

## *Innovative Stewardship*

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# *Green Shoots from the Stump*

BY BRENT OWENS

## **Part I of II: When you're down, you're not out**

It would have been easy for St. Alban's <http://www.saintalbans-monroe.org/> to die. In 2003, the rector left the Episcopal Church over theological disagreements. He took more than 200 of the 300 or so congregation members with him to set up their own Anglican enterprise elsewhere. In his last service, the departing rector led a "burial liturgy" and declared the Episcopal Church dead. Smelling blood in the water, the local media made a spectacle of the split. It was even reported in Time Magazine. Such widespread bad publicity was hard to take, especially in the small, rural town of Monroe, Georgia. Many who didn't go with the rector left because they were tired of the fighting and the publicity. But the 40 or 50 members who remained at St. Alban's were determined that their Church would survive,

even though some months it wasn't certain they could pay the bills.

Eventually, a priest-in-charge was hired. Things stabilized some. But then St. Alban's received a college tuition refund. No one had authorized payment for the college tuition of the then parish administrator's son. It was discovered that after the congregation split, the parish administrator had embezzled around \$87,000. Criminal charges and a conviction of the parish administrator followed. St. Alban's filed a lawsuit against their bank for allowing an account in the name of the Church to be set up without the knowledge of the Church.

The small congregation decided to forego a formal rector search process, so they called the priest-in-charge to be their rector.

Things seemed to be looking up. But then it was discovered

the priest-in-charge had to be removed because of misconduct and disciplined by the Bishop. Things were not looking good for St. Alban's.

A formal search for a new Rector was begun, but it ended a year later when all of the final candidates withdrew. After the failed rector search, St. Alban's started a new, streamlined search process. This is where my story and the story of St. Alban's converge. After seminary I was called to be an associate priest at a large Episcopal church in Scottsdale, Arizona. But after three years, I felt called to be a rector. One of my former seminary classmates told me about St. Alban's and said he felt the Church had a lot of potential.

What I found in my interviews and visits to St. Alban's was a truly dedicated group who refused to let these destructive incidents rob them of their Church. The members rolled up their sleeves, learned everything they could about best practices, church finances, and ministry. They kept the doors open. I accepted the call to be the rector of St. Alban's, and started in June 2008 even though it was questionable whether the finances would support a full time Rector. Innovation and creativity became essential for St. Alban's particu-

larly in finances and stewardship. The Church was saddled with a large mortgage as a result of a major expansion prior to the split. This high interest commercial mortgage was creatively refinanced with the help of the Diocesan Foundation through a low, fixed rate mortgage with minimal closing costs. St. Alban's undertook the "greening" of the Church buildings, led by a lay "Creation Keeper," by making significant energy improvements with help and matching grants from Georgia Interfaith Power and Light ([www.gipl.com](http://www.gipl.com)), as well as generous donations and hard work from parishioners. This resulted in a 49% reduction in our electricity and gas bills as compared to five years before. Because of this work, St. Alban's was 1 of 5 U.S. churches to receive an Energy Star Award from the EPA ([http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=sb\\_success.congregations2010\\_stalbans](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=sb_success.congregations2010_stalbans)).

There hadn't been a formal stewardship program at St. Alban's for several years. I had a good experience in Arizona with the stewardship program New Consecration Sunday by Herb Miller. As a result of this program and a theological focus on giving back to God what God has given to us, pledges increased 30% over three years.

One of St. Alban's more innova-

tive fund raising efforts is "Alban's Oil," which resulted from giving a catalogue from a well-known church supply company to Wilbur, one of our lay Eucharistic ministers, who was looking for a new cassock. Several days later Wilber, who is in the petro-chemical business, asked me, "Why is the Church paying so much for candle oil?" He saw candle oil being sold through the catalogue and knew that the actual cost of the oil was many times less than what we were being charged. Through Wilber's connections, St. Alban's began to buy candle oil directly from the refinery for far less. Then Wilber came up with the idea of selling the candle oil to other churches. The price we charge is much less than the church supply companies, but it still provides a small profit for St. Alban's mission and outreach ministries. As a result, Alban's Oil was born. We now sell Alban's Oil through our new website. ([http://www.saintalbansmonroe.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=27:albans-oil](http://www.saintalbansmonroe.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=27:albans-oil)).

This is only part of the story though. Through faith in hard times and by following the lead of the Holy Spirit, the people of St. Alban's have kept their Church from dying which in turn has produced bright green shoots of ministry growing in many directions.

Next month Part II: Event  
Evangelism, Community Focus  
and Growth

***The Rev. Brent Owens*** is the rector of St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Monroe, Georgia.

### ***Resources***

- Alban's Oil: [http://www.saintalbansmonroe.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=27:albans-oil](http://www.saintalbansmonroe.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=27:albans-oil)
- Diocese of Atlanta's Diocesan Foundation: [http://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Content/Diocesan\\_Foundation.asp](http://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Content/Diocesan_Foundation.asp)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Energy Star Award: [http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=sb\\_success.congregations2010\\_stalbans](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=sb_success.congregations2010_stalbans)
- Georgia Interfaith Power and Light: [www.gipl.com](http://www.gipl.com)
- New Consecration Sunday by Herb Miller: <http://www.cokesbury.com/forms/ProductDetail.aspx?flid=4670>

## Editor's Letter

September is a time of new beginnings. Summer vacations are over and the start of the new church year brings a sense of optimism, a chance to try something new.

For the September and October Vestry Papers, we're sharing stories from individuals, congregations, and dioceses who are taking innovative approaches to the ongoing challenge of financial sustainability. Inspired by the Province IX Sustainability Conference held in Tela, Honduras, in March, we sought examples of congregations using the principles of asset based community development to first discern their gifts and strengths and then use these assets in service to God. [Read the ENS story here: [http://www.episcopalchurch.org/79425\\_127426\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/79425_127426_ENG_HTML.htm)]

Our September articles include:

- "Green Shoots from the Stump, Part I of II: When you're down you're not out," by Brent Owens, rector of St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Monroe, Georgia. In this two-part article (the second installment will be posted in October), Brent

shares the story of a congregation determined to survive and how, through a combination of faith, innovation, and creativity, St. Alban's is growing, with bright green shoots of ministry growing in many directions.

- "New Heights: Innovative Ideas to Build Church Revenue and Community" by Jeanie Sablatura and Terry Nathan offers a look at the approach taken by a large urban congregation to both build community and increase revenue. St. David's, Austin has a long history of using its location to generate revenue and continues to explore and develop income-producing enterprises to fund ministry and build community.
- "One Step Out of Stuckness" by Jamie Coats offers a creative way to look at how to bring about change in your congregation or your life. Offered as a tool for committees and groups eager to 'think outside the box,' Jamie invites you try his approach when you are feeling stuck in old ways of thinking or being.
- Offered in both Spanish and

English, "El Futuro o el Hoy/ The Future and the Now" by Juan Ángel Monge, uses the experience of the Diocese of Puerto Rico to invite financially dependent congregations to explore ways to both serve the community and increase revenue.

