbing team. In itself, it is neither the goal of the expedition nor the mountain itself. The value of this image is that it affirms the importance of the community.... but does not mistake the institution for the central reality. The hikers don't exist for the good of the base camp. The base camp exists for the good of the hikers. How well (is the church) empowering people for the work on the mountain those other*

*six days? The church exists for the people, not the reverse. People deserve our help in making sense of all seven days."*

(From *Hearts to God, Hands to Work*, Alban Institute)

In light of this, a reality check: Isn't Christ the Lord of our daily lives as much as the Lord of our church's programs? If so, how might a congregation embrace a paradigm that includes the places beyond the church doors where the hikers "live and move and have their being?"

This is an issue that stretches a vestry's vision and imagination. How might a vestry focus on enhancing the mission of all the baptized in their daily lives? To do so a vestry must make the conscious and intentional decision to put the hikers' journeys as a priority in its strategic planning. It calls for vestry leadership to enable the parish's programs to focus on equipping and empowering the laity to live out their faith in their daily vocations. Given sufficient intentionality, creativity, and prayer, church leaders can help their congregants claim their ministries, in and through their daily lives.

This may seem obvious, but my own experience reflects something different. Take the workplace. I have been visiting parishioners where they work most of my ordained life. The initial questions are: What do you do here and what is the faith connection with what you do here? For the vast majority that second question is the first time the faith/work connection has been raised. That should tell us something- that at the heart of a person's daily life where he or she is spending most of his/her God-given talents and God-given time, the church has been delinquent.

Let me share the story of my visit with Lisa, an attorney with a major transportation company:

*"When Fletcher Lowe originally asked if he could visit me at work to discuss the 'faith connection,' that is the connection between what I do to make a living and my faith, I agreed reluctantly. Not because I was reluctant to talk with Fletcher or because I was reluctant to talk about either my work or my faith. I just wasn't sure I saw any connection between the two. So, I agreed, but planned to rely on Fletcher to steer the conversation, because I really couldn't draw a connection there. I mean, after all, how could working as an attorney for a trucking company tie in to God's work anyway?"*

*"In our discussion, Fletcher challenged me to see how the gifts I have and the work I do is in fact God's work. That drafting up a contract fairly, is applying my faith and the values rooted in my faith. That treating my fellow employees with respect, behaving in an ethical manner, and being able to help two parties work through issues and come up with a problem solving approach... is doing God's work. That, in fact ... using whatever talents I may have, is God's work. It was a revelation to me! I tended (and still tend, it's hard to re-train my brain after 48 years), to view God's work as what the priests and choir directors and youth ministers and Mother Teresas of the world do. I viewed the work world as separate from the faith world."*

So, what if a vestry had as its mission statement: We prepare people for the dismissal, what shape would its congregational life look like? Some initial thoughts of vestry programmatic initiatives:

- **Liturgically:** How do the readings and the music and the sermon illustrations and the prayers of the people and the dismissal point to the doors Sunday after Sunday and on special days like Labor Day Sunday and Rogation Sunday?
- **Christian Formation:** What if its main emphasis in program-

ming focused on nurturing and equipping the hikers in their daily journeys at work and family and school and community?

- **Pastoral Care:** What would it look like if it broadened its reach to include supporting and affirming people in the places of their strengths- on the job, in the home, at the school, in the community, as well as helping those in physical or emotional or spiritual need?
- **Communications:** How might the congregation's various publications, web site, social media, and public media connections reflect the parish's life as a base camp?

In short, how could a congregation's life be seen as a staging area - not the destination- for its members on their daily hikes, the place of replenishment providing spiritual nurture? Then the parish becomes a base camp where each hiker is equipped and fed for her/his Monday- Saturday journey. The dismissal truly becomes the marching orders of the baptized.

*J. Fletcher Lowe is the convener of Episcopalians on Baptismal Mission, a group of lay persons, priests, and bishops committed to promoting the ministry of all the baptized in their daily lives. Rector emeritus, Holy Comforter Episcopal*

*Church in Richmond, Virginia, Fletcher authored the LeaderResources book Baptism: the Event and the Adventure, and co-edited the book, Ministry in Daily Life.*

### Resources

- Episcopalians on Baptismal Mission <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/episcopalians-on-baptismal-mission/>
- Hearts to God, Hands to Work, by Stephen Jacobsen, Alban Institute <http://www.alibris.com/search/books/isbn/9781566991803>
- Member Mission [www.membermission.org](http://www.membermission.org)
- Ministry in Daily Life by J. Fletcher Lowe <http://arc.episcopalchurch.org/ministry/dailylife/mdl0308.htm>

# Teams: Built on Trust

BY ROSA LINDAHL

Late last year, the community I serve faced fully into the reality many communities across our church will encounter in years to come. The funding was simply not there to continue to have a full time priest on staff. In part, we are struggling financially because we are a faith community that includes members who are elderly and on fixed incomes as well as recently immigrated Latinos, many of whom are raising families on less than \$200.00 week. The congregation-level ministry model in the Episcopal Church depends on a strong clergy person who is able to lead, direct, manage, and administer almost all aspects of community life.

In a fragile community like ours a new, less 'clergy-centric' model of ministry presents enormous challenges. Paradoxically, our ministries are vibrant—we have a thriving school-success program that qualified us to become a United Way agency. Our English and Spanish speaking members have been bold and courageous, testing all kinds of new ways to worship and serve together and give witness to a new kind of unity. We just had a very successful stewardship

campaign—the best we've had in four years and one we got done in record time so the will to live is strong. There is life and light here and no one is prepared to 'go gently into the night.' The best way forward we can see involves developing a strong leadership team.

To start moving in that direction, the vestry and I spent time developing a clear and accurate picture of all the activities and ministries of our community. With a detailed "to do list", the group then spent time prioritizing our work. We wanted to make sure not to overextend ourselves and we knew we would need to exercise more intentional stewardship of all our resources than ever before.

While it was helpful to get a handle on our ministries, there was a much more difficult element we needed to engage. Our capacity to move into the future depends on us functioning optimally as a team and we are like most other communities—we have fractures, divisions, old hurts and new, that we've mostly worked around but not through. As a result, there is an unarticulated but very real anxiety

about the possibility of conflict amongst the team members and about our capacity to make and execute faithful decisions with health and wholeness. What could we do to discuss more openly and honestly the ways in which our relationships with each other could be strengthened and built up.

We found a helpful resource in *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*, a book by Patrick Lencioni. The book considers five self-defeating behavior patterns that a team must overcome to be healthy. They are behavior clusters that 'nest' one in the other and reinforce each other behaviors. They are:

1. **An absence of trust**, particularly as it relates to being open and transparent about mistakes and weaknesses.
2. **A fear of conflict**, that makes it next to impossible for a team to vigorously debate ideas and hold different perspectives and points of view in creative tension.
3. **A lack of commitment** that comes from little or no buy in

and ownership so even when a group makes a decision, team members are at best, minimally committed to do whatever it takes to execute the decision.

4. **Avoidance of accountability** is the next 'extension' of the self-defeating patterns because everyone involved is hesitant to call other team members on issues and concerns when individuals are aware that they themselves are not giving their all.

5. **Inattention to results** is the fifth component and is the result of a concern on the part of the individuals in a team to protect themselves and their individual needs at the expense of the goals of a team.

The book includes a self-assessment tool teams can use and valuable activities and exercises that can help develop new patterns of behavior and relationship that ensure stronger performance and results.

Our leadership team recognized we had lots of developmental opportunities on the basis of this book and our own process of self assessment. Because the patterns build on each other, we have started to work on the first behavior cluster of trust. Each member of the team identified one behav-

ior they were willing to practice to be more open about their own mistakes and weaknesses. For example, we all committed that at the beginning of our meetings, individuals will voluntarily present a situation or incident where they consider they did not achieve the results they expected or in some way consider they fell short of what was needed. The rest of the group will brainstorm ways to help that person either resolve the situation or do things differently if they encounter the same problem in the future.

Our team is aware that we must and will continue to be very intentional about trying new ways to work with each other. We like that the book includes straightforward exercises and activities a group can use to overcome its vulnerabilities. It has invited us to be far more mindful of how we relate to each other and be braver about going below superficial interactions to achieve a higher level of trust. We know we're a work in progress and still fragile. Openness, honesty and mutual accountability have given us new hope that as a healthy lay and clergy team we will find our way forward.

*Rosa Lindahl is lead consultant for Vital Teams and founding member of the New River Regional Ministry in Fort Lauderdale,*

*FL, a project for which she was awarded an ECF Fellowship in 2011. This regional approach to ministry merged a well-resourced downtown congregation, a Latino storefront ministry, and a primarily English-speaking congregation with financial challenges. Today, the New River Regional Ministry leverages the diverse resources of three distinct faith communities. Prior to becoming an Episcopal priest in 2006, Rosa worked for 15 years in international organizational development and human resource management, primarily with Federal Express. Rosa is a native of Colombia, has a passion for Latino ministry, and lives in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.*

## Resources

- Beating Burnout by Building Teams: <http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=2402>
- Building Strong Teams: A Tool for Identifying and Addressing Five Common Areas of Dysfunction <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/building-strong-teams-a-tool-for-identifying-and-addressing-five-common-areas-of-dysfunction/>
- Four Dimensions of Relational Work: <http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=2402>

- Team Assessment Resource by Patrick Lencioni <http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/pdfs/Five%20Dysfunctions%20of%20a%20Team.pdf>
- Teams and Performance: <http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=9661>
- The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable by Patrick Lencioni <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787960756.html>
- The Role of the Leader from The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Patrick Lencioni [https://www.tablegroup.com/books/dysfunctions/the\\_five\\_dysfunctions.pdf](https://www.tablegroup.com/books/dysfunctions/the_five_dysfunctions.pdf)

# Try This at Church

BY NANCY DAVIDGE

ECF has a history of and commitment to offering congregational leaders resources that are practical, accessible, and useful immediately. ECF Vital Practices ([www.ecfvp.org](http://www.ecfvp.org)) grew out of that commitment, taking advantage of its online format to easily connect readers with a wide range of resources.

