

Strategic Visioning

July 2019

Stretching Our Strategic Imagination – Part 1

Lauren Grubaugh

This article, the first of two, is an introduction to the kind of imaginative, strategic shift that is required for the Church to transition from institution to movement. Part Two will focus on the work of empowering others to join in solidarity.

You would be hard-pressed to find an Episcopal parish parking lot without “[We are the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement](#)” bumper-stickers on at least a few vehicles. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s vision has become a frequently invoked catchphrase in sermons, on the Episcopal conference circuit and on social media as a response to the question, “Episco what?”

But when we claim to be a movement, what, exactly, are we saying?

Many in and outside of the Episcopal Church regard the denomination as a social and civic institution. They see it as a Eucharistic country club, its liturgical smells and bells synonymous with the military pomp and circumstance of a state funeral or presidential prayer service.

Movement is a catchy moniker, and many in our culture are eager to lay claim to it. Its popularity, however, obscures the significant shift in identity that the Presiding Bishop’s vision denotes.

A significant shift in identity

Our world is experiencing radical change at a rate unprecedented in human history, and the institutions around us are in paralysis or even hell-bent on exacerbating the chaos. For Spirit-inspired and pragmatic reasons, we are now talking about how the Church’s primary means of expression is not as an institution, but as a movement. If the Episcopal Church is to be an agent of transformation in this world, we must be willing to move.

We know how to be an institution. We have a lot to learn about being a movement.

The Presiding Bishop’s adaptive language is an important first step toward this new identity. When we refer to ourselves as “the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement” and take seriously the call to walk in the Way of Love, we are subverting a static institutional identity in favor of a dynamic, reputation-risking, radically inclusive, justice-oriented, deeply disruptive way of being.

To live as movement requires is to go beyond language and retool our imaginations, resulting in a strategic shift in the way we operate. “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind,” the Apostle Paul urges.[1] Christocentric change emerges in and among those who nurture an expansive, playful, spiritual imagination. As Andre Henry – artist and theologian contending for a racially just world – writes and sings: “It doesn’t have to be this way.”[2]

Early Jesus followers were keyed into this vision that was nothing less than the total renewal and transformation of the world. They were considered a threat to the status quo, disparagingly known as “people who have been turning the world upside down.”[3] Today, agents of the Jesus Movement are called to offer a compelling story that will effectively counter the lies of supremacy.

Making a movement

But how do we do this? As we begin anew, we would do well to listen to those who have devoted their lives to learning how to move others to engage in nonviolent direct action in order to create social change.

Movement makers can learn from the groundbreaking research of Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan. They have quantifiably demonstrated that nonviolent movements are twice as successful as violent ones[4] in bringing about democratic ends, in large part because nonviolent revolutionaries are already living into the world that they seek to bring about. They are practitioners of the values they wish to see in the culture around them. This kind of integrity inspires others to join the movement. And the higher the levels of “active and sustained participation”[5] in the movement, the likelier it is to achieve its vision.

Successful movements refuse to be content with the world as it is. They embody the world they want, while strategically working toward a vision that is strangely and compellingly hopeful. They inhabit and live into that vision through tactics that are deeply disruptive of the status quo.

Gene Sharp, patron saint of nonviolent revolutionaries everywhere, wrote extensively about power and the capacity of nonviolent movements to overcome dictatorships and install democratic rule. In his seminal work, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, Sharp wrote that some people who want the world to be different “assume that if they simply live and witness according to their principles and ideals in face of difficulties, they are doing all they can to implement them. The espousal of humane goals and loyalty to ideals are admirable, but are grossly inadequate to end a dictatorship and to achieve freedom.”[6]

Simply talking about being the Jesus Movement does not a movement make. First, we need a vision of Beloved Community that will inspire us. Then we need to be subversive and strategic followers of Jesus, working in solidarity with all who are oppressed for the sake of that vision. In this movement, we will need to learn how power works and that the people of God can shift what the late theologian Walter Wink called the “[powers that be](#).” We will need to use tactics of nonviolent direct action (Sharp identified [198 of them](#)) to undermine entrenched systems that do harm to God’s beloved.

Empowered by sacramental Imagination

As a sacramental people, we know something about this way of faithfully living in the liminal space between what is and what shall be. In the liturgy, we point to ultimate realities as already present and coming into being, even as the world around us is intent on keeping things as they are.

Jesus Movement people ought to be the most radical sort of revolutionaries.

After all, in Baptism we celebrate that each one of us is God's beloved child, commissioned as an agent of the Risen Christ to seek Christ in every person and do justice in the world.

Every time we come to the Table, our communion with each other enacts the Beloved Community as God intended it, where all come in need of grace, where all are received as beloved, where all go forth strengthened to be Christ's hands and feet in the world. As Augustine put it, "Behold what you are, become what you receive." What if, every time we received communion, we took seriously this invitation of Christ to be changing people, open to the Spirit transforming us from within, so we might participate in Christ's work of making the world new?

If we took Christ seriously, these sacramental acts would make the powers that be tremble. These are profoundly subversive practices, because they provide an alternative vision of the way things could be. As people of the Jesus Movement, we have the opportunity to weave our sacramental imagination together with strategic initiative. With a sacramental strategic imagination at work, we might have eyes to see communion and life emerging from the sites of division and death that are all around us. It is with this holy vision that we are empowered to boldly enact the ultimate realities of God's reign in the here and now, and invite others to join us in this brave work.

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1 Romans 12:2b, NRSV

2 Listen to the track [here](#). Learn more about Henry and his work for an antiracist world on his [website](#). His weekly newsletter, "[Hope and Hard Pills](#)," is full of practical resources for antiracist living.

3 Acts 17:6b, NRSV.

4 This research is presented in [Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict](#).

5 From a [talk given by Chenoweth at TEDxBoulder in 2013](#). Chenoweth has demonstrated that an oppressive government can be removed if 3.5 percent of the population of a nation is engaged in nonviolent movement.

6 Gene Sharp, [From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation](#), Albert Einstein Institution, 2002, pp. 41.

Resources:

- [Redefining Outreach](#) by Linda Buskirk, ECF Vital Practices blog, May 12, 2018
- [Do We Have What it Takes to Heal?](#) by Alan Yarborough, ECF Vital Practices blog, June 14, 2019
- [Identifying & Recruiting New Leaders](#) an ECF webinar presented by Ella Auchincloss, May 7, 2013

Eight Visioning Mistakes to Avoid

Melissa Rau

For more than eight years, I've had the privilege of facilitating visioning processes for churches and other non-profit organizations. It's fun, life-giving work and one of my favorite things to do. I've worked with churches that have never had a clearly articulated vision, churches that are re-evaluating and re-casting their vision, and churches that were regrouping after a process that didn't set them up to succeed. Through it all, I've gleaned what does and doesn't work. Below (in no particular order) are some common mistakes congregations make while trying to facilitate a clearly articulated vision.

1. Not using outside facilitation – Often, rectors feel they need to facilitate their parish's visioning process. This mistake is too common. Some want to guide the process because they think it's their job to cast the vision. Others choose to do it to save the parish money, since an outside facilitator typically isn't free. Here are a few reasons why the rector shouldn't be the facilitator:

- A good facilitator is unbiased and protects the process...not the outcome. Rectors are a vital part of the community and should fully participate in dreaming with the community, especially as they bring the theological lens.
- Rectors can be blamed for being heavy-handed. If they serve as the facilitator and are not neutral, they run the risk of setting themselves up for unnecessary criticism and resentment from the congregation. A biased facilitator can easily steam-roll the process. Rectors need to remember that the vision of the church isn't solely theirs. It is the church's. Once established, the rector simply helps steward the congregation's vision.
- Rectors aren't experts. Perhaps he or she has read a few books on visioning (too few read more than one before taking a stab at facilitating). Knowing what clear vision consists of (mission/vision statement(s), defined values, goals, org chart) is one thing. Knowing how to facilitate the process is another thing entirely. A well-facilitated process is often fun, engaging and energizing. A process facilitated poorly, however, can be too long, exhausting, and tedious.