- The second part of the St. Alban's story by Brent Owens. "Why Grow: The Great Commission" shares what happened after the congregation studied the Great Commission, which shaped their perspective on growth and particularly why they needed to grow. Brent shares how the passion and persistence of parishioners has contributed to the overall health of the St. Alban's congregation.
- Rosa Lindahl Mallow's "Out of Many, One: New River Regional Ministry" offers a look at a different expression of 'multi-cell' or 'multi-site' ministry, created in response to both a need for church planting as part of a congregation's growth strategy and as a response to area congregations in deep crisis.

■ “The Best Way to be Blocked,” by Jamie Coats. Jamie’s creative way of approaching change offers congregational leaders a new way of thinking about the obstacles we encounter both in our corporate and spiritual lives.

■ Lynette Wilson’s reporting from the Province IX sustainability conference, where leaders from Latin America, Africa, and the Philippines shared stories and resources related to the ways their congregations and dioceses are working towards self sustainability.

Over the summer we posted a few blogs related to the theme of innovative stewardship. The posts *Inspiring Intersections* by Anne Ditzler and *Rising Dough, Growing Communities* by Miguel Escobar explore new ways to approach community building and stewardship, while the video featured in *Back to Church Sunday* by Richelle Thompson offers ways to engage in conversation about our faith without feeling ‘preachy.’ And, for practi-

cal tips and strategies related to congregational finance, read *Tax Credit?* by Nancy Davidge and *Stewardship Season is Just Around the Corner* by Miguel Angel Escobar. [You can find these July and August blogs here: <http://www.ecfvp.org/posts>]

Do you have an “Innovative Stewardship” story to share? If so, please drop me a note at [ndavidge@episcopalfoundation.org](mailto:ndavidge@episcopalfoundation.org), post a comment on our Facebook page [<https://www.facebook.com/pages/ECF-Vital-Practices/152603051444422>], or share your Innovative Stewardship resources in the Your Turn section of this site.

Faithfully,

Nancy

**NANCY DAVIDGE**  
Editor, *ECF Vital Practices*

PS: To make it easier for congregational leaders to find the resources offered through ECF Vital Practices, please consider adding a link to ECF Vital Practices to your website.

# New Heights

By Jeanie Sablatura and Terry Nathan

## Innovative Ideas to Build Church Revenue and Community

In today's world of decreasing church attendance, changing parish demographics, and difficult economic times, it is essential that all of us optimize the stewardship of the resources with which we are blessed. At St. David's, Austin, our leadership has chosen to proactively explore opportunities to further our mission through maximizing all of our resources including our physical facilities. Located in the heart of Austin since 1854, St. David's has seen significant growth and increased vitality of our downtown in recent years. Due to this, St. David's is perfectly situated to explore new ideas for building community and increasing revenue. With a membership of over 2,200 and an annual budget of just over \$2.5 million, we continue to challenge the old norms about the roles of church and business. We have found new ways to lead our congregation and grow, spiritually and numerically, in mission in the community and to increase our financial stability.

## Consignment Shop

Thinking-outside-the-box has long been routine for St. David's. Since 1959 volunteers have been running Next-to-New, a consignment shop that is housed in its own building in North Austin. What started as an outreach ministry has grown into a successful, well-known Austin business through marketing efforts and word-of-mouth. Annually, Next-to-New contributes over \$100,000 to local charities and to the preservation of St. David's Historic Church. In addition to the economic impact the proceeds have on the community, it also offers a valuable service to customers and consignors. By providing affordable clothing, furniture, and appliances, the shop is filled daily with shoppers. In addition, the store provides work training and service opportunities to over 100 volunteers who keep the merchandise flowing six days a week and offers the opportunity for Community Service credit for numerous people.

## Parking Garage

St. David's sits on an entire city block in the middle of downtown Austin. As the town continued to grow around the Church, leaders knew that parking capacity would

have to be increased to accommodate growth in our programs and population. In 1985, St. David's began building a 5-level parking garage, and then expanded it to eight floors ten years later.

The 545-car garage is free for parishioners and visitors to the church. For others, daily or monthly rates are paid while they work nearby or head downtown for an evening out. Annually, the garage has revenues of more than one million dollars. In 2007, the garage management contract was terminated, and the church automated the gates. This further increased the profits available for church ministries.

In 2004, Sprint contacted the church and asked if it could put a cell phone tower on top of the garage. Geographically, it was just the right place. That placement generates over one thousand dollars each month in additional rent. This year, four electric vehicle charging stations were added, increasing community awareness of the garage as well as making a statement about the church's commitment to the environment.

## Coffee and Gift Shop

In 1953, St. David's opened a retail space inside the church building. Originally functioning as a Christian bookstore, the shop has transformed over the years to a coffee and gift shop that, during the week, caters to downtown employees looking for a morning latte or quick lunch. While the shop has failed to remain profitable as it transitions from book sales to more of a food and beverage orientation, the Vestry has supported its existence because it serves so well as a gathering space for the parish and is effective in bringing new people into the building each day. It currently operates six days a week, and continues to grow in popularity.

## Day School

In 1997, St. David's established a Day School that enrolls 130 pre-school age children each year. The Day School has its own board which operates independently of the church, but the school utilizes classroom space that was originally only used on Sunday mornings. This increasing utilization of the church is not only good stewardship of the resource, but provides income to the church budget. The Day School is open to parishioner and non-parishioner families, and almost 40% of the school families become members of the church,

serving as one of the most effective evangelism ministries at St. David's.

## Cafe Divine

St. David's operates a full time commercial kitchen with three professionally trained chefs. The kitchen stays busy providing Sunday breakfasts to parishioners, Tuesday and Wednesday night dinners, lunches for the local Rotary Club, and on Thursdays, a hot lunch offered to the public for \$8. Each week an average 400 meals are prepared from this facility. Many are served to downtown workers who visit the church for the first time because of the food offerings. Through an E-menu that is sent to 650 subscribers each week, community awareness is maintained and increased. This ministry of hospitality furthers the church's mission financially, but more importantly it serves as an evangelism tool by bringing thousands of people into our facility and helping create loyal relationships with those around us.