Beginning with this issue, Vestry Papers introduces Try This at Church – A ‘try this at church’ tool that you and your congregation could use to strengthen and support team efforts in your congregation. Our first offering is a resource developed by Patrick Lencioni to measuring team effectiveness.

## Building Strong Teams: A Tool for Identifying and Addressing Five Common Areas of Dysfunction

ECF Vital Teams consultant Rosa Lindahl believes a leadership team’s capacity to move into the future depends on its ability to function effectively. She notes that congregations, like most other communities, have fractures, divisions, old hurts and new, often worked around but not through. As a result, there often is an unar-

ticulated but very real anxiety about the possibility of conflict amongst the team members and about their capacity to make and execute faithful decisions with health and wholeness. What can we, as congregational leaders, do to discuss more openly and honestly the ways in which our relationships with each other could be strengthened and built up?

### The Five Areas of Dysfunction

Rosa recommends congregations consider The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable by Patrick M. Lencioni. The book considers five self-defeating behavior patterns that a team must overcome to be healthy. They are behavior clusters that ‘nest’ one in the other and reinforce each other behaviors. They are:

1. **An absence of trust**, particularly as it relates to being open and transparent about mistakes and weaknesses.
2. **A fear of conflict**, that makes it next to impossible for a team to vigorously debate ideas and hold different perspectives and points of view in creative ten-

sion.

3. **A lack of commitment** that comes from little or no buy in and ownership so even when a group makes a decision, team members are at best, minimally committed to do whatever it takes to execute the decision.
4. **Avoidance of accountability** is the next ‘extension’ of the self-defeating patterns because everyone involved is hesitant to call other team members on issues and concerns when individuals are aware that they themselves are not giving their all.
5. **Inattention to results** is the fifth component and is the result of a concern on the part of the individuals in a team to protect themselves and their individual needs at the expense of the goals of a team.

The book includes a self-assessment tool teams can use and valuable activities and exercises that can help develop new patterns of behavior and relationship that ensure stronger performance and results.

## **The Diagnostic Tool**

Congregational leadership teams are invited to rate their effectiveness as a team using the Team Assessment Questionnaire, a diagnostic tool for evaluating your team's susceptibility to the five dysfunctions. Invite each member of your team to complete the diagnostic and then share the results, discussing discrepancies in the responses, and identifying any clear implications for the team.

Here's the link to the diagnostic tool, including the questionnaire, scoring sheet, and additional descriptions of the behaviors of dysfunctional teams.

<http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/building-strong-teams-a-tool-for-identifying-and-addressing-five-common-areas-of-dysfunction/>

*Note: The Team Assessment Tool and Scoring Instructions were created by Patrick M. Lencioni and published in *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* by Patrick M. Lencioni, April 2002, Jossey-Bass. This material is reproduced with permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.*

***If you use this tool, we'd appreciate knowing how it worked for you. Best way to reach us? Subscribers are encouraged to post in the Comment section at***

***the bottom of this page or on our Facebook page or, send us an email at [editor@ecfvp.org](mailto:editor@ecfvp.org).***

***Nancy Davidge is editor of ECF Vital Practices.***

## Equipos: Basados en la Confianza Mutua

BY ROSA LINDAHL

A fines del año pasado, la comunidad en que sirvo enfrentó plenamente la realidad que muchas comunidades de toda nuestra iglesia encontrarán en años venideros. Sencillamente no teníamos suficientes fondos como para seguir teniendo un sacerdote a tiempo completo. En parte, estábamos luchando financieramente porque somos una comunidad de fe que incluye miembros ancianos con ingresos fijos y latinos inmigrados recientemente, muchos de los cuales están criando familias con menos de \$200.00 semanales. El modelo de ministerio a nivel de feligresía de la Iglesia Episcopal depende de un sacerdote fuerte capaz de liderar, dirigir manejar y administrar casi todos los aspectos de la vida comunitaria.

En una comunidad frágil como la nuestra, un nuevo modelo de ministerio menos 'centrado en el sacerdocio' presenta enormes desafíos. Paradójicamente, nuestros ministerios están florecientes: tenemos un exitoso programa escolar que nos calificó para ser una agencia de United Way. Nuestros miembros anglo e hispanohablantes han sido enérgicos y valientes, poniendo a

prueba todos los tipos de nuevas maneras de rendir culto, de servir juntos y de ser testigos de un nuevo tipo de unidad. Acabábamos de tener una campaña de mayordomía sumamente exitosa, la mejor que tuvimos en cuatro años, y la hicimos en tiempo récord, de manera que la voluntad de vivir es fuerte. Aquí hay vida y luz y nadie está preparado para 'entrar dócilmente en la noche'. La mejor manera de salir adelante que podemos ver requiere contar con un equipo de liderazgo fuerte.

Para empezar a movernos en esa dirección, la junta parroquial y yo pasamos tiempo elaborando un panorama claro y preciso de todas las actividades y ministerios en nuestra comunidad. Con una lista detallada de "cosas que hacer", el grupo después pasó tiempo dando prioridades a la labor que teníamos por delante. Queríamos estar seguros de no extendernos demasiado y sabíamos que necesitaríamos ejercer una mayor mayordomía intencional que nunca sobre todos nuestros recursos.

Si bien nos resultó útil examinar nuestros ministerios, había un elemento mucho más difícil que

teníamos que enfrentar. Nuestra capacidad de avanzar hacia el futuro depende de que funcionemos óptimamente como un equipo, pero somos como todas las demás comunidades: tenemos fisuras, divisiones y viejas y nuevas nanas que a menudo tratamos con rodeos, pero no a fondo. A causa de ello, hay una aprensión no expresada pero muy real sobre la posibilidad de conflicto entre los integrantes del equipo y su capacidad de tomar y ejecutar decisiones de maneras sanas y enteras. ¿Qué podríamos hacer nosotros para hablar más abierta y honestamente sobre las maneras en que las relaciones entre nosotros podrían reforzarse y profundizarse?

Encontramos un recurso útil en *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*, un libro escrito por Patrick Lencioni. El libro se refiere a cinco patrones de conducta contraproducentes a los que los equipos deben sobreponerse para ser sanos. Son agrupamientos de conductas que se "anidan" entre sí y refuerzan las conductas de cada uno de ellos. Son los siguientes:

1. Desconfianza, especialmente en

ser abiertos y transparentes sobre los errores y los puntos débiles.

2. Temor al conflicto, que prácticamente imposibilita que un equipo debata ideas vigorosamente y tenga diferentes perspectivas y puntos de vista en tensión creativa.

3. Falta de compromiso proveniente de poca o ninguna convicción y aceptación, de manera que incluso cuando un grupo toma una decisión, sus componentes están, en el mejor de los casos, mínimamente comprometidos a hacer lo que haga falta para aponer la decisión en práctica.

4. Evitar rendir cuentas es la próxima 'extensión' de los patrones contraproducentes porque todos los participantes vacilan en dirigirse a otros miembros del equipo sobre temas e inquietudes en casos en que los propios individuos están conscientes de que no están dado todo de sí mismos.

5. Falta de atención a los resultados es el quinto componente y el resultado del deseo de los integrantes de un equipo de protegerse y de proteger las necesidades individuales a coste de los objetivos del equipo.

El libro incluye una herramienta de autoevaluación que pueden

emplear los equipos, así como actividades y ejercicios valiosos que pueden ayudar a crear nuevos patrones de conducta y de relacionarse entre sí que producen mejores desempeños y resultados.

Nuestro equipo de liderazgo reconoció que teníamos muchísimas oportunidades de desarrollo empleando las ideas de este libro en nuestro propio proceso de autoevaluación. Debido a que los patrones se alientan entre sí, hemos empezado a trabajar en el primer agrupamiento de conducta: confianza. Todos los integrantes del equipo identificaron una conducta que estaban dispuestos a practicar para ser más abiertos sobre sus propios errores y puntos débiles. Por ejemplo, todos nos comprometimos que al principio de nuestras reuniones, individuos presentarían voluntariamente una situación o un incidente que consideraban que no había alcanzado los resultados esperados o que de alguna manera no había sido suficiente para obtener lo que se necesitaba. El resto del grupo hacía una lluvia de ideas sobre maneras de ayudar a esa persona ya sea a resolver la situación o a hacer las cosas de otra manera si enfrentara una situación similar en el futuro.

Nuestro equipo sabe que debemos

ser y que continuaremos siendo muy intencionales sobre poner a prueba nuevas maneras de trabajar entre nosotros. Nos gusta que el libro contenga actividades y ejercicios sencillos que un grupo puede utilizar para sobreponerse a sus vulnerabilidades. Nos invitó a estar más conscientes de cómo nos relacionamos entre nosotros y a ser más valientes sobre ir más allá de las relaciones superficiales para alcanzar un mayor nivel de confianza. Sabemos que somos un trabajo en curso y que todavía somos frágiles. La apertura, honestidad y rendición de cuentas mutuas nos han dado nuevas esperanzas de que como equipo formado por legos y miembros del sacerdocio encontraremos nuevas maneras de salir adelante.