Naturally, the same can be said for congregation members serving as facilitators. Perhaps they do this for a living in the secular world. Still, they are a part of the community and should be a participant rather than the facilitator. If you can't afford to bring in a consultant, try calling your diocese to see if there is a diocesan staff person who can facilitate. If push comes to shove, get

together with a neighboring congregation. Whether it's the pastor or another lay leader, you can facilitate each other's visioning process.

2. Not inviting the entire congregation to participate – Do you want people to have ownership rather than mere buy-in? Let them dream with you. There's no need to cut them out of the equation. Just because you have an annual vestry retreat and consider visioning a vestry concern, doesn't mean the rest of the congregation should be left out of the process. The more the merrier (don't forget to include youth!).

3. Stopping at mission, vision, and values – Simply put, mission is who you are now; vision is the end result(s) you're working to achieve; and values are the things that inform your behavior and decisions, the spirit through which you achieve your goals. Goals, however, are what give your mission legs. Without them, it'll be difficult to find traction in achieving your vision. Goals are the framework by which your strategy emerges.

4. Not creating an organizational chart – What good is vision if it's not clear? Organizational charts are helpful tools that help identify who is responsible for what. Ambiguity often leads to conflict. Clarity around the flow of responsibility is helpful. It keeps people on the same page, so they don't overstep or drop the ball when things get wonky.

5. Confusing goals with necessary next steps – Often, congregations name goals that are actually strategies. For instance, many shy away from participation goals. They definitely want a more engaged congregation, but instead of saying that, they claim their goal is recruiting a team to welcome guests, get them connected, and track attendance for all members. Flip that – name your quantifiable goal (remember SMARTER goals): XXX people engaged weekly. And then name the strategies (next steps) through which you'll grow – recruit a welcome committee, train ushers, develop an attendance tracking procedure, develop a follow-up plan so missing members are contacted and cared for, etc.

6. Forgetting God – You'd be shocked at how many times people limit themselves because they forget to develop God-sized goals, discern with the Spirit and cover the entire process in prayer.

7. Not reviewing progress and next steps at least once a month – What's the point in creating a vision statement if you haven't developed assigned next steps to achieve the goals that will help you achieve your vision? There isn't one. Yet, this is exactly what too many churches do. They go through the visioning process and then forget to work the plan. And they are shocked when a year passes and nothing has changed. Vestries need to review their plan's progress each month and to make sure that next steps are assigned and working to achieve the congregation's goals.

8. Not re-casting every year – What goes up must come down. If you don't re-cast your vision every year, you will naturally lose momentum. Annual re-casting isn't hard to accomplish since you should be reviewing your progress monthly anyway. If you forget to re-cast, you'll become stuck. And it's harder to get going again once you've stopped. You need to be able to continue articulating a clear and compelling vision that is relevant for your community.

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Resources:

- [Why Articulate Your Mission & Vision](#) by Nancy Davidge and Susan Elliott, Vestry Papers, July 2015
- [The Power of a Shared Nightmare](#) by Miguel Escobar, ECF Vital Practices blog, January 29, 2013
- [Do You Really Need A Mission Statement](#) by Linda Buskirk, ECF Vital Practices blog, March 2, 2015
- [Setting Goals—Moving Your Mission Forward](#) by Melissa Rau, Vestry Papers, January 2019

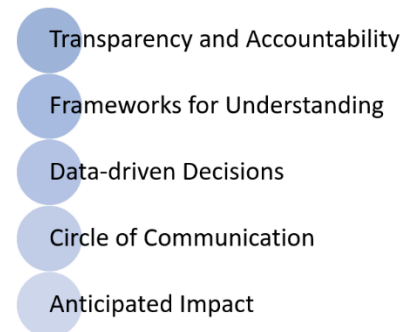
Through All Kinds of Weather

Anne Vickers

What inspires congregations to make sound financial management a priority? Who is doing this? Why? We hear messages about decline...we eagerly greet opportunities for planting new congregations and approaching ministry in new ways...we pray, we have faith...and ultimately, financial management is involved. There is no getting around it. It doesn't have to be complicated. In fact, a basic and sound sense of financial management is at the core of our success as a Church evolving into the future.

Our charge as people committed to improving the sustainability of our congregations' ministries is to address financial management for every one of our 6500+ congregations, intentionally and individually. And achieving long-term sustainability through up and down economic cycles, serving constantly shifting demographics in our communities, addressing evolving ministry approaches in the Episcopal Church in our world today, takes coordination.

A System of Integrated Support



Integrated support for sound financial management

The Episcopal Church has a unique and demonstrable system of integrated support in its congregations, dioceses and resource organizations. But it doesn't work without our engagement. True and consistent application at each layer is needed to reap the benefits the system provides. Here's an outline of how each layer works:

1. Transparency and Accountability

It all starts with an elected vestry. The vestry has the fiduciary duty to serve the congregation and to meet canonical obligations – many of which are financial, and for good reason. But they do not work if not done and done correctly. And responded to. And analyzed, carefully considered and discussed. This is the work of the diocese and resource organizations, working closely with the congregation.

Disaggregating the summary information is critical – for example, looking at the breakout of the sources of income compared to expenses. There are hundreds of ways to be sustainable and hundreds of scenarios that require a safety net. Instances where the system employs a safety net mark an opportunity to evolve. How are we approaching them?

To start, detailed historical financial management data for all 6500+ congregations going back to 2000 is available online [here](#). Ways in which this parochial report data can be useful to local congregations is outlined in this [webinar](#).

2. Frameworks for Understanding

Once elected to the vestry, what do you get? What you need are good frameworks that are understandable, relevant and directed to your individual situation. You need benchmarks, relevant laws and support. Dioceses provide guidance in this and are responsible for targeting support (or hunting it down in many cases), serving as conduits to resources and most importantly, engaging leaders and inspiring action. Dioceses also help resource organizations understand the local context in which their services can be applied.

You can find an example of how these frameworks are communicated to vestry leaders in the [2018 Diocesan Benchmark Report from the Diocese of Southwest Florida](#).

3. Data-driven Decisions

With the right frameworks in place, data effectively drives decisions. It quantifies concern and outlines opportunities. Most of all, data proves, reiterates and persuades. Look at the trend data on the 2018 Diocesan Benchmark Report charts, and you will see how the persuasion works – legacy asset (endowment) growth, debt reduction, property usage, capital investments, human resource optimization, balanced budgets!

Our system of integrated support in the Episcopal Church (which includes dioceses, The Church Pension Group, The Episcopal Church, Episcopal Church Foundation, Episcopal Relief and Development and more) is not only an able facilitator of complicated business methods. It's a confidence builder and an optimization tool, built to endure more than a century of demographic shifts, making the Church and its people stronger to fulfill God's mission.

4. Circle of Communication

Imagine a ship with little or no transparency on its position, no framework for navigation or data for making decisions. The Episcopal Church system is not that! Like the Coast Guard to the vessels of the sea, dioceses are listening, monitoring the weather, providing a proactive patrol and when necessary, providing direct communication and instructions. Without this full circle of communication, the system doesn't work, and the ship is alone and lost, separated from its context.