## Meeting/ Venue Space Rental

As the St. David's staff and downtown community have grown over the years, the Church has committed to a Ministry of Hospitality that operates much like a hotel banquet facility. St. David's has several banquet halls that can be rented out for meetings, not to mention a

professional kitchen for catering such events. The Church hosted over 300 events for non-profits and community organizations last year. These ranged from simple meetings, to music performances, to worship space for start-up faith communities. While we focus on making great food and lovely space available at a reasonable cost for non-profit entities, we also welcome for-profit entities believing that offering biblical hospitality may very well open the eyes of faith to those who enter our doors.

## Giving with Social Media

Even in the traditional forms of revenue at the church, St. David's tries to think outside the box. In an effort to make it easier for parishioners to pay their pledge, St. David's has just begun printing a bar code on Sunday bulletins. While the church has not discontinued the passing of the plate, it has recognized that in today's electronic society, debit and credit cards have all but replaced checkbooks and money clips. So for the parishioners who rely on their iPhones more than their wallets, St. David's is providing a simple in-the-pew means of electronically contributing to the church. Now, the inspired parishioner can simply scan the bar code that connects them to the church's "Give" page where an electronic contribution can be made. While this may seem crass and

commercial to some, to our younger parishioners, it is more natural than writing a check.

## Future

In addition to its established enterprises, St. David's continues to work to expand its horizons with new ventures. The church has an underutilized gymnasium that it plans to use as the basis for an activity center, offering classes and recreation to the 25,000 people living within a mile of the church. In addition, it is in conversation with the property owner of a nearby block about building a day care facility to serve downtown workers during the day and on a drop-in basis at night. Both concepts would complement existing operations, and would directly serve the church's missions of evangelism and stewardship while providing funds and resources for overall church operations.

For more information, contact St. David's Parish Administrator, Terry Nathan, at [TerryN@StDave.org](mailto:TerryN@StDave.org).

***Jeanie Sablatura** is the director of communications at St. David's Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas and **Terry Nathan** is the parish administrator.*

## Resources

- Café Divine: [http://stdave.org/site/about/cat/cafe\\_divine/](http://stdave.org/site/about/cat/cafe_divine/)
- Cell Tower Income 101: <http://www.cell-phone-towers.com/Cell-Tower-Income.html>;  
<http://www.steelintheair.com/Get-a-Cell-Tower-on-your-Property.html>
- Meeting/Venue Space Rental: <http://stdave.org/site/about/cat/catering/>
- Next-to-New Consignment Shop: <http://www.next2new.org/>
- Parking Garage: <http://stdave.org/site/about/cat/garage/>

# One Step Out of “Stuckness”

BY JAMIE COATS

**Editor’s Note:** *Sometimes we get stuck in old ways of thinking and doing, finding it difficult to envision a different approach to an ongoing challenge. Earlier this year, Jamie Coats shared the story of the “Winged-Boot Fitter;” his imagery stuck with me. When we decided to devote an issue of Vestry Papers to new approaches to financial sustainability, it seemed fitting to include an exercise designed to help groups explore how to take one step out of stuckness.*

In Lent 2004 I had a vision during a meditation and wrote down a story entitled “In Boots Behold God” that told of Jesus giving me a pair of winged-boots and instructing me to “go fit boots!” Since this story emerged I have come to see my vocation as being the winged-boot fitter, who helps others to make spirited and rooted next steps in their lives and organizations. At least that is what I try to do. I now describe myself as “a communication messenger for the religious, drawing upon the story of Hermes, and the story of Jesus’ washing the disciples’ feet.”

Helping other make spirited and rooted next steps often involves

being intentional about not only where you want to go but also what is keeping you from getting started. When leading workshops on this topic, I often invite participants to join me in this exercise:

## 1) Where do you want to go?

Take a blank sheet of paper and put it under your foot. Draw an outline of your foot. This can be done anywhere easily, even in a restaurant with napkin. It doesn’t matter if your shoe is on or off. It is the rightful place of the people of God, ever widening the embrace of Christ’s body on earth.

## 2) Where are you stuck?

Take the foot outline and fill in everything that is stuck in your work or life.

Next, take another blank sheet and draw around your other foot.

## 3) What is one step out of stuckness?

Reflect, mediate, pray, and then write down one step that will get you moving towards your vision.

What I have learned from using this exercise is that it takes people out their heads and makes them, in some way, think with their whole body. It allows people to surface major issues that stop their whole progress or their organization’s progress. I have also found that what people are desperate for is “one step out of stuckness.” They do not need comprehensive answers, brilliant ideas, and other people’s examples. They want their own one step out of stuckness. They want to be fitted with their own pair of winged boots, able to move freely, perhaps to soar, in search of their own path.

I believe that in washing the disciples’ feet Jesus called us to lead by equipping others to walk their own path in direct relation to God. Jesus offers us a different form of leadership, grounded in faith in our own ability to find our way, to become unstuck through reflection, meditation, and prayer. When I hear the word “leadership” I often fear what is being proposed is “headship” where one person says to another, “If you put my ideas in your head or let me take over your thinking it

will solve your problems.” Instead I pray that that we can work to equip others to take their own “one step out of stuckness” and fit them with their own winged-boots.

**Jamie Coats** serves as the Director, Friends of SSJE - Society of Saint the Evangelist, (SSJE) an Episcopal religious order of Brothers ([www.ssje.org](http://www.ssje.org)) and as a trustee of the Trustees of Donations to the Protestant Episcopal Church ([www.trusteesofdonations.org](http://www.trusteesofdonations.org)). He directed SSJE's the Stone & Light Capital Campaign to renovate SSJE's beautiful Monastery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is currently working to support the Brothers' plans to enhance and conserve Emery House, SSJE's rural retreat center in West Newbury, Massachusetts.

*This article is copyright Jamie Coats 2011 and was first published on Jamie's blog site [www.winged-boots.com](http://www.winged-boots.com)*

# El Futuro o el Hoy

POR JUAN ÁNGEL MONGE

Por más de 135 años el liderazgo de la Diócesis de Puerto Rico ha demostrado su capacidad de realizar la enorme tarea de llevar una diócesis dependiente financieramente a ser una diócesis que puede afrontar sus necesidades financieras por sí sola. Nuestra diócesis posee de uno de los mayores sistemas de salud de Puerto Rico. “Servicios de Salud Episcopales”, también conocido como “Grupo San Lucas”, es el segundo mayor empleador sin fines de lucro de Puerto Rico y uno de los principales 20 empleadores con más de 4,000 empleados y 17 instalaciones médicas.