**Rosa Lindahl** es asesora principal de Vital Teams y miembro fundadora del Ministerio Regional New River en Fort Lauderdale, FL, un proyecto por el que ganó un ECF Fellowship en 2011. Este enfoque regional del ministerio unió una feligresía urbana con buenos recursos, un ministerio latino que se reunía en establecimientos comerciales y una feligresía principalmente anglohablante con problemas financieros. En la actualidad, el Ministerio Regional New River aprovecha los recursos diversos de tres comunidades de fe diferentes. Antes de convertirse en sacerdote

*episcopal, en 2006, Rosa trabajó por 15 años en desarrollo organizacional internacional y en la gestión de recursos humanos, principalmente en Federal Express. Rosa es colombiana, tiene una verdadera pasión por el ministerio latino y vive en Fort Lauderdale, Florida.*

## Recursos

- Formación de equipos fuertes:  
Una herramienta para identificar cinco áreas de disfunción comunes y mejorarlas ECF Vital Practices <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/formacion-de-equipos-fuertes-una-herramienta-para-identificar-cinco-areas-de-disfuncion-comunes-y-me/>
- *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* por Patrick Lencioni <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787960756.html>
- The Role of the Leader, de The Five Dysfunctions of a Team por Patrick Lencioni [https://www.tablegroup.com/books/dysfunctions/the\\_five\\_dysfunctions.pdf](https://www.tablegroup.com/books/dysfunctions/the_five_dysfunctions.pdf)
- Team Assessment Resource por Patrick Lencioni <http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/pdfs/Five%20Dysfunctions%20of%20a%20Team.pdf>

# Pruebe Esto en la Iglesia

BY NANCY DAVIDGE

La ECF tiene antecedentes y el compromiso de ofrecer a los líderes de las feligresías recursos prácticos, accesibles y de utilidad inmediata. ECF Vital Practices ([www.ecfvp.org](http://www.ecfvp.org)) surgió de ese compromiso y aprovecha su formato en línea para conectar a sus lectores a una amplia variedad de recursos.

A partir de este número, Vestry Papers presenta Pruebe esto en la iglesia, una herramienta 'pruebe esto en la iglesia' que usted y su feligresía pueden emplear para reforzar y apoyar los esfuerzos de los equipos de sus feligresías. Lo primero que ofrecemos es un recurso creado por Patrick Lencioni para medir la efectividad de los equipos.

## **Formación de equipos fuertes: Una herramienta para identificar cinco áreas de disfunción comunes y mejorarlas**

La asesora de ECF Vital Teams Rosa Lindahl cree que la capacidad de un equipo de liderazgo de avanzar hacia el futuro depende de su habilidad de funcionar de maneras efectivas. Señala que las feligresías, al igual que la mayoría de las demás comunidades, tienen fisuras, divisiones y viejas y nuevas

nanas que a menudo se tratan con rodeos, pero no a fondo. A causa de ello, a menudo hay una aprensión no expresada pero muy real sobre la posibilidad de conflicto entre los integrantes del equipo y su capacidad de tomar y ejecutar decisiones de maneras sanas y enteras. ¿Qué podemos hacer nosotros, como líderes de feligresías, para hablar más abierta y honestamente sobre las maneras en que las relaciones entre nosotros podrían reforzarse y profundizarse?

## **Las cinco áreas de disfunción**

Rosa recomienda que las feligresías consideren *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* por Patrick M. Lencioni. El libro se refiere a cinco patrones de conducta contraproducentes a los que los equipos deben sobreponerse para ser sanos. Son agrupamientos de conductas que se 'anidan' entre sí y refuerzan las conductas de cada uno de ellos. Son los siguientes:

1. Desconfianza, especialmente en ser abiertos y transparentes sobre los errores y los puntos débiles.
2. Temor al conflicto, que prácticamente imposibilita que un equipo

debata ideas vigorosamente y tenga diferentes perspectivas y puntos de vista en tensión creativa.

3. Falta de compromiso proveniente de poca o ninguna convicción y aceptación, de manera que incluso cuando un grupo toma una decisión, sus componentes están, en el mejor de los casos, mínimamente comprometidos a hacer lo que haga falta para aponer la decisión en práctica.

4. Evitar rendir cuentas es la próxima 'extensión' de los patrones contraproducentes porque todos los participantes vacilan en dirigirse a otros miembros del equipo sobre temas e inquietudes en casos en que los propios individuos están conscientes de que no están dando todo de sí mismos.

5. Falta de atención a los resultados es el quinto componente y el resultado del deseo de los integrantes de un equipo de protegerse y de proteger las necesidades individuales a costa de los objetivos del equipo.

El libro incluye una herramienta de autoevaluación que pueden emplear los equipos, así como actividades y ejercicios valiosos

que pueden ayudar a crear nuevos patrones de conducta y de relacionarse entre sí que producen mejores desempeños y resultados.

### La herramienta diagnóstica

Se invita a los equipos de liderazgo de las feligresías a que califiquen la efectividad de sus equipos empleando el Cuestionario de Evaluación de Equipos, ([http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Herramienta\\_de\\_evaluación\\_de Equipos.pdf](http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Herramienta_de_evaluación_de Equipos.pdf)) una herramienta diagnóstica para evaluar la susceptibilidad de su equipo a las cinco disfunciones. Invite a todos los miembros de su equipo a que completen el diagnóstico y después compartan los resultados y hablen sobre las diferencias en las respuestas e identifiquen las consecuencias claras para el equipo.

Haga clic ([http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Hoja\\_de\\_puntaje\\_de las disfunciones del equipo.pdf](http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Hoja_de_puntaje_de las disfunciones del equipo.pdf)) en la hoja de puntaje a continuación para tabular sus resultados e interpretar las posibles conclusiones.

Haga clic aquí (<http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/pdfs/Five%20Dysfunctions%20of%20a%20Team.pdf>) para ver otra versión de esta herramienta de diagnóstico que incluye descripciones

adicionales de las conductas de los equipos disfuncionales.

*Nota: La Herramienta de Evaluación de Equipos y las Instrucciones de Puntaje fueron creadas por Patrick M. Lencioni y publicadas en The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable by Patrick M. Lencioni, Abril de 2002, Jossey-Bass. Este material se reproduce con permiso de John Wiley & Sons, Inc.*

Si emplea esta herramienta, apreciaríamos saber cómo le funcionó. ¿La mejor manera de contactarnos? Se estimula a los suscriptores que lo pongan en la sección de Comentarios (Comment) al final de esta página o en nuestra página Facebook. También nos puede enviar un mensaje por correo electrónico a [editor@ecfvp.org](mailto:editor@ecfvp.org). article.

### Recursos

- Equipos: Basados en la Confianza Muta por Rosa Lindahl <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/building-strong-teams/equipos-basados-en-la-confianza-mutua/>
- Formación de equipos fuertes: Una herramienta para identificar cinco áreas de disfunción comunes y mejorarlas ECF Vital Practices <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/formacion-de-equipos-fuertes-una-herramienta-para-identificar-cinco-areas-de-disfuncion-comunes-y-me/>

El Cuestionario de Evaluación de Equipos, [http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Herramienta\\_de\\_evaluación\\_de Equipos.pdf](http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Herramienta_de_evaluación_de Equipos.pdf)

- Hoja de puntaje de las disfunciones del equipo [http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Hoja\\_de\\_puntaje\\_de las disfunciones del equipo.pdf](http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Hoja_de_puntaje_de las disfunciones del equipo.pdf)

# A Blueprint for Change

BY BIRDIE BLAKE-REID AS TOLD TO NANCY DAVIDGE

Stop by St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in Brooklyn on a Sunday and you'll enter a church filled with people who hail from the United States, the Caribbean, and other parts of the world; infants, children, young adults, parents, and grandparents. All persons are warmly greeted at the door and parishioners young and old can be found sitting in the pews, singing in the choir, leading the readings and prayers, collecting the offerings, or preparing food for fellowship after the service.

Should you stop by during the week, you might find a group of seniors enjoying lunch and conversation following a worship service. Or, perhaps you're in time for arts and crafts, exercise, or maybe a workshop offering basic computer skills. If you come by after school, you'll likely hear the laughter of school age children participating in our after school programs. Or, maybe you'll find one of our staff talking with a couple about their upcoming wedding.

Our church is vibrant, alive, and very connected to our community, as well as to The Episcopal Church at the diocesan, provincial, and

denominational levels.

It hasn't always been that way. In the early 1980s as the congregation plummeted from a high of nearly 1,000 to 40 members, it was time for the congregation – and its leaders – to face some difficult truths.

Like many churches, we've had our good times and our bad times. Founded in 1875 as the first Episcopal Church for colored people in Brooklyn, we've had many homes – both owned and rented – seen our church buildings burn to the ground, and opened and closed two schools. We'd been blessed with charismatic rectors, able to rescue us after each setback, and yet, with time, the same challenges – often related to finances – began to surface. The congregation was once again in debt; we needed to close the school. People were leaving the church. The priest resigned.

It was time to break this longstanding pattern: The vestry resigned making it possible for the bishop to make St. Augustine's an aided parish and to take control of our affairs.

## Hard Truths

One of the first – and perhaps the most difficult – truths we learned was the role we, as church leaders had played in this cycle. Over the course of many years, the congregation and the vestry had become comfortable with our rectors taking the lead, not only of the spiritual but also the administrative aspects of our congregation. We stopped paying attention and let too much power become vested in one person.

It was time for the congregation to learn a new model of leadership, one where the laity claimed their role as full partners in decision making.

## Rebuilding

Our leadership team was facing some big challenges: St. Augustine's had a million dollar debt and our buildings were in disrepair. We didn't have any insurance.

Working with the bishop, diocesan staff, and elders we re-learned how to run a congregation: We revised outdated bylaws, established norms for how we wanted to work together, and identified concrete

tasks that needed to be done to be released from aided parish status and prepared for the day when we would be released from aided parish status and again elect our lay leaders.

When the bishop appointed a new interim priest who subsequently became priest-in-charge, the bishop's committee was determined to make this new relationship a true partnership. Because the congregation had no voice in the bishop's appointment decision, some wondered if once again, St. Augustine's would be led by "another man who would dictate." These fears were soon allayed as the new priest Howard Kently Williams, began to reach out to long time members of the congregation, visiting us in our homes, talking and listening, and sharing his belief that the only way forward was by building a strong lay and clergy leadership team.

From these conversations, specific areas of interest and concern were identified and committees formed to work on them, including finance, leadership, and spirituality/formation. With the congregation still an aided parish, members were appointed by the bishop rather than elected and both long-time and newer members of the congregation were asked to serve. Committees met monthly, worked from agendas, kept minutes, and established procedures to account

for funds collected – business as usual for many congregations, but new to us at St. Augustine's.

As we worked, we began to sort through issues, grouping related organizations/functions together as we looked to identify root causes of our problems and prioritize what needed to be addressed first.