5. Anticipated Impact

Here is the exciting proof that this integrated support system works. When you announce a bold anticipated impact – and it happens! When you establish an endowment for ministry from scratch, give tiny little grants, communicate impact, attract support and are able to give larger and larger grants – in perpetuity. When you know one another and the challenges you each face. When you call out and they respond, one by one, and when you respond to another's call, completing the circle of awareness.

These are the stories that inspire, that give confidence and create interest in financial management. But this stage is built upon the others. When you see it happening, you know you've done it right.

Humming along - Guided by mission

Strategic visioning, and especially financial strategy, were not as complicated and intimidating years ago. Past leaders could not anticipate today's challenges and opportunities. But those leaders did think of legacy, and they understood sustainability at its core. Our risks are ever more evident and managed. Today, jazzed about articulating and measuring mission, we are using it as our guide.

With this system of integrated support in place, financial management is relevant. It's a natural priority due to its inspirational value alone. When we get this working on all cylinders, watch out world! All the passion of our Marks of Mission, our Jesus Movement, our Way of Love will take on new levels in all kinds of weather. I'm excited about this and thrilled to help engage all of our leaders in using the structures that are in place and functioning right now. We have tweaking to do, but oh, how it will hum!

Canon Anne Vickers has been the Canon for Finance and Administration of the Diocese of Southwest Florida since 2009. In that role, she leads a diocesan system of support for the 77 congregations in Southwest Florida. Over the last decade, these coordinated efforts have successfully created remarkable trends in the local financial management of congregations. As a Trustee of the Church Pension Fund, she understands the strategic challenges and varying economic and cultural environments that exist across the entire Church. Anne is driven by her passion for healthy churches with a well-functioning system of support.

Resources:

- [Healthy Finances](#) by Wendy Pineda, Vestry Papers, March 2018
- [Five Resources on Mission-based Finances](#) by Melissa Rau, ECF Vital Practices blog, April 17, 2019
- [The Purpose of Basic Financial Statements](#) by Nancy Fritschner, Vestry Papers, March 2018

- [Make Your Money talk. Or at Least, Your Budget.](#) by Richelle Thompson, ECF Vital Practices blog, November 10, 2015

Real-Time Strategy

Louise Baietto and Leslie Pendleton

A healthy, vital and vibrant Episcopal faith community requires prayer, a clear vision, responsive leaders and the support and involvement of its members. The Episcopal Church Foundation's (ECF) [Strategic Solutions](#) is a guided process for mission-focused congregational planning that helps leaders in the discernment of God's call. The classic six- to eight-year strategic plan does not work for the dynamic and ever-changing work of the church. Often, the traditional strategic planning process is highly focused on the product – a map with goals, strategies and objectives to be addressed over the next five or ten years. Members move, vestries turn over every year and clergy come and go, so how do you stay on track?

ECF has learned from decades of experience that the best laid plans, however well-intentioned and thought out, are an enormous challenge to implement over time and often result in frustration and defeat. ECF's methodology focuses on the process – specifically, how to engage your parish leadership in active, strategic thinking that will continue annually. Strategic Solutions empowers leadership to respond quickly, meaningfully and effectively to changing realities, using a framework for ongoing decision-making that is rooted in a shared sense of identity, purpose and direction. Leading a community to follow God's call with renewed energy and vision takes time and repetition.

Walking together in real time with a faith community strengthens a congregation's capacity to make strategic decisions on an ongoing basis and in a spiritually-grounded, yet practical way. There are advantages to real-time strategic thinking:

- It is iterative and ongoing
- It identifies congregational goals that are aligned with long-term vision
- It identifies strategies for reaching those goals
- It evaluates long-term and short-term strategies in light of mission, financial capacity, an organization's uniqueness and more.

Four steps to build a framework for ongoing decision-making

Strategic Solutions follows four basic steps:

1. Fitting the Process

There is no standard blueprint or document to follow. Leaders (vestry, board, steering committee, staff, etc.) and consultant must work together to develop the right timeline and overall plan to fit the community's culture and situation. The plan and ultimate goals need to be understood and committed to by all leaders through clear communications, building relationships and trust.

2. Training

Once the process is defined, additional leaders are identified, coached and trained in facilitating the listening process with the broader community.

3. Congregational Work and Data Analysis

Leadership and volunteers oversee the listening process, taking detailed notes for analysis. With this information, we identify common priorities, energy and values, to inform a plan to reach future goals.

4. Strategic Priorities, Benchmarks, Strategy Screen

Work continues to fine-tune a few specific goals and the steps that will move the community closer to reaching those goals over time. These steps, or benchmarks, are put into a detailed plan with real action items to be accomplished in one year's time. This is where most plans falter and where we continue to walk with the community to ensure it does not get distracted or off track. When the initial benchmarks are achieved, a new annual plan is created and a strategy screen for future decisions becomes part of the culture.

In this way, ECF provides congregations with the tools they need to continue this work long after our consulting services conclude.

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Leslie Pendleton is Associate Program Director for Strategic Resources and Client Services and a Capital Campaign Consultant for ECF. She has worked with a diversity of congregations, enthusiastically guiding them through the communal process of a capital campaign.

Resources:

- [Why Strategic Planning?](#) By Linda Buskirk, Vestry Papers, July 2015
- [5 Resources for Vision & Planning](#), by Brendon Hunter, ECF Vital Practices blog, June 22, 2017
- [Strategic Vision & Planning](#) by Donald Romanik, webinar, October 8, 2015
- [Five Pitfalls of Strategic Thinking](#) by Susan Erdey, Vestry Papers, November 2017

Extender nuestra imaginación estratégica

Lauren Grubaugh

Este artículo, el primero de dos, es una introducción al tipo de cambio imaginativo y estratégico que se requiere para que la Iglesia pueda evolucionar de institución a movimiento. La segunda parte se centra en cómo empoderar a otros a unirse en solidaridad.

En los estacionamientos de parroquias episcopales se ven frecuentemente automóviles con pegatinas en los parachoques que dicen “Somos la rama episcopal del Movimiento de Jesús”. La visión del Obispo Presidente Michael Curry figura frecuentemente en sermones, en el circuito de conferencias episcopales y en redes sociales como respuesta a la pregunta “¿episco qué?”.

Pero cuando afirmamos que somos un movimiento, ¿qué exactamente estamos diciendo?

Muchos dentro y fuera de la Iglesia Episcopal piensan en la denominación como una institución cívica y social. La consideran como un club de campo eucarístico en el que las campanas y los aromas litúrgicos son equivalentes a la pompa y solemnidad militar de un funeral estatal o de un servicio religioso presidencial de oración.

Movimiento es un sustantivo pegadizo que muchos en nuestra cultura ansían reivindicar. Sin embargo, su popularidad ofusca el profundo cambio de identidad que denota la visión del Obispo Presidente,

Un cambio significativo de identidad

Nuestro mundo está pasando por un cambio radical a un ritmo sin precedentes en la historia de la humanidad y las instituciones a nuestro alrededor están paralizadas y hasta empecinadas en exacerbar el caos. Por motivos pragmáticos e inspirados por el Espíritu, ya estamos hablando de una Iglesia que se expresa no como institución, sino como movimiento. Para hacer que la Iglesia Episcopal sea un agente de cambio en este mundo, debemos estar dispuestos a movernos.

Sabemos ser una institución. Tenemos mucho que aprender sobre ser un movimiento.