Con el liderazgo del Obispo David A. Álvarez, “Grupo San Lucas” se convirtió en una fuente de ingresos autogenerados para la labor y el desarrollo de nuestra diócesis. Todas las Instituciones de Salud tienen consejos administrativos cuyos miembros son episcopales activos que participan en su desarrollo y labor. Ello permitió que el presupuesto diocesano subiera de \$400,000 en 1978 a \$2.6 millones en 2011, lo que a su vez permitió, entre muchas otras cosas, que el clero diocesano participara en los beneficios del “Church Pension

Fund” (Fondo de Pensiones de la Iglesia), que se aumentarían sus estipendios y prestaciones, y que se adquirieran bienes raíces para nuevas feligresías, así como que se obtuvieran subsidios UTO paralelos a donativos para construir iglesias.

Por otro lado, tras 3 años de auditorías, conversaciones y presentaciones del desempeño de las feligresías, entendimos que muchos de nuestros laicos necesitaban tener un sentido claro de las responsabilidades que asumían al aceptar ser parte de las Juntas Parroquiales. También descubrimos la necesidad de una mayor toma de conciencia de la importancia de aumentar el mantenimiento financiero local y disminuir la dependencia financiera del presupuesto diocesano. Tenemos cincuenta feligresías de las cuales sólo cinco son parroquias, el resto de ellas son parroquias asistidas y misiones sin suficiente capacidad financiera para cubrir todas sus necesidades.

Es justo decir que los que dependen del presupuesto diocesano asumen un cierto nivel de responsabilidad financiera por su mantenimiento y que están aumentan-

do su aporte constantemente. Sin embargo, para evitar la posible y real amenaza de que por hábito su dependencia diocesana sea a perpetuidad, es importante continuar una educación que enfatice la importancia de tener un plan para, como mínimo, iniciar un proceso de obtención de independencia financiera.

Si queremos ser una Iglesia del Futuro tenemos que evaluar El Hoy y determinar el mejor camino a seguir. Nunca debemos dejar de ser una iglesia misionera, nuestro modo de pensar actual, si queremos servir a otros. Pero tenemos que empezar a presentarnos nuevos retos. Debemos aprovechar nuestro mayor recurso, nuestros laicos, y hacerles un llamado para que sean más activos, positivos, apasionados, llenos de amor y misericordia y orgullosos de quienes son y de lo que pueden lograr. Necesitan estar conscientes de que la constante dependencia financiera en el presupuesto diocesano tarde o temprano va a “secar el pozo”.

El 5 de marzo pasado completamos el segundo de dos talleres llamados “Taller para juntas

parroquiales” al que asistieron principalmente líderes laicos, líderes potenciales y miembros de juntas. El taller se basó en parte en la “Guía de Recursos para la Junta Parroquial,” publicado por la Fundación de la Iglesia Episcopal (ECF por sus siglas en inglés), y con el apoyo de personal de ECF. El propósito primordial fue dar una idea clara y completa de lo que es una Junta Parroquial, de sus responsabilidades y de lo que se espera de los que aceptan servir en ellas. Pero también fue más allá de las responsabilidades básicas en la discusión de liderazgo en la iglesia.

La mayoría de los que asistieron se sintieron agradecidos por la información provista. Las partes que generaron el mayor interés fueron “Responsabilidad compartida de la junta y el clero” y “Liderazgo laico transformacional”. Creo que esto confirma el interés de nuestros laicos en ayudar a sentar las bases del futuro de nuestra diócesis. El Futuro nos espera, El Hoy nos necesita todos, tanto a laicos como a clérigos, para estar llenos de vida, ser activos, ser cristianos.

Ojalá pudiera decirles a las feligresías lo que tienen que hacer para alcanzar la independencia financiera. Sería sumamente fácil si para resolver los problemas finan-

cieros lo único que tuviéramos que hacer fuera abrir una escuela o una microempresa o invertir un capital. Pero eso no basta.

En una transmisión en vivo por el net, alguien pregunto a la obispa primada: “¿Qué le diría a una feligresía pequeña que está en dificultades y necesita más miembros con desesperación?” La obispa primada respondió: “Primero tendría que preguntar: ¿es tu propósito simplemente tener más miembros o es tu propósito ser una feligresía que sirve a su comunidad?” Continuó diciendo: “La respuesta a esta pregunta demostrará cómo ves la vida de esta feligresía. La feligresía que piensa que la solución de sus problemas es tener más gente en los bancos de la iglesia para pagar sus deudas, probablemente no está sirviendo bien a su comunidad.

Cuando ves la comunidad que te rodea y encuentras jóvenes llegando de la escuela a hogares vacíos y encuentras una manera de responder a esa situación, algo que llene ese vacío para los estudiantes, estás encaminado a servir a esa comunidad. La mayoría de las feligresías descubrirán que la comunidad se entera más de la labor de esa feligresía y que a menudo desea participar en sus esfuerzos y ser parte del trabajo”. (Pido disculpas si la cita no es

exacta).

¿Acaso no fue eso precisamente lo que hicimos a nivel diocesano? ¿No estamos sirviendo a la comunidad de Puerto Rico por medio de los Servicios de Salud Episcopales y los Servicio Sociales Episcopales? Sí, lo estamos haciendo. Nuestro sistema de salud atiende diariamente a miles de personas. Nuestro sistema de servicios sociales cuenta con centros en los que se atiende a niños necesitados hasta los 4 años y 11 meses de edad. El Hogar San Miguel alberga a niños y adolescentes de 5 a 18 años de edad que han sido retirados de sus hogares y tienen trastornos especiales.

Si funcionó a nivel diocesano, ¿qué nos impide hacerlo a nivel de feligresía?

Creo ya lo dije: “El Futuro y El Hoy nos necesitan a todos, tanto a laicos como a clérigos, para estar llenos de vida, ser activos, ser cristianos.

**El Rvdo. Canónigo Juan Ángel Monge-Santiago, MBA, MDiv es le Canónigo de Mayordomía Cristiana Y Desarrollo de Feligresía en la Diócesis de Puerto Rico.**

### *Resources*

- Grupo Episcopal San Lucas:  
<http://www.ssepr.com/>
  
- Servicios Sociales Episcopales:  
<http://www.vidasse.org/>
  
- Vestry Resource Guide: <http://www.episcopalfoundation.org/tools-and-programs/leadership-tools/the-vestry-resource-guide>

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# The Future or The Now

BY JUAN ANGEL MONGE

For over 135 years the main leadership of the Diocese of Puerto Rico has demonstrated its capacity to carry forward the huge task of taking this diocese from being financially dependant to becoming responsible for its own financial needs. Our diocese owns one of Puerto Rico's largest health systems *Sevicios de Salud Episcopales*, also known as *Grupo San Lucas*, the second largest nonprofit employer in Puerto Rico and one of the top 20 employers with over 4,400 employees and 17 medical facilities.