As our work progressed, we discovered and prioritized three areas of focus:

1. Spirituality and formation – our food
2. Mission and ministry – our work
3. Management and finance – our infrastructure

### **Spirituality and Formation**

Taking our inspiration from 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, our first priority was to focus on making disciples by participating in the life of Christ. In addition to Sunday worship, we developed opportunities for Bible Study, retreats, revivals, meditation, pastoral care, and Sunday school. At Easter, only a few months after Father Howard Williams joined the congregation, our small congregation welcomed 1,000 worshippers, many brought back by the optimism and confidence expressed by the elders. Word quickly spread throughout

the community to come and experience the renewed "sweet, sweet spirit at 4301 Avenue D."

Today, 14 years later, our focus on spirituality and formation remains our main priority.

### **Mission and Ministry**

Mindful that we were rebuilding our congregation and had considerable debt, we looked at what we had in abundance: Ourselves. We took seriously the sending out at the end of each Eucharist: "Let us go forth in the name of Christ. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." We challenged ourselves to go out, not just once, but again and again, as individuals and in our varied ministries, to learn about our community, asking what the Lord was calling each of us to do. Knowing that the act of going out can sometimes be difficult, we invested in training our ministry leaders to look inside themselves and to tap into the talents of their members to discover the connection between our vocations and our gifts and what we were learning about our immediate neighborhood.

And, we gave ourselves permission to do the work we were being called to do, to invite others to join us, and to look for the resources we needed to support these ministries.

As we began a deeper relationship within our community, we found our ministries expanding beyond acts of immediate relief, such as feeding people who are hungry and clothing those in need. Now, 14 years later, you'll find church members actively engaged in programs related to sustainability, such as educational scholarships for young people and adults, the Girl Scouts, the Boy Scouts, nutrition, social, and exercise programs for older people, and financial support to Anglican congregations outside of the USA. We established close relationships with the first responders in the 67th precinct as well as local politicians. We stay on top of local, state, and national issues that might negatively impact our youth and seniors. Our members are invited to make their voices heard on issues that are important to them by participating in the political process be it letter writing, lobbying efforts in Albany or Washington, or other forms of advocacy. In addition, members of St. Augustine's have actively sought and have been elected or appointed to church committees at the diocesan and provincial levels and have also served as delegates to denominational level conventions.

One of the most visible signs of our community outreach can be seen at our annual police, fire, and EMT service held on a Sunday in October. At this parish wide cele-

bration, we acknowledge and thank the dedication and service of these public servants – many of whom we know on a first name basis. We worship together in the sanctuary and then proceed outside (weather permitting) where the surrounding streets are closed to allow for festivities including a scrumptious feast in front of the church.

### Management and Finance

During our rebuilding years, we never lost sight of the importance of a strong foundation of effective management and stable finances. As we grew in the practice of our faith and in our discipleship in the community, our membership grew and our finances began to improve. While paying off the debt, purchasing insurance, and maintaining our buildings proved to be achievable goals, we never let these define who we were as a congregation. Our focus remains on serving Christ.

Our commitment to overcome our history of poor management led us to develop the guidelines we use today. Referred to as the 'Big 7 Ps of Management' and the 'Big 6 of Finance,' these practices keep us focused on our mission of restoring all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. (BCP pg. 855).

The Big 7 Ps of Management (plan, personnel, property, program, pro-

cedures, polity, and policy) help us evaluate all of the 'good ideas' that can so easily capture imaginations and start people dreaming about the 'what ifs.' Central to any discussion is a review of how or where it contributes to the achievement of our overall goals to:

- Provide opportunities for new people to enter into our community of faith.
- Know and care about all individuals in our parish.
- Continually rediscover that we belong to each other and are one in Christ.
- Develop and maintain a positive relationship between our parish and the wider community.
- Welcome all people and respect the dignity of every human being.

When we started this work, members of the congregation were invited to share their time and talent by participating in the drafting of the processes and procedures that guide us. We drew upon the skills and talents not only of members of the parish but also our neighbors. At St. Augustine's, when we speak of personnel, we include the past, current, and future volunteers who keep our many programs, ministries, and leadership committees

running smoothly.

Developing the Big 6 allowed us to create sound financial principles and procedures, an essential part of this work. Again, we drew upon the skills and talents of our members to help us think about and set up best practices related to budgeting, investing, fundraising, starting an endowment, and securing grants, as well as establishing sound bookkeeping procedures and setting up committees to oversee work in these areas.

### St. Augustine's Today

Today, St. Augustine's serves as a model for strong lay+clergy leadership teams. We continue to be organized by our three areas of focus, with our priest overseeing spirituality and formation, the vestry and a warden, mission and ministry, and another warden, management and finance. Within each of these areas are a variety of committees or, working groups, the leaders of which meet monthly with the priest and the vestry in our parish council.

We have a strong culture of transparency, encouraging all of our parish council leaders to share as much information as they can in their varied ministries and with the congregation to ensure ongoing communication. Recognizing

that our strength continues to be in our members – new and continuing – our current leaders are empowered to become ambassadors who invite others to participate. Ongoing training helps our members and our neighbors become familiar with our mission, organizations, and programs.

Keeping our focus on our three organizing principles of spirituality and formation, ministry and mission, and management and finance, St. Augustine's has been successful in both growing in membership and achieving financial viability. In 2003, the church was returned to full parish status. The then-debt has been repaid. The church and its adjunct buildings have been restored.

St. Augustine's is ever evolving as we continue to grow in God's grace. We are proud of our progress and will continue to intentionally persevere and live out our mission.

And today, on any given Sunday, the church is filled with worshippers who then go out into the world – and the neighborhood - to “love and serve the Lord.”

***Birdie Blake-Reid** is a lifelong member of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in Brooklyn, NY. She has served as a member of*

*the bishop's committee, warden, chairperson of the vestry bylaws and nominating/election committees, president of the Episcopal Church Women, and superintendent of Sunday school. She is a retired educator, and launched the first 24-hour day care center as executive director of DAWN Child Development Center.*

### Resources

- *Back from the Dead: The Book of Congregational Growth* by Gerald W. Keucher, Church Publishig
- Living Into Our Ministries <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/living-into-our-ministries/>
- St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, NY <http://www.staugustinesbrooklyn.org>
- Structuring Leadership Teams <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/structuring-leadership-teams/>
- Vestry Covenant and Planning Calendars <http://www.ecfvp.org/yourturn/vestry-covenant-and-planning-calendars-2/>

# Un Plano Para el Cambio

POR BIRDIE BLAKE-REID SEGÚN SE LO CONTÓ A NANCY DAVIDGE

Si se detienen un domingo en la Iglesia Episcopal St. Augustine's, en Brooklyn, entran en una iglesia llena de gente proveniente de Estados Unidos, el Caribe y otras partes del mundo: bebés, niños, adultos jóvenes, padres y abuelos. Todos ellos son recibidos cálidamente en la puerta y se puede encontrar parroquianos jóvenes y viejos sentados en los bancos, cantando en el coro, liderando las lecturas y las oraciones o preparando comida para la recepción después del servicio religioso.

Si pasan por allí durante la semana, podrán encontrar un grupo de personas mayores disfrutando el almuerzo y la conversación después de un servicio de culto. O tal vez están a tiempo para artes, artesanías, gimnasia o hasta un taller para adquirir destrezas básicas de computación. Si vienen después del horario escolar probablemente oirán las risas de los escolares que participan en nuestros programas para después del horario de clase. O puede ser que encuentren a un miembro de nuestros personal hablando con una pareja sobre su próxima boda.

Nuestra dinámica iglesia además

de estar llena de vida está muy conectada con nuestra comunidad y con la Iglesia Episcopal a los niveles diocesano, provincial y confesional.

No siempre fue así. A principios de la década de los 1980, cuando la feligresía bajó vertiginosamente de cerca de 1,000 a 40 miembros, era hora de que la feligresía - y sus líderes- enfrentaran algunas verdades difíciles.

Al igual que muchas iglesias, habíamos tenido nuestros buenos y malos tiempos. Fundada en 1875 como la primera Iglesia Episcopal para gente de color en Brooklyn, habíamos tenido muchos domicilios, tanto nuestros como alquilados, y visto los edificios de nuestra iglesia completamente destruidos por incendios. Además, habíamos abierto y cerrado dos escuelas. Hemos estado bendecidos con rectores carismáticos, capaces de rescatarnos después de cada traspié y, con el correr del tiempo, los mismos desafíos, a menudo relacionados con las finanzas, empezaron a surgir. La feligresía estaba nuevamente en deuda y necesitábamos cerrar la escuela. La gente se estaba yendo de la Iglesia. El sacerdote

había renunciado.

Era hora de dar fin a este patrón que se había repetido tantas veces: la junta parroquial renunció, posibilitando que el obispo hiciera que St. Augustine's pasara a ser una parroquia asistida y que tomara las riendas de nuestros asuntos.

## Verdades dolorosas

Una de las primeras verdades que enfrentamos - y posiblemente la más difícil- fue el papel que nosotros, como líderes de la Iglesia, habíamos desempeñado en ese ciclo. A lo largo de muchos años, la feligresía y la junta parroquial habían permitido que nuestros rectores estuvieran a la cabeza, no solamente en la parte espiritual, sino también en los aspectos administrativos de nuestra feligresía. Dejamos de prestar atención y permitimos que demasiado poder estuviera centrado en una persona.

Era hora de que la feligresía adoptara un nuevo modelo de liderazgo en el que el laicado reclamara su papel de participante pleno en la toma de decisiones.

## La reconstrucción

Nuestro equipo de liderazgo estaba enfrentando algunos grandes desafíos: St. Augustine's tenía una deuda de un millón de dólares y nuestros edificios estaban en decadencia. Además, no teníamos ningún seguro.

Trabajando con el obispo, el personal diocesano y los mayores volvimos a aprender a manejar una feligresía: actualizamos nuestros estatutos anticuados, establecimos normas sobre cómo queríamos trabajar unidos e identificamos tareas concretas que se deberían realizar para dejar de ser una parroquia asistida y prepararnos para el día en que saliéramos de esa situación y nuevamente pudiéramos elegir nuestros líderes laicos.