El lenguaje adaptativo del Obispo Presidente es un primer paso importante hacia esta nueva identidad. Cuando nos referimos a nosotros mismos como “la rama episcopal del Movimiento de Jesús” y tomamos en serio la llamada a transitar el Sendero del Amor, estamos pasando de una identidad institucional estática a una manera de ser dinámica que pone en riesgo la reputación, es radicalmente incluyente, está orientada hacia la justicia y perturba profundamente.

Vivir como movimiento requiere ir más allá del lenguaje y adaptar nuestras imaginaciones, causando un cambio estratégico en la manera en que funcionamos. “Transfórmense mediante la renovación de su mente”[1], urge el apóstol Pablo. El cambio Cristocéntrico surge en y entre los que fomentan una imaginación espiritual expansiva y alegre. Como escribe y canta Andre Henry, un artista y teólogo dedicado a la justicia racial, “No tiene que ser así”. [2]

La visión que tenían en mente los seguidores iniciales de Jesús era nada menos que la renovación y transformación total del mundo. Se consideraba que eran una amenaza al statu quo y se los conocía menospreciadamente como “gente que está poniendo el mundo cabeza abajo”. [3] En la actualidad,

los agentes del Movimiento de Jesús están llamados a ofrecer una historia convincente que contrarresta las mentiras de la supremacía.

Realizar un movimiento

¿Pero cómo lo hacemos? Ahora que estamos empezando de nuevo, conviene que prestemos atención a aquellos que dedicaron su vida a aprender a inspirar a la gente a que participe en acción directa no violenta para generar el cambio social.

Los creadores de movimientos tienen mucho que aprender de la investigación de Erica Chenoweth y Maria J. Stephan, quienes demostraron cuantificablemente que los movimientos no violentos tienen el doble de probabilidades de alcanzar fines democráticos que los movimientos violentos.[4] Este nivel de éxito se debe en gran medida a que los revolucionarios no violentos ya están viviendo el mundo que quieren realizar. Ponen en práctica los valores que esperan ver en la cultura que los rodea. Este tipo de integridad inspira a otros unirse al movimiento. Y cuanto mayor es el nivel de “participación activa y sostenida”[5] en el movimiento, mayor es la probabilidad de que su visión se convierta en realidad.

Los movimientos exitosos rehúsan conformarse con el mundo tal como está: encarnan el mundo que quieren y simultáneamente trabajan estratégicamente hacia una visión extraña y persuasivamente esperanzadora. Habitan y viven esa visión mediante tácticas que perturban el statu quo.

Gene Sharp, el patrono de los revolucionarios no violentos en el mundo, escribió extensamente sobre el poder y la capacidad de los movimientos no violentos de acabar las dictaduras y sustituirlas con un régimen democrático. En su obra fundamental *De la dictadura a la democracia*, Sharp escribió que los que quieren que el mundo sea diferente “creen que si simplemente viven sus ideales a pesar de las dificultades, están haciendo todo lo que pueden por hacer que se conviertan en realidad. La adhesión a sus objetivos y su lealtad son dignas de encomio, pero extremadamente inadecuadas para acabar con una dictadura y alcanzar la libertad”.[6]

El mero hecho de hablar sobre ser el Movimiento de Jesús no hace que seamos un movimiento. En primer lugar, necesitamos una visión de Comunidad Amada que nos inspire. Posteriormente necesitamos ser seguidores subversivos y estratégicos de Jesús, trabajando en solidaridad con todos los oprimidos en aras de esa visión. En este movimiento, necesitaremos aprender cómo funciona el poder y que el pueblo de Dios puede alterar los poderes que el fallecido teólogo Walter Wink llamó “los poderes que mandan”. Necesitaremos usar tácticas de acción directa no violenta (Sharp identificó 198 de ellas) para socavar sistemas arraigados que perjudican a los amados de Dios.

Empoderados por imaginación sacramental

Como pueblo sacramental, sabemos algo sobre esta manera de vivir fielmente en el espacio límite entre lo es y lo que será. En la liturgia nos referimos a lo que ambicionamos como si ya estuviera presente y llegando a ser, incluso si el mundo que nos rodea se empeña en dejar las cosas como están.

Los que participan en el Movimiento de Jesús deben de ser los revolucionarios más radicales.

Después de todo, en el bautismo celebramos que cada uno de nosotros es un hijo amado de Dios, encargado como agente de Cristo Resucitado a encontrar a Cristo en todas las personas y hacer justicia en el mundo.

Todas las veces que acudimos a la Mesa, nuestra comunión mutua representa la Comunidad Amada como Dios tenía la intención de que fuera, a la que todos acuden en pos de gracia, en la que se recibe a todos como amados y de la que todos salen fortalecidos para ser las manos y pies de Cristo en el mundo. Como dijo San Agustín, “Ve lo que eres y conviértete en lo que recibes”. ¿Qué pasaría si todas las veces que comulgáramos tomáramos en serio esta invitación de Cristo a ser un pueblo cambiante, abierto a que el Espíritu nos transforme desde dentro, para que podamos participar en el trabajo de Cristo de hacer nuevo el mundo?

Si tomáramos a Cristo en serio, estos actos sacramentales harían temblar a los poderes que mandan. Estas son prácticas profundamente subversivas, porque brindan una visión diferente de cómo podrán ser las cosas. Como pueblo del Movimiento de Jesús, tenemos la oportunidad entretejer nuestra imaginación sacramental con iniciativas estratégicas. Con una imaginación sacramental estratégica en práctica, podremos tener ojos para ver la comunión y la vida emergentes en los lugares de división y muerte existentes en el mundo que nos rodea. Es con esta visión sagrada que estamos empoderados para promulgar las verdaderas realidades del reino de Dios en el aquí y ahora e invitar a otros unirse a nosotros en esta labor valiente.

La Rev. Lauren Grubaugh se desempeña como sacerdote en Christ Church Cathedral, situada en Indianápolis. La suya es una parroquia multicultural y multilingüe dedicada a la formación espiritual, la belleza y el fomento. Como sacerdote, Lauren estimula la curiosidad sobre las prácticas espirituales necesarias para que las comunidades se conviertan en agentes de paz valientes y perseverantes en un medio político y ecológico crecientemente caótico. Su anhelo de aprendizaje vitalicio la condujo al Seminario Teológico de Virginia, al Seminario Teológico Fuller, a la UCLA (donde obtuvo una licenciatura en español) y más recientemente a la Escuela Kennedy de la Universidad de Harvard, donde completó un curso llamado Leading Nonviolent Movements for Social Change (Liderar movimientos no violentos para el cambio social). Sígala en Twitter @laurengrubaugh

[1] Romanos 12:2, Nueva Biblia Latinoamericana de Hoy.

[2] Escuche la canción [aquí](#). Para enterarse más sobre Henry y su trabajo para un mundo antirracista, visite su [sitio web](#). Su boletín semanal, “[Hope and Hard Pills](#)” (Esperanza y píldoras difíciles de tragar) está repleto de recursos prácticos para una vida antirracista.

[3] Hechos 17:6b, NBLH.

[4] Esta investigación figura en [Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict](#) (Por qué la resistencia civil funciona: la lógica estratégica del conflicto no violento)

[5] Pasaje de [un discurso pronunciado en 2013 por Chenoweth en TEDxBoulder](#). Chenoweth demostró que se puede acabar con un régimen opresivo cuando el 3.5 por ciento de la población participa activamente en un movimiento no violento.