Under the leadership of Bishop David A. Alvarez, *Grupo San Lucas* became a source of self-generated income for the work and development of our diocese. All health system institutions have governing boards with active Episcopalians participating in their development and work. This brought the diocesan budget from \$400,000 in 1978 to \$2.6 million in 2011. Among other things, this increase has enabled all full time active clergy to participate in the Church Pension Fund benefit, increased clergy stipends and benefits, and allowed for the purchase of property for new congregations and matching UTO

grants for church building projects.

On the other hand, we have realized our congregations need to become more aware of the importance of increasing their local financial support and decreasing dependency on financial aid from the diocesan budget. We have 50 congregations: only five are parishes, the others are aided-parishes and missions whose financial capacity does not allow them to cover 100% of their financial needs. After three years of auditing, face-to-face talks, and congregational performance presentations, it is our understanding that many of our lay people needed a clearer sense of the responsibilities assumed when they agree to be part of the congregation's vestry.

It is fair to say that those depending on diocesan budget do have some level of financial responsibility to provide for their own support and are constantly incrementing their share. However, to avoid a potential and real threat of a status of conformity on diocesan dependency it is important to continue education emphasizing the importance of having a systematically evaluated strategic plan to, at least,

begin a process to attain financial independence.

If we want to be a Church for the Future, then we have to assess the Now and determine the best course to follow. We should never stop being a missionary church, our current mindset, if we want to serve others. But we need to start challenging ourselves. We need to reach out to our greatest resource, our lay people, to call on them to be more active, assertive, passionate, loving, merciful, and proud of who they are and what they can accomplish. They need to be aware that to continue congregational financial dependency on the diocesan budget, will, sooner or later, "dry out the well."

In March, we completed the second of two workshops called "Taller Para Juntas Parroquiales" (Vestry Workshop) where the attendance was mainly lay leaders, potential leaders and members of vestries. The workshop was based in part on "The Vestry Resource Guide," a publication of the Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF), and presented with the support of ECF staff. Our main purpose was to provide a comprehensive picture of what a

vestry is, what its responsibilities are, and what is expected of those who agree to serve on it. But we also went beyond the basic responsibilities in discussing congregational leadership.

The majority of those attending were grateful for the information provided. The parts that generated the most interest were “Shared Responsibilities of Vestries and Clergy” and “Transformational Lay Leadership.” I believe that confirms the interest of our lay people to be active partners in laying the foundation for the future of our diocese. The future awaits us; the now needs all of us, clergy and lay people, to be alive, to be active, and to be Christians.

I wish I could tell each congregation what to do in order to reach an independent financial status. It would be a walk in the park if something as simple as opening a school, starting a micro enterprise, or initiating a capital investment could solve your financial problems. It’s more than that.

On a live webcast last year, someone asked the presiding bishop, what would you say to small congregations that are in difficulty and desperate for more members? The presiding bishop said, “First I have to ask: is your purpose to simply add more members or is your purpose to

be a congregation that serves its community?” She continued saying: “The answer to this question will show how you see the life of this congregation. Congregations who think the solution to their problems is to have more people in the pews to be able to pay their dues are probably not serving their communities well.

“When you look at your surrounding community and find young people coming from schools to empty homes and then you find something that responds to that situation, something that fills that void for those students, you are on your way to serving that community. The majority of congregations will discover that the community learns more about their congregation and frequently will want to participate in that effort and will want to be part of it.” (My apologies if I have misquoted.)

Isn’t that exactly what we did at a diocesan level in the Diocese of Puerto Rico? Are we not serving the community through Episcopal Health Services and Episcopal Social Services? Yes we are. Our health system attends to thousands of people daily. Our social services system has centers to care for children with difficulties up to four years 11 months. Hogar San Miguel is a shelter for children between five

and 18 years old who have been removed from their homes and have special conditions.

If it worked at the diocesan level, what’s stopping us from doing it at the congregational level?

I say it again: The Future and The Now need all of us, clergy and lay people, to be alive, to be active, and to be Christians.

***The Rev. Canon Juan Angel Monge-Santiago, MBA, MDiv***  
*is the Canon for Christian Stewardship and Congregational Development in the Episcopal Diocese of Puerto Rico*

### **Resources**

- Episcopal Health Services/ Grupo Episcopal San Lucas: <http://www.ssepr.com/>
- Episcopal Social Services/ Servicios Sociales Episcopales: <http://www.vidasse.org/>
- Vestry Resource Guide: <http://www.episcopalfoundation.org/tools-and-programs/leadership-tools/the-vestry-resource-guide>

# St. Alban's: Why Grow?

BY BRENT OWENS

## Part II of II: The Great Commission - Community Focus, Event Evangelism, and Growth

*Editor's Note: In Part I, we heard about St. Alban's decline, both in size as well as financially, and the tenacious work of the remaining members who dug in their heels and refused to let the congregation die. Part II showcases the transformation that takes place when individuals, through their passion and persistence, make miracles occur.*

After the substantial decline in size, a major focus of St. Alban's has been on growth. When I became rector three years ago, I led the parish in a study of Reclaiming the Great Commission: A Practical Model for Transforming Denominations and Congregations, by Claude Payne and Hamilton Beazley. This shaped our perspective on growth and particularly why we need to grow. Church growth is not simply for the sake of getting bigger, or having more bodies, or balancing the budget. Instead, we believe that if we fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), then we will grow. Having a sense of urgency regard-

ing the Great Commission has been essential.

Our approach to fulfilling the Great Commission has revolved around: event evangelism, community-focused mission, and a plan to welcome and integrate visitors.

As mentioned in Part I, St. Alban's reputation in this small, rural Georgia community took a beating in years past as a result of an ugly public split and a variety of other problems that made the news. Many in the larger community had a negative view of St. Alban's, if they even knew it existed. A strong community focus on our mission and ministries has been essential to our comeback.

### Event Evangelism

Three years ago at a St. Alban's men's group breakfast, a parishioner by the name of Marvin (a former volunteer fireman) proposed that we invite the local first responders (fire, police, sheriff, EMS) to bring their best chili for a competition. Marvin suggested that we get sponsorships from local businesses and charge \$5 for all you can eat chili. More than

just a few of us thought that this wouldn't work. Why would the first responders even participate? But Marvin continued to talk about his idea, so we started to explore it. Much to our surprise, when he talked to the various first responders they all agreed to be a part of St. Alban's Chili Challenge.

We continued to work toward putting together this event even though we didn't know what we were doing and weren't really sure it would work. Patterned after a golf tournament, we sold sponsorships to local businesses. In addition to the first responder's competition chili, parishioners contributed their own chili for "all you can eat" chili. On the day of the event, live music, fire trucks, and police cars filled our parking lot. Marvin's idea turned into a success. To say that we were surprised would be an understatement! And on top of this, we received a significant amount of positive publicity in the community.