Cuando el obispo nombró a un nuevo sacerdote interino que posteriormente se convirtió en el sacerdote a cargo, el comité del obispo estaba determinado a hacer que esta nueva relación fuera una verdadera asociación. Debido a que la feligresía no tenía voz en la decisión de nombramiento del obispo, algunos se preguntaron si St. Augustine's estaría nuevamente liderado por "otro hombre que dictaría". Estos temores pronto desaparecieron cuando el nuevo sacerdote, Howard Kently Williams, empezó a comunicarse con miembros establecidos de la feligresía, a

visitarnos en nuestros hogares, a hablar y escuchar y a compartir su creencia de que la única manera de salir adelante era crear un fuerte equipo laico-sacerdocio.

De estas conversaciones se identificaron áreas específicas de interés y preocupación. Posteriormente se formaron tres comités para trabajar en ellas: de finanzas, liderazgo y espiritualidad y formación. Debido a que la parroquia seguía siendo una parroquia asistida, los miembros fueron nombrados por el obispo en lugar de elegidos y se pidió a miembros de la feligresía antiguos y recientes que sirvieran en esos comités. Los comités se reunieron mensualmente, trabajaron con agendas, levantaron actas y establecieron procedimientos para dar cuenta de los fondos recaudados, algo que era normal en muchas feligresías pero nuevo para nosotros en St. Augustine's.

A medida que trabajamos empezamos a organizar los diferentes asuntos: agrupamos organizaciones y funciones, analizamos las causas raíz de nuestros problemas y sentamos prioridades para decidir qué se debería hacer primero.

A medida que nuestra labor progresó, descubrimos y priorizamos tres áreas en las que nos deberíamos concentrar:

1. Espiritualidad y formación –

nuestro alimento

2. Misión y ministerio – nuestro trabajo

3. Administración y finanzas – nuestra infraestructura

## Espiritualidad y formación

Inspirándonos en 1 Corintios 12:12-13, nuestra primera concentración fue hacernos discípulos participando en la vida de Cristo. Además del culto dominical, creamos oportunidades para estudio de la Biblia, retiros, revitalizaciones, meditación cuidados pastorales y escuela dominical. En la Pascua, sólo unos pocos meses después de que el padre Howard Williams se uniera a nuestra feligresía, nuestra pequeña feligresía dio la bienvenida a 1,000 feligreses, muchos de ellos traídos de regreso por el optimismo y la confianza expresada por los mayores. Corrió rápidamente la voz por toda la comunidad sobre el "dulce, dulce espíritu renovado en 4301 Avenue D".

Ahora, 14 años después, nuestra concentración en la formación sigue siendo nuestra prioridad principal.

## Misión y ministerio

Conscientes de que estábamos reconstruyendo nuestra feligresía y de que teníamos una deuda

considerable, nos fijamos en qué teníamos en abundancia: nosotros mismos. Tomamos seriamente el saludo al final de cada Eucaristía: “Salgamos en el nombre de Cristo. Id en paz para amar y servir al Señor”. Nos retamos a salir, no sólo una vez, sino una y otra vez, como individuos y en nuestros diferentes ministerios, para aprender sobre nuestra comunidad, preguntando cuál era el llamado del Señor para cada uno de nosotros. Sabiendo que el acto de salir a veces puede ser difícil, invertimos en capacitar a nuestros líderes de ministerios para que miraran dentro de sí mismos y emplearan los talentos de sus miembros para descubrir la conexión entre nuestras vocaciones y nuestros dones y lo que estábamos aprendiendo sobre nuestro vecindario inmediato.

Y nos dimos permiso para hacer la labor para la que habíamos sido llamados, invitar a otros a que se nos unieran y buscar los recursos que necesitábamos para apoyar esos ministerios.

A medida que empezamos a tener una relación más profunda con nuestra comunidad, encontramos que nuestros ministerios se estaban expandiendo más allá de actos de socorro inmediato, como alimentar a los hambrientos y vestir a los necesitados. Ahora, 14 años más tarde, encontrarán miembros de la Iglesia participando activamente

en programas relacionados con la sustentabilidad, tales como becas educativas para jóvenes y adultos, las Girl Scouts, los Boy Scouts, programas de nutrición, sociales y de apoyo financiero a feligresías anglicanas fuera de Estados Unidos. Establecimos relaciones estrechas con los primeros respondedores en el 670 precinto y con políticos locales. Permanecemos al tanto de asuntos locales, estatales y nacionales que pueden tener un impacto negativo sobre nuestros jóvenes y ancianos. Nuestros miembros están invitados a hacer que sus voces se oigan en temas importantes para ellos participando en el proceso político ya sea escribiendo cartas, realizando esfuerzos de cabildeo en Albany o en Washington, o en otras formas de fomento y defensa. Además, miembros de St. Augustine’s han buscado activamente y han sido elegidos o nombrados para participar en comités eclesiásticos a niveles diocesano y provincial, y también han servido como delegados de convenciones a nivel confesional.

Uno de los signos más visibles de los esfuerzos de extensión de nuestra comunidad se puede ver en nuestro servicio religioso anual para la policía, los bomberos y los técnicos de emergencias médicas que se celebra en un domingo de octubre. En esta celebración de toda la parroquia, reconocemos y agradecemos la dedicación y el ser-

vicio de estos individuos, muchos de los cuales son amigos personales nuestros. Rendimos culto juntos en el santuario y después salimos afuera, si lo permite el tiempo, donde las calles circundantes están cerradas para permitir las festividades, incluyendo un delicioso festín frente a la iglesia.

### **Administración y finanzas**

Durante nuestros años de reconstrucción, nunca perdimos de vista la importancia de tener un buen sistema administrativo y finanzas estables. A medida que fuimos creciendo en la práctica de nuestra fe y en nuestro discipulado en la comunidad, empezamos a tener más miembros y nuestras finanzas comenzaron a mejorar. Si bien saldar la deuda, comprar seguros y mantener nuestros edificios demostraron ser objetivos alcanzables, nunca permitimos que definieran la dirección hacia la que nos encaminábamos como feligresía. Seguimos estando centrados en servir a Cristo.

Nuestro compromiso para sobreponernos a nuestros antecedentes de mala administración nos llevó a elaborar las directrices que empleamos en la actualidad. Conocidas como ‘Los Grandes 7 Elementos de la Administración’ y los ‘Grandes 6 Elementos de las Finanzas’, estas prácticas permanecieron concentradas en nuestra

misión de restaurar a todos los pueblos a la unión con Dios y unos con otros en Cristo. (LOC).

Los Grandes 7 Elementos de la Administración (plan, personal, propiedad, programa, procedimientos, sistema de gobierno y normativa) nos ayudan a evaluar todas las 'buenas ideas' que tan fácilmente pueden captar las imaginaciones y hacer que la gente empiece a soñar en 'qué pasaría si'. Un elemento central de todas las conversaciones es un repaso de cómo y dónde contribuye al alcance de nuestras metas generales de:

- Brindar oportunidades para que nuevas personas pasen a formar parte de nuestra comunidad de fe.
- Conocer y cuidar a todas las personas en nuestra parroquia.
- Redescubrir constantemente que nos pertenecemos los unos a los otros y que somos uno en Cristo.
- Desarrollar y mantener una relación positiva entre nuestra parroquia y la comunidad en general.
- Dar la bienvenida a todas las personas y respetar la dignidad de todos los seres humanos.

Cuando iniciamos esta labor, invitamos a miembros de nuestra

feligresía a que compartieran su tiempo y talento participando en la elaboración de los procesos y procedimientos que nos guían. Aprovechamos y empleamos las destrezas y los talentos no sólo de los miembros de la parroquia sino también de nuestros vecinos. En St. Augustine's, cuando hablamos de personal incluimos a los voluntarios pasados, actuales y futuros que hicieron, hacen y harán que nuestros numerosos programas, ministerios y comités de liderazgo funcionen sin problemas.

Desarrollar los Grandes 6 nos permitió crear principios y procedimientos financieros sólidos, una parte esencial de esta labor. Nuevamente, recurrimos a las destrezas y talentos de nuestros miembros para que nos ayudaran a pensar en las mejores prácticas y a aplicarlas a la preparación de presupuestos, a las inversiones, a la recaudación de fondos, al inicio de un legado y a la obtención de subsidios, así como al establecimiento de prácticas contables sólidas y de comités de supervisión de esos elementos.

### **St. Augustine's en la actualidad**

En la actualidad, St. Augustine's sirve como un modelo de equipos de liderazgo laico-sacerdocio fuertes. Seguimos estando organizados alrededor de nuestras 3 áreas de concentración, con

nuestro sacerdote supervisando la espiritualidad y la formación, la junta parroquial y un coadjutor supervisando la misión y el ministerio, y otro coadjutor supervisando la administración y las finanzas. Dentro de cada una de esas áreas hay una variedad de comités o de grupos de trabajo cuyos líderes se reúnen mensualmente con el sacerdote y la junta parroquial en nuestro consejo parroquial.

Tenemos una fuerte cultura de transparencia e instamos a todos los líderes de nuestro consejo parroquial a que compartan la mayor información posible con sus diversos ministerios y la feligresía para asegurar que haya comunicación constante. Reconociendo que nuestra fortaleza sigue estando en nuestros miembros, tanto nuevos como viejos, nuestros líderes están autorizados a convertirse en embajadores que invitan a otros a participar. La capacitación permanente ayuda a nuestros miembros y a nuestros vecinos a familiarizarse con nuestra misión, organizaciones y programas.

Haber mantenido nuestra concentración en nuestros tres principios organizativos de espiritualidad y formación, ministerios y misión, y administración y finanzas ha permitido que St. Augustine's haya incrementado su número de miembros y alcanzado viabilidad financiera. En 2003, la iglesia recuperó

su condición de parroquia plena. La deuda anterior ha sido saldada. La iglesia y sus edificios complementarios han sido restaurados.