[6]Gene Sharp, [From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation](#) (De la dictadura a la democracia: Un marco conceptual para la liberación), Albert Einstein Institution, 2002 pp 41

Recursos:

- [Ventajas e Inspiraciones del Desequilibrio](#) por Rosa Lindahl Mallow, ECF Vital Practices blog, 28 febrero 2014
- [Liderazgo efectivo en épocas de cambio y ansiedad](#) por Robin Hammeal-Urban, Vestry Papers, mayo 2015
- [Visión Para Tener Impacto, No Sólo Cambios](#) por Linda Buskirk, Vestry Papers, julio 2014
- [Grupos Pequeños, Gran Impacto](#) por John Adler, Vestry Papers, julio 2014

Stretching Our Strategic Imagination — Part II

Lauren Grubaugh

When Episcopalians talk about the Jesus Movement, conversations about evangelism often follow closely behind. We want to grow, and that is good if growth is happening for the right reasons. It is worth asking what constitutes Good News within our movement, and what is simply reconstituted institutional church growth strategy.

Some activities dubbed “evangelism” are merely a thin guise *for this will persuade more people to come to dying parishes, so that we will have enough money to keep our doors open*. This thinking is not Good News. Movements are not concerned with ensuring institutional security. They are concerned with mobilizing people to engage in radical experimentation for the sake of just and concrete change.

If the latter is what we want, nonviolent resistance theory can prove a helpful conversation partner. Here are three lessons we can apply to the work of building the Jesus Movement.

1. Nonviolent movements that allow a broad demographic to get involved are more successful

Violent movements require participants to be willing to cause harm to other beloved creatures of God. Consequently, they favor involvement from people who possess special skills and training. On the other hand, many who would not be able or willing to participate in a violent movement can contribute to a nonviolent one. Nonviolent movements can involve the old and the young; they can involve disabled persons; they can involve people who speak different languages; they can involve those whose sexuality or gender might make them more vulnerable to abuse in an armed conflict setting. Accessibility leads to broader participation in the movement, and this matters, because participation is a major factor in favorable outcomes. Researchers call this the “participation advantage.”[1]

Moreover, it is more strategic to build an intercultural, interfaith, interracial movement, because such a coalition can wield a greater variety of tactics. Such “tactical diversity”[2] is a proven source of power, since a wider array of participants is more likely to develop innovative ways of resisting, which catch oppressors off-guard and unprepared to swiftly respond.

The research on effective movements is powerfully reminiscent of our identity as the Body of Christ. The Jesus Movement calls for everyone’s participation, especially those whom the world considers least powerful.[3] It is our task to recognize the power of the Spirit in each and every person and to use our resources to stir up that power in all who participate in the healing of the world.

In widening the circle of participation, it is especially vital that the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement promote the leadership of those who have experienced oppression (especially at the hands of the Church). Our denomination is too white, too wealthy, too entrenched in violent systems to see the many ways in which we have been part of the very problems we seek to address. This calls us to offer public and enthusiastic support to those of other faith traditions who are working for justice. It means giving the microphone to people of color who have been wounded by the church’s silence and complicity in white supremacy.

2. Effective mobilization requires deep listening

Having collaboratively led a successful nonviolent revolution in Serbia in 2000, Srdja Popovic now teaches aspiring revolutionaries around the world. He notes that “dissidents fail to realize that it’s the mundane things that move people.”[4]

Empowering people to get involved in the Jesus Movement requires prioritizing the everyday concerns of those who are experiencing oppression. For all of our eloquent theology and lovely liturgies, what most people want to know is: “How will this movement make my life better? How will being part of this movement help me, my family and my community to flourish?”

We know God through tangible expressions in the sacraments. Bread and wine, water and chrism, are signs of God’s presence with us in the ordinary stuff of life. Likewise, in talking with others, we must be willing to address the tangible impact of our theology of movement on white supremacy, poverty, climate change and other violent systems.

Evangelism in a movement context has far more to do with listening than with talking. It calls us to join with those who have been pushed to the margins,[5] creating a solidarity that empowers those affected by oppression to be agents of their own liberation. The Jesus Movement is not simply a movement for the people. It is the people’s movement.

3. Nonviolent movements shift power dynamics as they empower participants

Movements that are truly nonviolent don’t consolidate power. They distribute it. They resist the temptation to fall back into patterns of domination-based leadership by sharing that leadership widely.

White supremacy, in particular, celebrates centralization. It sees distributed power as an assault on its calculated process of monopolizing power. Movements which distribute power offer hope that another, more equitable way is indeed possible. Decentralization is also subversively strategic: you can't kill the movement by killing one charismatic leader.

This is a hard lesson for a church that treasures its episcopal polity and in which clericalism runs contrary to the priesthood of all believers. Too often, we cast Jesus in the role of panacea, so that we needn't bother to participate in the troublesome healing of the world.

We forget that Jesus, "though he was in the form of God...did not consider being equal with God something to exploit. But he emptied himself by taking the form of a slave and by becoming like human beings." [6] The Jesus Movement is about being under the authority of a God who chose to show up in the neighborhood as a poor, brown, Jewish Palestinian man. This same Jesus distributed power to a ragtag group of people from across his society: fishermen, tax collectors, and prostitutes; the sick and the poor; women of all walks of life. He empowered them to do the work of God in the world.

If we want to participate in the Jesus Movement, we must also engage in such kenosis. White American Christians, in particular, must empty ourselves of the deeply ingrained tendency to step on others to get ahead. A church that owes its existence to imperialism and settler colonialism has much to learn from the many powerful movements around the world that have sprung up from the grassroots.

If we are to be a movement, then evangelism ought to entail mobilization of co-conspirators for God's Beloved Community. In solidarity and under the leadership of those who are most affected by humanity's failure to live into God's vision for us, we can move toward Shalom, toward Beloved Community, toward a world of beauty, just peace and joy, where all God's creatures may flourish.

The Rev. Lauren Grubaugh serves as Curate at Christ Church Cathedral, Indianapolis, an intercultural, multilingual parish devoted to spiritual formation, beauty and advocacy. As a priest, Lauren cultivates curiosity about the spiritual practices necessary for communities to become courageous and resilient agents of peace in an increasingly chaotic political and ecological climate. She's a lifelong learner whose formal education has taken her to Virginia Theological Seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary, UCLA (B.A. in Spanish) and most recently, the Harvard Kennedy School, where she completed a course called Leading Nonviolent Movements for Social Change. Follow her on Twitter @laurengrubaugh.

Resources:

- [What is Episcopal Evangelism?](#) by Alan Bentrup, ECF Vital Practices blog, August 10, 2018
- [Midnight Evangelism](#) by Robert Hendrickson, ECF Vital Practices blog, July 22, 2016
- [On July 4th --Take it to the Streets](#) by Melanie Barnett Wright, ECF Vital Practices blog, June 29, 2016
- [Are We the Church of Jesus?](#) by Tracy Johnson Russell, ECF Vital Practices blog, May 26, 2016

[1] Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, Columbia University Press, 2011, pp. 8. Read Chapter 1 [here](#).

[2] *ibid.*, pp. 16.

[3] “But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.” (1 Cor. 12:24b-26, NRSV)

[4] Srdja Popovic, and Matthew I. Miller, *Blueprint for Revolution: How to Use Rice Pudding, Lego Men, and Other Nonviolent Techniques to Galvanize Communities, Overthrow Dictators, or Simply Change the World*. 2015, pp. 73.

[5] My articulation of kinship with those at the margins is inspired by Fr. Greg Boyle, S.J., whom I served alongside for two years at Homeboy Industries, the largest gang intervention and prevention organization in the world. You can further explore these ideas in his books *Tattoos on the Heart* and *Barking to the Choir*.

[6] *Philippians 2:6-7a*, CEB.