At last year's St. Alban's Chili Challenge, 800 tickets were sold and 450 people, including the new Governor of Georgia and his wife,

came to eat chili. We recruited over 50 sponsors, grossed \$15,000, netted \$12,500, and gave away 50% to other local charities.

### **Community Focused Mission**

As the economy was tanking in 2008, another parishioner, Mary Ann, came to me with a strong feeling that we needed to provide hot meals to a part of our community. But we weren't sure whom we were to serve. We entered into a month long discernment of this idea. During this period we became aware that at the local Boys and Girls Club some children of the working poor didn't get much dinner since they were often in the after school program until 8:00 pm. We started STAR (St. Alban's Response) Dinners, which provides a hot meal for the children one night a week, and STAR Tutoring to help with school-work. Funding came from an Episcopal Charities Foundation Grant, parishioners, and beef came from a parishioner who is a rancher.

During this time, another parishioner, Melissa, announced her interest in reviving St. Alban's Vacation Bible School (VBS). It had been years since the congregation had offered VBS and with Melissa's passion for this project

as the catalyst, we started summer VBS three years ago and opened it to any child in the county. As a result, we have had between 45-72 children each year at VBS, and have gained several new families as members.

Last year, just a few days after I added new mission opportunities to my prayer list, a parishioner, DeDe, came to me and suggested a rather unusual mission project. DeDe's idea was that we could partner with the local jail to plant a community garden on several acres of their land, and the vegetables would be given to the poor in our county. She had explored obtaining grants from ACTION, Inc., which dispersed funds from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. After the phone call I thought, "Whoa!" and wrote "prayer answered" next to new mission opportunities.

The next Sunday we had a meeting to see if anyone else felt called to this mission. About 10 parishioners showed up, including some very good gardeners. Our parishioners provide time and know-how to show inmates how to garden. Inmates receive one day off of his or her sentence for each day worked in the garden.

The vegetables are given to those

in need in our county with St. Alban's serving as a distribution center. Last summer 265 families (a total of 486 individuals) were provided with a box of vegetables each week. You can read more about the Jail Garden Ministry at: [http://waltonwellness.org/Garden\\_PathwaysWinter\\_2010-2011.pdf](http://waltonwellness.org/Garden_PathwaysWinter_2010-2011.pdf).

### **Welcoming Visitors**

We felt it was crucial to do everything possible to welcome and integrate the people who have already expressed an interest in St. Alban's: our visitors. An evangelism team was recruited, with a vestry member as the team leader. They adopted the Integration program developed by St. David's Episcopal Church in Roswell, Georgia, which outlines a series of contacts with visitors designed to integrate them into the parish over a period of time.

### **Results**

Each of these event evangelism and community-focused ministries has been covered by the local newspaper or appeared on the local cable channel. Many in our community are now aware of St. Alban's for positive, rather than negative reasons. The parishioners of St. Alban's can justifiably feel good about their Church and be proud to invite a

friend to worship with them.

What has been the impact on growth? Three and a half years ago average Sunday attendance was 46. Now average Sunday attendance is in the low 80's. But sometimes we now have 90, and even 100 folks, worshipping with us. St. Alban's is still a small church, but now it's a bigger small church. There is still much to be done at St. Alban's, but bright green shoots are indeed growing from the stump.

***The Rev. Brent Owens*** is the rector of St. Alban's Episcopal Church in Monroe, Georgia.

### ***Resources***

- Reclaiming the Great Commission: A Practical Model for Transforming Denominations and Congregations, by Claude Payne and Hamilton Beazley: <http://www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787952680.html>
- St. Alban's Chili Challenge: <http://www.saintalbansmonroe.org/index.php/felloship/episcopal-church-men/chili-challenge>
- Episcopal Charities Foundation (Diocese of Atlanta): <http://ecf.episcopalatlanta.org/Content/>

Episcopal\_Charities\_Foundation\_1.asp

- Jail Garden Ministry: [http://waltonwellness.org/Garden\\_PathwaysWinter\\_2010-2011.pdf](http://waltonwellness.org/Garden_PathwaysWinter_2010-2011.pdf)
- Integration Welcome Program at St. David's Episcopal Church, Roswell, GA: <http://www.stdavidchurch.org/>

# Out of Many, One

BY ROSA LINDAHL MALLOW

**Editor's Note:** *The New River Regional Ministry is the result of the commitment of The Diocese of Southeast Florida, All Saints Church, St. Ambrose Church, El Centro Hispano de Todos los Santos, and St. Ambrose Pre-school to serve joyfully both in the abundance and suffering of life in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Their ministry is to seek justice and mercy for all people, welcoming seekers to join at one of these safe harbors.*

Fort Lauderdale, like many East Coast cities, has a number of Episcopal Churches in a small geographic area. Ten years ago, there were six in a six-mile radius, all facing the very real challenge of supporting ministry and real estate as expenses continued to outpace income. Something needed to change.

The genesis for New River Regional Ministry began in 2006, when All Saints Episcopal Church in Fort Lauderdale, a large resource size parish, responded to the call for ministry to serve very low income, recently immigrated Latinos. The leadership at All Saints called me, a native of Colombia, to work with a small seed group of other Latinos

to get this new ministry off the ground. The group that became El Centro Hispano de Todos los Santos congregation (El Centro) rented a small upholstery shop that we converted to a chapel. Over the next three years El Centro moved twice to accommodate our growing ministries and community. By the end of 2009, we knew that we would need to move again within the next six months. But where?

From the beginning, El Centro was located near another of the six Fort Lauderdale Episcopal churches: St. Ambrose. At the end of 2009, as El Centro was looking for a new home, St. Ambrose was in crisis. For ten years it had rented a large part of its facility to a social service agency. The agency was moving out and, with the space they formerly occupied needing approximately \$500,000 worth of repairs, there were no prospects for another tenant. Without this income stream, St. Ambrose could no longer support a full-time priest. Remaining was a small preschool/day care program (36 students) and approximately 65 active members of the congregation.

St. Ambrose had the space that

would allow El Centro to grow, which would also help with operating expenses. Though profoundly embattled with the Diocese and suspicious of All Saints and El Centro, St. Ambrose's leadership agreed to share their church with El Centro.

An agreement was made between St. Ambrose and All Saints: while still leading el Centro, I was brought on as priest-in-charge at St. Am, and both its congregation and the preschool were placed under the leadership and administrative management of All Saints. Our three congregations began to call ourselves the New River Regional Ministry.