St. Augustine's evoluciona constantemente y, a la vez, seguimos creciendo en la gracia de Dios. Estamos orgullosos de nuestro progreso y seguiremos perseverando intencionalmente y viviendo nuestra misión.

Y en la actualidad, en cualquier domingo, la iglesia está llena de feligreses que luego salen al mundo - y a la comunidad- a "amar y servir al Señor".

***Birdie Blake-Reid es miembro vitalicia de la Iglesia Episcopal St. Augustine's en Brooklyn, NY. Fue miembro del comité del obispo, coadjutora, presidenta de los comités de estatutos de la junta parroquial y de nombramientos y elecciones, presidenta de Mujeres de la Iglesia Episcopal y superintendente de la escuela dominical. Es docente jubilada y fundadora del primer centro de cuidados las 24 horas como ejecutiva del Centro de Desarrollo Infantil DAWN.***

[products/index.cfm?fuseact=productDetail&productID=9662](http://www.ecfvp.org/products/index.cfm?fuseact=productDetail&productID=9662)

- Living Into Our Ministries <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/living-into-our-ministries/>
- St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, NY <http://www.staugustinesbrooklyn.org>
- Structuring Leadership Teams <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/structuring-leadership-teams/>
- Vestry Covenant and Planning Calendars <http://www.ecfvp.org/yourturn/vestry-covenant-and-planning-calendars-2/>

## Recursos

- *Back from the Dead: The Book of Congregational Growth* by Gerald W. Keucher <https://www.churchpublishing.org/>

# What Do You See? (Try This at Church)

BY NANCY DAVIDGE

As a child, I remember being amazed by a phenomenon known as the Rubin vase, or as it is more commonly known, the face-vase image. For those unfamiliar with this reference, the image shows either the outline of a white vase against a dark background or, the profiles of two faces looking at each other separated by white space. Why people see one image and then the other relates to the way our eyes and brain interpret what we see. And, as our brain tries to distinguish between the figure-ground elements of these black and white images with almost equal figure and ground elements, it is our higher level cognitive function of pattern matching that permits us to see first one, then the other, object.

What does this have to do with building strong leadership teams?

Recognizing that what we see may not be what others see is a valuable skill for leaders. Being able to set our own perceptions aside and actively listen as other members of a team share what they see, can lead to a richer conversation, one that allows us to delve deeper into relationship, and open up options for strategic thinking and problem

solving.

Howard K. Williams and Birdie Blake-Reid, from St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in Brooklyn, New York used this exercise at the recent New Community Gathering. Designed as an icebreaker to help workshop participants gain an understanding of the congregational contexts represented in the room, it can also be used to help members of a leadership team learn more about their peer's perception of where the congregation – or the leadership team – is at this point in time.

This activity can be done with any size group; breaking larger groups into smaller ones gives everyone an opportunity to respond to the two questions. The group can then be brought back together to summarize the conversation from each group.

## Material needed:

- Four images: (add links). These can be projected via a computer or printed and shown to the group.
- Newsprint pad and marker or black or white board.

## Process:

- Show the four images to the group, one at a time. Then post all four images for all to see.
- Ask participants to consider this question: Which of the four images visually represents where you see your congregation today? Share why.
- Give each member of the group the opportunity to briefly share their response. Within each group, you may want to allow time to discuss how each member interpreted what they saw.
- Ask participants a second question: Do you see the need for change and if so, in what areas?
- Again, give each member the opportunity to share his or her response.
- Coming together as one group, hold up one image at a time and ask for a show of hands indicating how many chose each image. Post the tally for all to see.
- As you show each image, invite

one or two of the people who chose that image to briefly share why they chose that image, encouraging them to describe what the photo represents to them. You may want to ask for a show of hands to see if any others had a similar response.

- It may be helpful to the group for the facilitator to summarize and record the ways members describe how they see the congregation. Are there any patterns?
- Invite each group to report out on their responses to change. Again, you may want to ask for a show of hands to see if any others had a similar response.
- As you wrap up this exercise, ask the group to think about and name:
  - o Any responses that surprised them.
  - o Any responses that made them think differently about where the congregation is today.
  - o Any responses they would like to explore further.

Scheduling this activity during a vestry retreat would allow time for extended conversation, providing the opportunity to tease out nuances, as well as shared

understandings and/or misunderstandings. A group might also consider breaking this into two sessions, discussing one question at a time.

***If you use this tool, we'd appreciate knowing how it worked for you. Best way to reach us? Subscribers are encouraged to post in the Comment section at the bottom of this page or on our Facebook page or, send us an email at [editor@ecfvp.org](mailto:editor@ecfvp.org).***

***Nancy Davidge is editor of ECF Vital Practices.***

# Pruebe esto en la Iglesia: ¿Qué ve?

BY NANCY DAVIDGE

De niño, recuerdo que me asombraba el fenómeno conocido como el jarrón de Rubin o, como se lo conoce más comúnmente, la imagen cara-jarrón. Para los que no están familiarizados con ella, la imagen muestra ya sea un jarrón blanco con un fondo oscuro o los perfiles de dos caras que se miran separadas por un espacio blanco. El motivo por el que algunas personas ven una imagen y después la otra tiene que ver con la manera en que nuestros ojos y nuestro cerebro interpretan lo que vemos. Y, a medida que nuestro cerebro trata de distinguir entre los elementos de estas imágenes blancas y negras con elementos casi iguales de figuras y trasfondos, es nuestra función cognitiva de función superior de hacer coincidir patrones lo que nos permite ver primero un objeto y después el otro.

¿Qué tiene que ver esto con la formación de equipos de liderazgo fuertes?

Reconociendo que lo que vemos puede no ser lo que otros ven es una destreza valiosa para los líderes. Poder dejar de lado nuestras percepciones y escuchar activamente cuando otros miembros

de un equipo comparten lo que ven puede llevar a conversaciones más ricas que nos permiten profundizar una relación y abrir paso a opciones de pensamiento estratégico y de resolución de problemas.

Howard K. Williams y Birdie Blake-Reid, de la Iglesia Episcopal St. Augustine's, de Brooklyn, Nueva York, emplearon este ejercicio en la Reunión Nueva Comunidad reciente. Diseñado como un rompehielos para ayudar a los participantes en el taller para entender mejor los contextos de la feligresía representados en el salón, también se puede emplear para ayudar a los miembros de un equipo de liderazgo a aprender más sobre la percepción de sus pares sobre el lugar en que la feligresía –o el equipo de liderazgo– se encuentra en ese momento.

Esta actividad se puede hacer con grupos de cualquier tamaño; subdividir a los grupos de mayor tamaño en grupos más pequeños da a todos la oportunidad de contestar las dos preguntas. Posteriormente el grupo se puede volver a reunir para resumir la conversación de cada grupo.

## Materiales necesarios:

- o Cuatro imágenes: imagen 1, imagen 2, imagen 3, imagen 4. Se pueden proyectar empleando una computadora o imprimirlas y mostrárselas al grupo.
- o Bloc Newsprint y marcador o pizarrón negro o blanco.

## Proceso:

- o Muéstrelas las cuatro imágenes al grupo, una por vez. Después exhiba las cuatro imágenes para que todos las vean.
- o Pídale a los participantes que consideren esta pregunta; ¿Cuál de las cuatro imágenes representa visualmente dónde ve a su feligresía hoy? Compartan por qué.
- o De a cada miembro del grupo la oportunidad de compartir su respuesta. Si lo desea, de tiempo a cada grupo para que discuta la manera en que cada miembro interpretó lo que vio.

- o Hágales a los participantes una segunda pregunta: ¿Ve usted la necesidad de cambio? En caso afirmativo, ¿en qué aspectos?
- o Nuevamente, de a todos los miembros la oportunidad de compartir su respuesta.
- o Reunidos nuevamente como un grupo, sostenga una imagen por vez y pida que los que escogieron cada imagen levanten la mano. Cuéntelos para que todos lo vean.
- o A medida que muestre cada imagen, invite a una o dos personas que eligieron esa imagen a que compartan brevemente por qué escogieron esa imagen, estimulándolos a que describan lo que representa la fotografía para ellos. Si lo desea, pida que levanten la mano los que tuvieron una respuesta similar.
- o Puede ser útil para el grupo que el facilitador resuma y escriba las maneras en que los miembros describen cómo ven la feligresía. ¿Hay patrones?
- o Invite a los grupos a que describan sus respuestas sobre los cambios. Nuevamente, si lo desea pida que levanten la mano los que tuvieron una respuesta simi-

lar.

Cuando esté terminando el ejercicio, pídale al grupo que piense en y nombre:

- o Respuestas que los sorprendieron.
- o Respuestas que los hicieron pensar de maneras diferentes sobre dónde se encuentra la feligresía actualmente.
- o Respuestas que les gustaría explorar más.

Programar esta actividad durante un retiro de la junta parroquial daría tiempo para una conversación prolongada que permitiría extraer matices, así como entendidos y malos entendidos compartidos. Un grupo también podría considerar dividir esto en dos sesiones en las que se discutiría una pregunta por vez.

*Si usa esta herramienta, apreciaríamos saber cómo funcionó para usted. ¿La mejor manera de ponerse en contacto con nosotros?*

*Se insta a los suscriptores que pongan una nota en la sección de Comentarios al final de esta página o en nuestra página de Facebook o que nos manden un mensaje por correo electrónico a [editor@ecfvp.org](mailto:editor@ecfvp.org).*

**Nancy Davidge** is editor of ECF

Vital Practices.

## Recursos

- Rubin Vase [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubin\\_vase](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubin_vase)
- Imágene 1 [http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Try\\_This\\_At\\_Church\\_April\\_2014\\_Image\\_1.pdf](http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Try_This_At_Church_April_2014_Image_1.pdf)
- Imágene 2 [http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Try\\_This\\_At\\_Church\\_April\\_2014\\_Image\\_2.pdf](http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Try_This_At_Church_April_2014_Image_2.pdf)
- Imágene 3 [http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Try\\_This\\_At\\_Church\\_April\\_2014\\_Image\\_3.pdf](http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Try_This_At_Church_April_2014_Image_3.pdf)
- Imágene 4 [http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Try\\_This\\_At\\_Church\\_April\\_2014\\_Image\\_4.pdf](http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Try_This_At_Church_April_2014_Image_4.pdf)

# Making It Work

BY ANN MELLOW

## *Building A Strong Leadership Team*

Navigating a church-school relationship is not always easy. Like any relationship, it requires time, care, communication, and a willingness to learn. As stated in the National Association of Episcopal Schools' (NAES) Principles of Good Practice for Governance in Episcopal Parish Day Schools, "Bylaws and canons set the parameters of the mission and its outcomes, but they cannot initiate a sustainable conversation between church and school. Only people can."