Planning Your Work, Working Your Plan

Jim Said

Because of my business background, I realize how important strategic visioning is for any organization – churches included. Plan your work and work your plan. However, in my first year as rector of St. Augustine of Canterbury Episcopal Church, there could be no heavy lifting with strategic visioning until we learned about each other and our parish – who we are and where we are. We knew whose we were! Any process to discern vision and mission first and foremost requires all engaged parties to trust one another completely. And trust is not built overnight in any organization, especially religious institutions!

Using Invite Welcome Connect to build attendance and trust

In that first year, however, we were all in agreement that Sunday attendance was one of the first things we needed to focus on. To address that charge, I introduced the vestry to Invite Welcome Connect, a ministry created by Mary Parmer. She describes her approach as “a transformational ministry that allows churches to move from a maintenance culture to gospel-driven ministry culture.”

With my spouse, Kim, I had been on a team that implemented the program at a previous church, so I had real experiences and results to share with St. Augustine’s vestry. I outlined how the program would be introduced and who would oversee its implementation. We discussed it as a way to change the culture. Realizing that names are very important, we initiated a nametag effort that

encouraged everyone – existing parishioners and newcomers – to wear a name badge. (Members of the congregation had them already, but not everyone wore one.) Kim volunteered to serve as the team leader for this ministry.

We deepened this work in the Church Development Institute (CDI). A requirement in the Diocese of Georgia, CDI's leadership development training is also strategic. As we got the ministry up and running, we have continuously monitored its progress and reflected on each step, making changes in what is not working and continuing what is working (Do/Reflect/Do).

What *Invite Welcome Connect* taught us

We have learned from this that everyone – from existing parishioners (who really did not know everyone's name) to returning visitors – liked to be called by their name. Names are so important. Jesus calls all his disciples by name, each one of us. Dale Carnegie, a developer of interpersonal skills, said, "A person's name is to that person, the sweetest, most important sound in any language." It's quite simple: knowing a person's name is how relationships are built.

As we worked to enhance the "Invite" leg, my view was simple – everyone we don't invite to come to church, doesn't show up. It's like in basketball, every shot you don't take, you miss. Applying my years of sales experience, I required vestry members to invite at least two people to church each month during the first year. I also participated in this task. At each vestry meeting they were required to tell the story of their invitation – who, when, how and the result. I managed to get a neighbor of ours to attend for a month or so, but it didn't last. While this requirement sounded like a good idea at first, I realized that the invitation must come naturally and cannot be forced on anyone. Once the invitation is made, the rest is up to the Holy Spirit, working in the person's life.

We discovered that connecting people to ministries for which they have a passion helps build a spiritual connection to the ministry and their faith community. We learned that our people are pretty good at knowing what is needed in our community. We empowered people for ministry, and they created ministries that were new to us.

We also learned that we are best at Welcoming, fair at Connecting and horrible at Inviting. In this way, we discovered where we needed to improve, so we could focus on developing each aspect of *Invite Welcome Connect* to its highest potential.

Our Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) has grown from 84 in 2016 to 110 in 2018. More importantly, our parishioners are participating in ministries that feed them spiritually and bring excitement to being part of our church.

With a growing and engaged congregation, strategic visioning can begin

In the second year, we began a strategic visioning process, and the vestry spent some time away together to build relationships. Because three vestry members leave each year and three new members join, this needs to be done each year.

Our most recent vestry retreat focused on strategic visioning and was led by the Rev. Walter Hobgood from the Diocese of Georgia. Our goal was to develop new vision and mission statements that come from the vestry and the congregation together. We have taken our vestry drafts to the parish and requested their recommendations, so that everyone has an opportunity to participate and contribute to the final statements. Our goal this summer is to produce a vision statement and a mission statement that everyone has had a chance to get behind. Good relationship building is critical to strategic visioning.

Our next task will be to pick four to five strategic areas to focus our energies around, breaking down the programs and setting goals and timelines. In this way, we will set a pathway to make our vision and mission a reality. In addition, we will be evaluating everything that we are currently doing and setting a three-year strategic plan. We'll outline where we want to be in three years and map out just how we plan to get there, planning our work and working our plan.

We know, however, that sometimes our tour guide, the Holy Spirit, leads our strategic vision to places we did not dream possible. Glory to God whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we could ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

Shalom!

The Rev. James T. Said is the Rector of St. Augustine of Canterbury Episcopal Church in Augusta, Georgia. Jim's secular vocation was in Sales and Sales Management. Jim and his wife Kim enjoy hiking in nature and spending time with their two daughters, their husbands and their four grandkids.

Resources:

- [Strategic Visioning and Planning for Congregations](#) an ECF webinar presented by Donald Romanik, April 7, 2016
- [Financial Visioning in Seven Steps](#) by James Jordan, Vestry Papers, November 2017
- [Strategic Planning for Your Church](#), an ECF tool
- [Why Strategic Planning?](#) By Linda Buskirk, Vestry Papers, July 2015

Five Questions At The Heart Of Strategic Planning

Linda Buskirk

Like Dorothy and her friends, locked arm-in-arm in the forest, congregational leaders may well quake at the dense terminology used in the strategic planning process.

“Mission and Vision and Outcomes – Oh my!”

Even the term “process” can be daunting. After all, a perfectly happy pig is “processed” into sausage. The word implies that some kind of transformation will occur, and *we don't know what*

that looks like, we're quite comfortable where we are, thank you, would be a perfectly reasonable response.

So let's set aside the business-like terminology of strategic planning for now. Here are five questions at the heart of it:

1. What do we really love to do?
2. How has God gifted us to do those things?
3. If we focused more on doing what we love, so that we do it really well and share it with others, what are the best things that could happen?
4. What might boost our ability to achieve each of those things?
5. Where do we start?

What do we really love to do?

This question invites everyone into the conversation. People share stories about being blessed by ministries, friendships, worship, etc. Multiple aspects of the church are highlighted and celebrated. Certain themes, unique to your faith community, are bound to surface.

How has God gifted us to do those things?

Answers to this question include stories about what people love, laced with appreciation for who or what made those things possible. An inspiring choir, the church building's location, a spirit of generosity, people who love to teach. The conversations generated by this question can transform a framework of scarcity into an attitude of abundance and gratitude.

If we focused more on doing what we love, so that we do it really well and share it with others, what are the best things that could happen?

This question is perhaps the most inspiring part of the conversation. It is energizing for the community to consider the possibilities and the positive impact their church could experience in the future.

What might boost our ability to achieve each of those things?

By this point, people have: identified what they love, affirmed the gifts that make those things possible and described an ideal future. Now it's time to consider any gaps between current realities and your congregation's desired future. Nothing is too small or too big to be listed: Stronger Christian formation for adults, a more accessible building, partnering with a neighborhood youth-serving agency, installing signs so people know where to park.

Where do we start?

That list grows long very quickly! Recognizing that tackling everything at once is not possible, this question identifies the most important first steps. Perhaps some projects could be achieved in phases. Another important consideration is how to ensure that future vestries will follow through. The "Where do we start?" question allows for the planning to end and implementation to begin, with a commitment to continue on into the future.

Now let's link these five questions to the terms (shown in **bold**) used in a typical strategic planning process:

What do we really love to do? Answering this helps identify and define **Mission**.

How has God gifted us to do those things? Answering this also helps identify **Mission**, with the addition of **Ministry Strengths**. These strengths can be further defined in terms of **Capacity Factors**, describing your congregation's level of capability in categories like programs/ministries, leadership, resources and organizational structure.