A year prior to the agreement between All Saints, St. Ambrose, and El Centro, All Saints became the guardian of Fort Lauderdale's Church of the Intercession. After a period of rapid decline, Intercession could no longer afford a priest and was barely paying its operating expenses, even with a significant diocesan subsidy. All Saints provided a priest for Sunday coverage at Intercession and handled the 'back room' responsibilities of a mission congregation

However, by the time the Church of the Intercession had come under the umbrella of this emerging regional ministry, it had lost critical mass and in 2010 was moved back out of the New River Regional Ministry to be managed more directly by the Diocese of Southeast Florida.

The New River Regional Ministry is a new, different expression of 'multi-cell' or 'multi-site' ministry, created in response to both a need for church planting as part of All Saints' growth strategy and as a response to area congregations in deep crisis. Its member congregations – All Saints, St. Ambrose, and El Centro - represent the diversity of culture, theological and social beliefs, and income level found in the Fort Lauderdale area. There are also significant size and power differences. And, by God's grace, we have managed to find our way forward for the past year and a half.

It hasn't been easy. These are the key challenges and questions we have had to engage:

1. How do we fund a venture like this, especially in a church used to investing in new single parishes?

2. How do we achieve economies of scale to make a regional min-

istry more financially sustainable than the individual 'cells' could be?

3. How do we manage the tension created by having one very strong 'anchor parish' that has deep resources, especially in the area of leadership, and several much smaller ministries that each have their own unique voice and identity that is worth preserving? Another way to describe this challenge is "how do we avoid duplicating previous patterns of colonialism?"

4. How do we ensure that we are mission and ministry focused, intent on serving and not just surviving?

The answers to these questions are complex. Perhaps the most important insight we have gleaned is that we are incubating a new expression of church. Small business incubators gather an extraordinary array of resources to help a new business succeed. At New River, we have discovered many internal resources and are being creative about looking for the additional resources we need. Gestation will not be rushed.

One of the key graces needed for this work is patience. The New River Regional Ministry is still fragile, still in need of a lot of

support and still at risk. It is also kicking quite lustily and there is a growing sense of excitement about the difference we will be able to make in Fort Lauderdale.

***The Rev. Rosa Lindhal Mallow***, an Episcopal Church Foundation Fellow, is a priest-engaged in a grand experiment of the Episcopal Church to transcend the limitations of an existing mindset. The New River Regional Ministry is coming into being thanks to the commitments of All Saints, St. Ambrose Church, El Centro Hispano de Todos los Santos, and St. Ambrose Pre-school to serve joyfully both in the abundance and suffering of life in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

### Resources

- El Centro: <http://www.allsaintsfl.org/centro-hispano.html>
- New River Current (English): <http://allsaintsfl.org/images/stories/PDF/nrc.pdf>
- New River Current (Spanish): ADD LINK

- New River Regional Ministry:  
<http://www.allsaintsfl.org/>
- New River Regional Ministry  
Chart of Accounts Template:  
The New River Regional  
Ministry has three legal entities  
and five separate sets of books.  
The three legal entities are St.  
Ambrose, All Saints, and the  
“New River Regional Child and  
Family Development Center”, a  
separate 501(c)3 that ensures  
that money received from found-  
ations that want reassurance  
that their grant funds will not  
be used for church/proselytiz-  
ing/evangelizing purposes. We  
keep separate books for All  
Saints, El Centro, St. Ambrose,  
St. Ambrose Preschool, and the  
Child & Family Development  
Center. We have structured our  
chart of accounts to be able to  
look at our finances all the way  
from the overall “NRRM” level  
(that is all our revenues and  
expenses) down to the project  
level of any one of the organiza-  
tions that are part of the NRRM.  
The chart of accounts is quite  
complicated at first glance and  
we are glad to provide more  
detailed information about it to  
interested parties. Inquiries  
should be sent to me at [rosa@  
allsaintsfl.org](mailto:rosa@allsaintsfl.org). **ADD LINK**

# The Best Way to be Blocked

BY JAMIE COATS

I'm not alone when making the observation that often, as we look ahead, our paths seem blocked and full of obstacles. While the Kingdom of Heaven may be right under our nose and what we need may be close at hand, we fail to see it due to the distractions of our tough/hectic/busy/pressured/rushed lives. Perhaps we need to consider a different way of seeing. Perhaps we need a new way to visualize being blocked.

"There is nothing more wonderful Than to have one's way Blocked by an angel, Holding a gift from God A practice when received Let's us feel God's love."

This verse is one of a series of poems I wrote a few years ago (The Grief & Wonder Trilogy) to cope with my anguish over the death of my sister, Emma. People would sometimes say, "You must feel terrible!" (Note no question mark). Yes I did feel terrible at times but often I found myself surrounded by angels who blocked my way with kindness and care. I experienced incredible joy on a difficult road.

The thought "being blocked by an

angel" celebrates that kindness.

While meeting with my spiritual director during this difficult time, I prayed for guidance. The result? I jotted down the following, what I've come to call my "Rules of the Heart:"

1. Breathe in God's Love.
2. Stop; part your time to make space for God.
3. Say out loud "I love you" to the names of friends and foes.
4. Humbly ask for God's help and the help of all around.
5. Know nothing; listen deeply for God's joy in all.
6. Shake and shudder to let go of physical attachments; feel God's spirit flow.
7. Die well; accept each day to sleep in God's peace.

I also wonder what "Angel" I will meet that day, who will surprise me with some wonderful practice that touches my heart. I also wonder if I will be awake enough to

stop and think, or even say "Wow, how beautiful!" or "Thanks for blocking my path with kindness." In the evening I reflect on the unexpected surprises that came my way during the day.

My most surprising angel visit involved knitting. Thinking I could help, I once asked a concerned-looking colleague how she was doing. She answered, "I'd rather be knitting but I haven't since my father died."

Without thinking, I replied, "Would you teach me to knit?" "Wednesday lunchtime," she said.

She taught me to knit. Then, I taught my daughter, who was six at the time, to knit and in the process, learned about practices and relationships that women seem to know much better than men. Knitting: What a wonderful practice to feel God's love.

Here's how to practice being blocked by an angel:

1. In the morning, wonder out loud: "What Angel might I meet today? or, "Know nothing; listen deeply for God's joy in all," or something of

your own devising.

2. Listen during the day and be open to receive.

3. Thank people with paradoxical words that combine stopping and thanking:

“You made me stop and smile.”

“Thank you for blocking my way with kindness.”

“It is wonderful to be disrupted by something so beautiful.” etc.

4. In the evening take stock and give thanks to God.

I believe angels surround every one of us with gifts, if we stop, receive and thank God. In my work I have the privilege of having to thank people for being generous to the Brothers of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist. No matter how many gifts come in, I still love the surprise of each one. I love to make gratitude telephone calls; the rule I follow for these calls is to just say thanks. I love to say, “I came into work today and had my day stopped for a moment to reflect on your kindness.”