Rectors and heads of parish day schools know how true this is! Rob Devlin, head school at St. George Episcopal School in San Antonio, Texas and Doreen Olseon, head of school at Saint Mark's School in Altadena, California have forged strong working relationships with their rectors, Carri Patterson Grindon of St. Mark's Episcopal Church and Ramirez Lopez of St. George Episcopal Church. This teamwork has set the tone for the entire church-school community. We invited them share their wisdom and experience.

## **What makes your relationship and the church-school relationship work?**

For both of these rector-head teams, it's all about being intentional and making the time. "We have intentional and frequent meetings as rector and head," notes Doreen Olseon of Saint Mark's. "We meet every Tuesday. It's a given and we really stick to it. We are always on time and always prepared with our agenda. Carri shares what's going on in the parish and I do the same. And we always take time to catch up personally."

Rob Devlin, head of school at St. George Episcopal School in San Antonio, echoes the same sentiment:

"Father Ram and I have worked together for nearly nine years. As with any relationship, our relationship works because we are both committed to making it work. We recognize that although we may have different thoughts and ideas and approaches, we each have a commitment to a larger goal – serving the Kingdom of God through the ministry of our Episcopal community."

Ram adds, "I think the fact that we both share a larger vision for our work here at St George is helpful. We do think and talk in terms of the Kingdom of God and that helps us keep things in perspective. This is very important because there are many anxious voices in the community which would seek to have us focus on the needs of one group over another. I don't differentiate between preaching on Sunday morning or during chapel. I preach Christ and him crucified and resurrected for us all. As difficult as it sometimes seems during busy times, I work very hard to recognize that my "parish" is not the "members on the church rolls" but it is the people among whom God has placed me. And I have watched Rob be just as effective among non-school connected people on Sunday mornings because he sees himself as placed here by God. To put it more succinctly – we are on the same team, God's, and that makes all the difference."

## **What have you discovered about team building and collaborative leadership as you've done this work?**

We have a common mission, not

only to educate young people but to educate the entire congregation,” says Doreen. “Carri not only leads us in prayer, she leads me to see her community more clearly. We respect each other and we work hard to see what’s going on in the entire church-school community.”

Rob notes, “In a way, it’s like the marriage covenant. You have to enter into the relationship with a predetermined commitment to mutual love and honor and respect. There has to be a commitment to two-way communication. This relationship has to be modeled by the parents to the children (other members of the family). Paul’s words in I Corinthians chapter 13 provide some guidance in this area.”

“When you keep things Christ centered and Kingdom of God focused,” adds Ram, “the rest takes care of itself.”

**How do you work through/ manage disagreements/differences in perspectives that must inevitably arise between vestry and board, parish, and school?**

“It seems like things tend to go south the quickest when we let our fear and pride get a leg up on humility and Christ-centered courage and confidence,” reflects Rob. “We have to keep check-

ing ourselves in this respect, and often it’s two steps forward and one step back. Again, an upfront commitment to and frequent reminders of the overarching goal, serving the Kingdom of God, can go a long way toward sustaining the relationship when the inevitable disagreements and differences arise.”

Ram adds, “The one thing I know does not work is feeding the beast of acrimony by engaging in back-and-forth verbal sparring. Over the years, I have learned the hard way that trying to win the point at issue is a sure way for everyone to lose. When there are disruptions in the body over issues, or when we have board members and vestry members at odds, we are open with each other about what is going on, [naming] our frustrations with each other. What has been fortunate is that we take these frustrations to each other and talk about them, counsel each other as Christian brothers and sisters and pray with and for one another and the ones causing us frustration. God has never abandoned us and we have come through times of difference stronger in many ways.”

**What one practice or principle would you recommend to your peers in the same role?**

Doreen and Rob agree that what’s

most important is to make the relationship a priority. “I would recommend that a rector and head of school schedule weekly time together without any specific agenda. Perhaps a bible study or a book study. And I would encourage the head and rector to pray together – to pray for each other, and to pray for the community,” suggests Rob.

“In the early years we read spiritual books together,” shared Ram. “We prayed together. Prior to our building campaign we “circled” the campus (we read the “Circle Maker” by Mark Batterson) in prayer – with students, faculty and staff watching. We do more than meet about business and/or issues. We fellowship. We pray. We share our hearts. We remember that our call is to be faithful to God in our work and family lives. It is a much richer time because of this.”

“Ultimately, Carri really knows the school,” says Doreen. “She comes to every board meeting. She has made time to really get to know people at the school and, more importantly, she knows the culture. And I am a member of the parish. It’s important that we both see the parish and school in action.”

“In the end,” says Rob, “as with any strong relationship, it takes a

lot of hard work and a lot of time. It requires the classic fruits of the Spirit as identified by Paul to the Galatians: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

**Ann Mellow** is associate director of the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES). From 1995-2007 Ann was head of school at St. Luke’s School in New York City, a pre-kindergarten – grade 8 parish day school founded by The Church of Saint Luke in the Fields.

*Founded in 1965, NAES is a voluntary membership organization of over 400 Episcopal schools from preschool through secondary school. NAES provides services, resources, and best practices related to Episcopal school identity, leadership and governance, and spiritual and professional development. Learn more at [www.episcopalschools.org](http://www.episcopalschools.org)*

### **About St. George Episcopal School and St. George’s Episcopal Church**

St. George Episcopal School ([www.saintgeorgeschool.org](http://www.saintgeorgeschool.org)) began in 1954 as the Pilgrim School, a preschool at Pilgrim Congregational Church in San Antonio, Texas. Over the years it expanded into an elementary school. In 1972, the school was

invited to make a new home at St. George Episcopal Church (<http://www.saintgeorgechurch.org/>). Today the school serves 500 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8.

Ramiro E. Lopez Jr., rector, [rlopez@saintgeorgechurch.org](mailto:rlopez@saintgeorgechurch.org)  
Robert G. Devlin, head of school, [rdevlin@saintgeorgeschool.org](mailto:rdevlin@saintgeorgeschool.org)

### **About Saint Mark’s School and St. Mark’s Episcopal Church**

Saint Mark’s School (<http://www.saint-marks.org>) was founded as a preschool by St. Mark’s Episcopal Church ([www.saintmarksaltadena.org](http://www.saintmarksaltadena.org)), Altadena, California in 1960. Today it serves 350 students in preschool through grade 6 on a five-acre parish-school campus. The parish celebrated its centennial in 2006.

Carri Patterson Grindon, rector, [carrig@saintmarksaltadena.org](mailto:carrig@saintmarksaltadena.org)  
Doreen S. Oleson EdD, head of school, [doreeno@saint-marks.org](mailto:doreeno@saint-marks.org)

### **Resources**

- National Association of Episcopal Schools <http://www.episcopalschools.org>
- NAES Principles of Good Practice Series [\[schools/principles-of-good-practice\]\(#\)](http://www.episcopalschools.org/episcopal-</a></li>
</ul>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

- The Parish Day School: Sustaining a Complex Organism <http://www.episcopalschools.org/library/articles/2012/03/23/the-parish-day-school-sustaining-a-complex-organism>
- Rectors and Episcopal Schools: It’s a Wonderful Life! <http://www.episcopalschools.org/library/articles/2012/03/15/rectors-and-episcopal-schools-it’s-a-wonderful-life>
- What are the principal qualities that distinguish a school as Episcopal? <http://www.episcopalschools.org/episcopal-schools/episcopal-identity>

# The Slow Work of God

BY ROSA LINDAHL

The unexpected – yet necessary – conversation related to last year’s Cinco de Mayo event.

Our challenge is straightforward enough: The congregation I serve is multilingual, multiethnic, and financially vulnerable. We have come to the difficult conclusion that we are no longer in a position to afford a full-time priest. Last month I described the first steps we took to transition to a team-based leadership model. Using *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* as our guide, the core leadership team has begun to develop new patterns of relationship that we believe will allow us to continue to move into the future as a viable, creative, and capable faith community.

We recognize that this work takes time. Like many congregations, in addition to the challenges we are able to see and to comfortably name, we are also learning to identify and name our other challenges, the ones that are more difficult to talk about openly.

Two months into this effort, we are more aware than ever that this is not work for the faint-hearted. Sharing a wide range of responsi-

bilities for the day-to-day operations of our congregation, trying to establish new and constructive levels of mutual accountability, and especially, taking new risks in order to deepen our level of trust with each other has been hard and we have taken turns we did not anticipate in advance.

The first goals we set to build trust had to do with creating a space where people could more openly and honestly acknowledge their weaknesses, the places they fell short, or when they considered themselves inadequate. Each member of the team was asked to identify one defensive behavior or attitude that he or she had used within our team in the past. The idea was that all of us would commit to monitoring ourselves and to working hard to change from that defensive behavior or attitude even if that felt risky.

That exercise in itself was hard—it is far easier to identify others’ protectiveness than our own. After our first round, we agreed we would keep coming back to review the list, aware that self-examination and self-disclosure is not a ‘once-and-for all’ event but a process. As

incomplete as that effort seemed to be, we discovered at our next meeting that it had been enough to move into an aspect of our life in community that had felt too unsafe to discuss openly in the past.

Last May, the community sponsored a Cinco de Mayo celebration on our campus. It was an opportunity to unite the whole congregation around a time-defined project, to raise our visibility in our neighborhood, and to raise funds for our ministries. After it was over, we congratulated ourselves about how well it had gone and got on with life. Now, almost a year after the event, a member of the leadership team took the risk to state that in fact, there was some lingering resentment about that event. While so much effort had been put into celebrating the Cinco de Mayo, we had not done the same when the Fourth of July came around. The perception of some was that this was a slight of the patriotic holidays of the United States and was particularly hurtful given that we are in the United States.