If we focused more on doing what we love, so that we do it really well and share it with others, what are the best things that could happen? Ta-da! By answering this, you have described your **Vision**. (Vision = the desired impact of your Mission)

What might boost our ability to achieve each of those things? Answers to this question form your **Strategic Priorities** for future action. These priorities are especially helpful to the vestry as it creates future budgets. Mission, vision and strategic priorities enable leadership to make strategic decisions at any time on everything, from budgets and programs to building maintenance and endowment management.

Where do we start? With the strategic priorities in place and widely communicated, all groups/ministries of the church are invited to create **Action Goals** to support the strategic priorities, so the church can achieve its vision.

These five questions are at the heart of strategic planning. The Episcopal Church Foundation offers [Strategic Solutions](#), an opportunity for a congregation to be guided by a skilled facilitator to maximize process efficiency and success. ECF's approach is customized to meet the unique culture of each congregation/diocese/camp client. And, as in all ECF programs, there is a strong component of spirituality, welcoming the Holy Spirit as a full participant.

So don't let those strategic planning terms scare you. A discerning, inspiring journey awaits!

At the heart of the matter is God's call for your faith community.

Linda Buskirk is an ECF consultant based in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In addition to the many successful Episcopal Church capital campaigns she has led for ECF, she brings extensive experience from her own consulting practice specializing in strategic planning, fundraising and board governance for not-for-profit organizations. Linda is also a contributing author for ECF's Vital Practices/Vital Posts blog. She enjoys journeying with clients to help identify where they are being called to serve as a faith community and implementing a plan to ensure their capacity to achieve their goals. Linda is active in her home parish and diocese serving on committees responsible for clergy formation, endowment, stewardship and many other ministries. She holds a master's degree in Public Affairs from Indiana University and is a graduate of the Congregational Development Institute of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Indiana.

Resources:

- [St. John's Plays Music in the Key of P](#) by Miguel Escobar, Vestry Papers, November 2017

- [The Process of Creating a Mission/Vision Statement](#), by Members of St. Phillip's Church, Vestry Papers, November 2017
- [Why Articulate Your Mission & Vision?](#) by Nancy Davidge and Susan Elliott, Vestry Papers, July 2015
- [Vision, Planning, and Movement?](#) by Jeremiah Sierra, ECF Vital Practices blog, April 28, 2014

Strategic Planning Is Overrated

Christopher Adams

At nearly every bookstore, you can find a shelf filled with books promising the next great prescription for church growth and congregational vitality. "In seven easy steps," they promise, "your congregation will grow by 1,000 percent!" Well, that might be an exaggeration, but you get the picture. Everybody seems to have an idea about what is needed to promote church growth and congregational vitality. Some actually do seem promising, while others project results that simply no program or scheme can predict.

I must confess that a few of those books are on my own bookshelf and the shelves in the library of my parish, Trinity on the Hill Episcopal Church in Los Alamos, New Mexico. Just after the two-year mark of my arrival at Trinity, the vestry began exploring ideas and programs that might inject a new sense of life and vitality in the congregation. From the beginning, we made a commitment to avoid the route of the traditional "Five-Year Strategic Plan." You know...those plans that get written up and then sit on a shelf collecting dust while the parish carries on with business as usual.

So, we turned to some of the aforementioned books. And while some of the programs seemed viable, we knew that the success of one parish's program didn't guarantee a favorable outcome at ours. Context matters. And as each parish is made up of wildly different personalities, we knew that whatever program we pursued, it had to be consistent with who we are as a faith community.

A different kind of visioning

Enter ECF and strategic visioning. I came across the organization's materials on the topic while perusing the Internet one evening. As we all know, the Internet is like a black hole...you go further and further in and can't resist its pull. As often as not, you come out the other side and realize that you've spent two hours researching the history of Mickey Mouse.

But not that night. That night something began to stir within me as I read about strategic visioning. Even at first glance, I could tell this wasn't the typical strategic plan model. Here was something else – something more organic, more personal, more (dare I say) spiritual.

At the next vestry meeting, I pitched the program to the parish leadership. They, too, were intrigued by what they read from ECF. It wasn't long before we were in contact with an ECF consultant, and soon after, hosted the first retreat for our Discernment Committee.

A clear path and a process

From the earliest steps in our work with ECF's strategic visioning process, the intent and trajectory were crystal clear. This would not result in a strategic plan birthed from a brain trust, after an afternoon locked away in a board room. It began with the members of the congregation, the very people who give of their time, talent and treasure to ensure a bright future for our parish.

To be sure, the clergy were involved. But, refreshingly, ours were not the primary voices. Even mine, as the rector, was just one voice among many. Nobody would monopolize the conversation. Our Discernment Committee was made up of a cross-section of the various demographics of the parish. Young and old, conservative and liberal, etc. Multiple voices committed to gather for the better part of a year to pray, talk to one another and dream about how God was calling our congregation forward.

Asking, listening and reflection

After a weekend retreat, where we prayed, ate and dreamed about the possible futures that God might be calling us to, we produced a series of 'Listening Questions.' These questions would be used to guide conversation in ten moderated small group discussions with parishioners. We also created an online version for people who couldn't make it to one of the Listening Sessions.

Nearly 75 percent of the members of the parish participated in these gatherings. Their frank and honest answers to questions about parish identity, programs, authority structures and a whole host of other topics allowed us to get a clear understanding of what the congregation valued about our faith community now and the possibilities that excited them for our future.

From this data, patterns began to emerge. Ranging from what the congregation overwhelmingly identified as most life-giving to what they identified as needing work, these responses shaped what came to be known as our Core Values.

Soon after the Listening Sessions, we held another retreat. At this retreat, we began to prayerfully discern the goals and strategies that we would implement in our mission and ministry moving forward. Finally, almost a year after our first weekend retreat, the vestry adopted the Core Values, Goals and Strategies identified by our Discernment Committee. Furthermore, from the Core Values, we articulated a new Mission Statement for the parish.

A life-giving process

There is no way to capture in words how life-giving this process has been, but I'll try. For years, our parish was comfortable with business as usual. But we knew instinctively that comfort in the ordinary was not what God was calling us to. By listening to the Spirit, by attending to the life-giving and liberating mission of Jesus, we knew that we had to grow beyond the ordinary.

The Strategic Visioning process drew on the imaginations and spiritual vitality of our parishioners in ways that generated real excitement throughout the whole parish. The Core Values and the Mission did not come from the clergy, who (let's face it) often fall into clericalism and unhealthy micromanagement. I've been guilty of that before.

But thank God for ECF and the Strategic Visioning process. Because of this process, new leadership has emerged, new and inventive programming has been implemented and all our members now share a common language with which to talk about our mission and ministry.

One word keeps coming to mind when I reflect on this process: beautiful. This beautiful parish, full of beautiful people, came together, listened to one another, dreamed together and is now walking into a new, hopeful future. For this, I will be eternally grateful to ECF and the Strategic Visioning process.

***Christopher Adams** has been the rector of Trinity on the Hill since the summer of 2015 and Dean of the Northeast Deanery of the Diocese of the Rio Grande since early 2018. He is a native Texan, but came back to the Southwest after living in North Carolina for nearly 20 years. He studied philosophy at East Carolina University, theology at Duke University Divinity School and Anglican Studies at Virginia Theological Seminary. He is passionate about the Gospel of Jesus Christ and cares greatly for the worship and liturgy of the Church. He enjoys reading, hiking, playing guitar and anything related to superheroes!*

Resources:

- [Not What We Expect](#) by Linda Buskirk, ECF Vital Practices blog, November 30, 2017
- [From Vision to Action](#) by Nancy Davidge and Susan Elliott, Vestry Papers, July 2015
- [Strategic Thinking for Congregations](#) an ECF webinar presented by Donald Romanik, April 23, 2015
- [Strategic Thinking: How our biases impact our parish's decisions](#) by Erin Weber-Johnson, ECF Vital Practices blog, May 21, 2015

Extender nuestra imaginación estratégica – Segunda parte

Lauren Grubaugh

Cuando los episcopales hablan sobre el Movimiento de Jesús, a menudo las conversaciones siguientes son sobre evangelismo. Deseamos crecer y eso es algo bueno si el crecimiento ocurre por los motivos

correctos. Vale la pena preguntar qué constituye Buenas Nuevas en nuestro movimiento y qué no es más que una estrategia reconstituida para el crecimiento eclesial institucional.