When was the last time you stopped to reflect on the ways your life may have been blocked by an angel?

**Jamie Coats** serves as the Director, Friends of SSJE - Society of Saint the Evangelist, (SSJE) an Episcopal religious order of Brothers and as a trustee of the Trustees of Donations to the Protestant Episcopal Church. He directed SSJE's the Stone & Light Capital Campaign to renovate SSJE's beautiful Monastery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is currently working to support the Brothers' plans to enhance and conserve Emery House, SSJE's rural retreat center in West Newbury, Massachusetts.

*This article is copyright Jamie Coats 2011 and was first published on Jamie's blog site [www.wingedboots.com](http://www.wingedboots.com)*

### Resources

- Rules of the Heart: <http://www.wingedboots.com/?p=1>
- The Grief & Wonder Trilogy: <http://www.wingedboots.com/?cat=10>

# Sharing Models of Sustainability

BY LYNETTE WILSON

**Editor's note:** *Our Episcopal congregations in Province 9 as well as our Anglican brothers and sisters in the two-thirds world can offer valuable lessons related to innovative models of financial sustainability and asset based community development. In this article, adapted from an ENS news story published earlier this year, Lynette shares the story of how the Episcopal Church in Honduras models both service and self-sufficiency through entrepreneurial leadership.*

In a sewing factory in San Pedro Sula men and women infected with HIV/AIDS sew T-shirts, tote bags, school uniforms, and other items for both in country and export sale. In exchange for labor the workers receive a fair wage -- \$250 a month (the Honduran minimum wage), medical care at a clinic operated by the Episcopal Diocese of Honduras and funded by the factory's profits, and a flexible work schedule that allows workers to keep their medical appointments.

"It [the factory] is a way to keep HIV-positive men and women employed," said Jose Alvarado, the factory's director. "This is a way they can keep their health and

work to clothe and feed their children."

Today, Ministerio Episcopal en VIH/Sida (VIYDA)/Siempre Unidos – a partnership between the diocese and TCH Manufacturing, a private company, embodies living out the church's mission through entrepreneurial leadership and self-sufficiency – the main theme discussed during the Province IX sustainability conference held earlier this year on the northern coast of Honduras.

More than 75 people attended the conference, aimed at training clergy and lay leaders to carry out strategic planning that will assist in developing resources toward long-term financial self-sustainability.

"Anything that needs sewing, we can do it," Alvarado said, adding that the hope is to grow from 20 employees to 60 by the end of the year. At present, the workers can sew 8,000 tee shirts and 3,000 bags per month. "We're not looking for donations, we're looking for work.

"It is a beautiful way to incorporate private business with social benefit."

Honduras is the third-largest exporter of tee shirts to the United States. The Central American country is a three-day journey by cargo ship from the United States; companies like Fruit of the Loom, Abercrombie & Fitch, Ralph Lauren, and others have factories here.

Alvarado, who has a background in economics and finance, and previously managed an industrial free trade zone, is a member of St. John's Episcopal Church in Cortez. He came to partner with the diocese on this project by way of his involvement with his daughter's Episcopal School and his relationship with the Rt. Rev. Lloyd Allen, the bishop of Honduras.

The diocese used to subsidize the sewing factory, but not any more, Allen said. The Diocese of Honduras, with 156 churches, the largest in the province, has a revolving fund that provides congregations with \$5,000 in seed money to start sustainable businesses.

"We are not just giving free money," Allen said, adding that the only condition he has is that "the

project comes from the people.”

Each Province IX diocese – Honduras, the host diocese, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Ecuador Litoral, Central Ecuador and Colombia – was represented at the conference by a five-member team, including bishops, clergy and lay leaders. (Recognizing the role the laity plays in the church, the teams were weighted 60 percent lay representation.) In addition, Cuba, Brazil, Panama, Mexico and Guatemala are represented.

In addition to workshops aimed at strategic planning, entrepreneurial leadership and economic self-sufficiency, the prime bishop and counsel from the Episcopal Church of the Philippines shared their journey to financial independence and autonomy, and the Rt. Rev. Meshack Mabuza, bishop of Swaziland, and the Rt. Rev. David Njovu, bishop of Lusaka in Zambia, from the Anglican Provinces of South and Central Africa, respectively, spoke about successful agriculture, forestry, social and medical service, capital building, and other projects across Africa.

### Taking Stock

In 2008-09, the bishops said, Trinity Wall Street held con-

sultations across the Anglican Communion in Africa to discuss local opportunities and challenges and to identify specific areas for financial support, engaging in the kind of work Province IX is now beginning.

Finding income-generating projects can be as simple as turning the church parking lot into a pay-to-park lot during the week in busy commercial areas, Mabuza said.

Njovu emphasized the importance of having a well-thought plan, with room for adjustment.

The stories from the Philippines and Africa were inspiring, said the Rev. Patricia Collier, executive vice president and chief ecclesiastical officer of the Church Pension Group.

“Moving from a mindset of dependency to one of recognizing resources available in your own environment and leveraging them in order to not only become financially self-sustainable but also to affect the environment for the church is a real change for many,” Collier said. “And yet it is clear that in dioceses across the church it is time to approach the church’s mission in a new way.”

The start of the conference focused on problems, their causes and analysis, and quickly moved to action, with each diocese sharing its stories

and talking about its assets, which reflects the Asset Based Community Development work now taking shape throughout the Episcopal Church.

“The ability to see assets is the gift of ABCD,” said the Rev. Christopher Johnson, the Episcopal Church’s officer of social and economic justice. “It depends upon relating to other individuals ... we don’t see assets until everyone gets together and sees what is around them.”

“What happening [sic] here, the focus has shifted to the capacity to act ... that invites us to see ourselves as empowered people, not people in need,” Johnson said.

*Lynette Wilson is an editor/staff writer for Episcopal News Service. This story was originally published on ENS on March 4, 2011.*

### Resources

- Case study, The Episcopal Church of the Philippines: [http://www.episcopalchurch.org/79425\\_127382\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/79425_127382_ENG_HTML.htm)

(continued on next page...)

- Episcopal Diocese of Honduras:  
<http://www.hondurasepisopal.org/>

Financial Sustainability &  
Stewardship (video):

- <http://www.trinitywallstreet.org/news/features/financial-sustainability-stewardship-strengthening-the-anglican-communion-in-africa>

- Some Proven Steps Toward  
Developing Sustainability  
Projects And Development  
Within The Church, pgs 23-24,  
Financial Sustainability &  
Stewardship (report):

<http://www.trinitywallstreet.org/files/action/grants/financial-sustainability-report.pdf>