Several of us were caught off guard by that feedback. Members of the Spanish-speaking part of the

community tried to explain that many people in the community are not Mexican and the day holds no special significance for them or even for most Mexicans. Cinco de Mayo is a marketing coup that has helped beer and tequila manufacturers leverage a nonAmerican holiday to sell more product. For the Spanish-speaking part of the congregation, the intent of the festivities had been to have a successful fundraiser.

The conversation was tense and awkward. The reality is, we still have a ways to go to understand how respectful multiculturalism works in a faith community, how we honor the reality that we are in the United States. At the level of team dynamics, we have not learned how to “own” our individual values and positions with clarity and openness to difference. It is easy to interpret an event like this through a lens of suspicion and fear. The temptation when we use that lens of suspicion is to view the “other” as an antagonist and consider that what we hold dear is at risk. In turn, that posture leads to a hardening of positions and makes folks reactive.

At the meeting, we agreed that there was considerable work for our team around this topic. We are exploring the possibility of getting help from an external trainer to help us deal with our diversity.

We’ve also agreed that we need to more clearly communicate when an event is primarily intended as a fundraiser, and find ways to celebrate a broad range of patriotic and cultural events.

As I reflect on that encounter, which represented only a very minor step deeper into our complexity, I am reminded of Teilhard de Chardin’s deeply insightful reflection on the way of grace and the work of God:

*Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay. We should like to skip the intermediate stages...And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability-and that it may take a very long time.*

Recognizing how modest our first steps have been, we are working hard to trust not only each other, but God’s ways as well.

*Rosa Lindahl is lead consultant for Vital Teams and founding member of the New River Regional Ministry in Fort Lauderdale, FL, a project for which she was awarded an ECF Fellowship in 2011. This regional approach to ministry merged a well-resourced downtown congregation, a Latino storefront ministry, and a primarily English-speaking congregation with financial chal-*

*lenges. Today, the New River Regional Ministry leverages the diverse resources of three distinct faith communities. Prior to becoming an Episcopal priest in 2006, Rosa worked for 15 years in international organizational development and human resource management, primarily with Federal Express. Rosa is a native of Colombia, has a passion for Latino ministry, and lives in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.*

## Resources

- Building Leadership Teams, ECF Vital Practices <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/building-leadership-teams/>
- Building Strong Teams: A Tool for Identifying and Addressing Five Common Areas of Dysfunction <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/building-strong-teams-a-tool-for-identifying-and-addressing-five-common-areas-of-dysfunction/>
- The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable by Patrick Lencioni <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787960756.html>

# El Lento Trabajo de Dios

POR ROSA LINDAHL

La conversación inesperada – pero necesaria – sobre el evento del Cinco de Mayo del año pasado.

Nuestro reto es suficientemente sencillo: la feligresía a la que sirvo es plurilingüe, multiétnica y financieramente vulnerable. Hemos llegado a la difícil conclusión de que no estamos más en posición de poder costear un sacerdote a tiempo completo. El mes pasado describí los primeros pasos que tomamos hacia un modelo de liderazgo basado en equipos. Empleando Las cinco disfunciones de un equipo como nuestra guía, el equipo central de liderazgo ha empezado a elaborar nuevos patrones de relaciones que creemos que nos permitirán avanzar hacia el futuro como una comunidad de fe viable, creativa y capaz.

Reconocemos que este trabajo lleva tiempo. Al igual que muchas feligresías, además de los retos que podemos ver y nombrar cómodamente, también estamos aprendiendo a identificar y a nombrar nuestros otros retos: los que son más difíciles de conversar más abiertamente.

A los dos meses de haber iniciado

este esfuerzo, estamos más conscientes que nunca de que ésta no es una tarea para los timoratos. Compartir una amplia variedad de responsabilidades para el funcionamiento diario de nuestra feligresía, tratar de establecer niveles nuevos y constructivos de rendición de cuentas mutuas y, especialmente, asumir riesgos para profundizar el nivel de confianza entre nosotros ha sido difícil y hemos dado giros que no habíamos anticipado.

Las primeras metas que fijamos para crear confianza tuvieron que ver con crear un espacio en el que las personas pudieran, más abierta y honestamente, aceptar sus puntos débiles, sus deficiencias o los momentos en que se consideraron inadecuadas. Se les pidió a todos los miembros del equipo que identificaran una conducta o actitud defensiva que habían empleado en nuestro equipo en el pasado. La idea era que todos nos comprometeríamos a vigilarnos a nosotros mismos y a esforzarnos mucho en cambiar esa conducta o actitud defensiva incluso en los casos en que nos pareciera peligroso hacerlo.

Ese ejercicio fue difícil de por sí:

es muchísimo más fácil identificar las medidas de protección ajenas que las propias. Después de nuestra primera ronda acordamos que volveríamos a repasar la lista, conscientes de que la autoevaluación y la autorrevelación no era algo que se hacía una vez, sino que era un proceso. Con todo lo incompleto que parecía ser ese esfuerzo, en nuestra próxima reunión descubrimos que había sido suficiente para trasladarnos a un aspecto de nuestra vida en comunidad que anteriormente habíamos sentido que hablarlo abiertamente era demasiado peligroso.

El mes de mayo pasado, la comunidad patrocinó una celebración del Cinco de Mayo en nuestro campus. Fue una oportunidad para unir a toda la feligresía alrededor de un proyecto definido, incrementar nuestra visibilidad en el barrio y recaudar fondos para nuestros ministerios. Después de que terminó, nos felicitamos por lo bien que había salido y seguimos adelante con nuestras vidas. Ahora, casi un año después del evento, un miembro del equipo de liderazgo asumió el riesgo de decir que en realidad perduraba un cierto resentimiento sobre ese evento. Si bien habíamos

dedicado tanto tiempo y esfuerzo en celebrar el Cinco de Mayo, no habíamos hecho lo mismo cuando llegó el cuatro de julio. La percepción de algunos fue que era un desprecio a las fiestas patrias de Estados Unidos y que era especialmente hiriente dado que estábamos en Estados Unidos.

A varios de nosotros ese comentario nos agarró desprevenidos. Miembros de la parte hispanohablante de la comunidad trataron de explicar que muchos en esa comunidad no eran mexicanos y que el día no tenía un significado especial para ellos o incluso para la mayoría de los mexicanos. Expresaron que el Cinco de Mayo era un triunfo de mercadotecnia que había ayudado a los vendedores de cerveza y de tequila a aprovechar un día festivo no estadounidense para vender más producto. Para la parte hispanohablante de la comunidad, la intención de las festividades había sido tener una buena recaudación de fondos.

La conversación fue tensa e incómoda. La realidad es que todavía no entendemos bien cómo abordar el multiculturalismo en una comunidad de fe, así como honrar la realidad de que estamos en Estados Unidos. Al nivel de la dinámica de equipo, todavía no aprendimos a hacer valer y respetar nuestros valores y posturas

individuales con suficiente claridad y apertura. Es fácil interpretar un evento como este a través de una lente de sospecha y temor. La tentación cuando usamos esa lente es ver al “otro” como un antagonista y temer que aquello que atesoramos está en riesgo. A su vez, esa postura conduce a un endurecimiento de las posturas e incita a la gente a ser reactiva.

En la reunión acordamos que nuestro equipo tenía un trabajo considerable por delante alrededor de este tópico. Estamos explorando la posibilidad de obtener ayuda de un capacitador externo para que nos ayude a lidiar con nuestra diversidad. También acordamos que necesitamos comunicar las cosas más claramente cuando un evento está dirigido principalmente a recaudar fondos, así como encontrar maneras de celebrar una amplia variedad de eventos patrióticos y culturales.

Cuando reflexiono sobre ese encuentro, que sólo representó un paso muy menor hacia la comprensión más profunda de nuestra complejidad, me viene a la mente la profundamente perspicaz reflexión de Teilhard de Chardin sobre la vía hacia la gracia y la labor de Dios:

Sobre todo, la confianza es el trabajo lento de Dios. Somos naturalmente impacientes en todo para

llegar al final sin demoras. Nos gustaría saltar todas las etapas intermedias... pero, sin embargo, es la ley de todo progreso que se realiza pasando por algunas etapas de inestabilidad y que puede llevar un tiempo muy largo.

Reconociendo lo modestos que fueron nuestros primeros pasos, nos estamos esforzando por confiar no sólo en cada uno de nosotros, sino también en Dios.

Rosa Lindahl es asesora principal de Vital Teams y miembro fundadora del Ministerio Regional New River en Fort Lauderdale, FL, un proyecto por el que ganó un ECF Fellowship en 2011. Este enfoque regional del ministerio unió una feligresía urbana con buenos recursos, un ministerio latino que se reunía en establecimientos comerciales y una feligresía principalmente anglohablante con problemas financieros. En la actualidad, el Ministerio Regional New River aprovecha los recursos diversos de tres comunidades de fe diferentes. Antes de convertirse en sacerdote episcopal, en 2006, Rosa trabajó por 15 años en el desarrollo organizacional internacional y en la gestión de recursos humanos, principalmente en Federal Express. Rosa es colombiana, tiene una verdadera pasión por el ministerio latino y vive en Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

## Recursos

- Building Leadership Teams, ECF Vital Practices <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/building-leadership-teams/>
- Building Strong Teams: A Tool for Identifying and Addressing Five Common Areas of Dysfunction <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/building-strong-teams-a-tool-for-identifying-and-addressing-five-common-areas-of-dysfunction/>
- Differentiated Leadership, <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/differentiated-leadership-in-seven-minutes/>
- The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable by Patrick Lencioni <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/pro-ductCd-0787960756.html>
- “Our Call to Leadership,” by Lelanda Lee, ECF Vital Practices’ Vestry Papers, May 2012 <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/governance/our-call-to-leadership/>