Algunas actividades que llamamos “evangelismo” representan en realidad la idea de que *“esto persuadirá a más gente a que venga a nuestras parroquias moribundas, para que podamos tener suficientes fondos para mantener nuestras puertas abiertas”*. Esta manera de pensar no es Buenas Nuevas. A los movimientos *no* les interesa conservar la seguridad institucional. Lo que *sí* les interesa es movilizar a la gente para que participe en experimentación radical con el propósito de generar cambios justos y concretos.

Si esto último es lo que queremos, entonces la teoría de la resistencia no violenta puede demostrar ser una parte útil de la conversación. A continuación, tres lecciones que podemos aplicar al trabajo de forjar el Movimiento de Jesús.

1. Los movimientos no violentos que permiten la participación de una gran variedad de personas son más exitosos por ello.

Los movimientos violentos requieren que los participantes estén dispuestos a hacer daño a otras criaturas bienamadas por Dios. Es por eso que favorecen la participación de personas con destrezas y capacitaciones especiales. Por el otro lado, muchos que no pueden o no están dispuestos a participar en un movimiento violento pueden contribuir a uno no violento. Los movimientos no violentos permiten la participación de jóvenes y viejos, de discapacitados, de gente que habla diferentes idiomas, de aquellos cuya sexualidad o género causa que sean más vulnerables a abusos en medios de conflictos armados. La accesibilidad conduce a una participación más amplia en el movimiento, y eso es importante, porque la participación es uno de los principales determinantes de la obtención de resultados favorables. Los investigadores lo llaman “la ventaja de la participación”.^[1]

Más aún, es más estratégico forjar un movimiento intercultural, interreligioso e interracial, porque una coalición de esa índole puede emplear una mayor variedad de tácticas. Esta “diversidad táctica”^[2] es una fuente probada de poder, porque cuando se cuenta con una mayor variedad de participantes hay una mayor probabilidad de que se creen maneras innovadoras de resistir, que pueden sorprender a los opresores y, por lo tanto, obstaculizar que respondan rápidamente.

La investigación sobre los movimientos efectivos es poderosamente reminiscente de nuestra identidad como el Cuerpo de Cristo. El Movimiento de Jesús solicita la participación de todos, especialmente de aquellos a los que el mundo considera como los menos poderosos^[3]; Es nuestro cometido reconocer el poder del Espíritu en todas las personas y emplear esos recursos para avivar la llama de todos los que participan en la sanación del mundo.

En el proceso de expandir el círculo de participación, es especialmente vital que la Rama Episcopal del Movimiento de Jesús promueva el liderazgo de los que sufrieron opresión (especialmente a manos de la Iglesia). Nuestra denominación es demasiado blanca, demasiado rica, demasiado arraigada en sistemas

violentos, como para ver las muchas maneras en las que hemos sido parte de los problemas que deseamos resolver. Esto requiere que ofrezcamos apoyo público y entusiasta a aquellos de otras tradiciones de fe que trabajan por la justicia. Significa darles el micrófono a las personas de color heridas por el silencio de la iglesia y la complicidad de la supremacía blanca.

2. La movilización efectiva requiere que se escuche con profundidad.

Tras haber encabezado colaborativamente una revolución no violenta exitosa en Serbia en 2000, Srdja Popovic ahora está enseñando a aspirantes a revolucionarios en todo el mundo. Señala que “los disidentes no se dan cuenta de que lo que mueve a los pueblos son las cosas mundanas”.^[4]

Empoderar a la gente para que participe en el Movimiento de Jesús requiere priorizar las preocupaciones cotidianas de los oprimidos. Con toda nuestra teología elocuente y liturgias hermosas, lo que la mayoría de la gente quiere saber es: “¿Cómo me va a mejorar la vida este movimiento? ¿Cómo ser parte de este movimiento ayudará a que yo, mi familia y mi comunidad florezcamos?”

Conocemos a Dios mediante expresiones tangibles en los sacramentos. Pan y vino, agua y crisma, son signos de la presencia de Dios con nosotros en lo cotidiano. Asimismo, al hablar con otros tenemos que estar dispuestos a dirigirnos al impacto tangible de nuestra teología de movimiento sobre la supremacía blanca, la pobreza, el cambio climático y otros sistemas violentos.

El evangelismo en un contexto de movimiento tiene mucho más que ver con escuchar que con hablar. Nos llama a unirnos con los han sido empujados a los márgenes^[5], creando una solidaridad que empodera a los afectados por la opresión a ser agentes de su propia liberación. El Movimiento de Jesús no es simplemente un movimiento para el pueblo. Es el movimiento del pueblo.

3. Los movimientos no violentos cambian la dinámica del poder y simultáneamente empoderan a los participantes.

Los movimientos verdaderamente no violentos no consolidan el poder. Lo distribuyen. Resisten la tentación de caer en patrones de liderazgo basados en dominación compartiendo ese liderazgo ampliamente.

La supremacía blanca en particular celebra la centralización. Considera que el poder distribuido es un ataque a su proceso bien calculado de monopolizar el poder. Los movimientos que distribuyen el poder ofrecen esperanzas de que otra vía, más equitativa, sea posible. La descentralización también es subversivamente estratégica: no se puede matar el movimiento matando a un líder carismático.

Esta es una lección difícil para una iglesia que atesora su sistema de gobierno episcopal, y en la que el clericalismo sigue siendo adverso al sacerdocio de todos los creyentes. Con excesiva frecuencia le damos a Jesús el papel de panacea, para que no tengamos que participar en la problemática sanación del mundo.

Olvidamos que Jesús, “[a]unque existía con el mismo ser de Dios no se aferró a su igualdad, sino que se despojó a sí mismo tomando forma de siervo, haciéndose semejante a los hombres”.^[6] El Movimiento de Jesús es sobre estar bajo la autoridad de un Dios que optó por presentarse en el barrio como un judío palestino pobre y moreno. Ese mismo Jesús distribuyó el poder a una mezcla de gente de toda su sociedad: pescadores, cobradores de impuestos y prostitutas; enfermos y pobres; mujeres de toda condición. Los empoderó para que hicieran el trabajo de Dios en el mundo.

Si queremos participar en el Movimiento de Jesús, también debemos participar en tal kenosis. Los cristianos blancos de EE UU, en particular, deben despojarse de la tendencia profundamente enraizada de pisotear a otros para salir adelante. Una iglesia que debe su existencia al imperialismo y al colonialismo y asentamiento de colonos, tiene mucho que aprender sobre los numerosos movimientos poderosos de base que surgieron en el mundo entero.

Si vamos a ser un movimiento, entonces el evangelismo debe significar la movilización de coconspiradores para la Comunidad de Bienamados de Dios. En solidaridad y bajo el liderazgo de los más afectados por el fallo de la humanidad de vivir hacia la visión que Dios tiene de nosotros, podremos irnos acercando al Shalom, a la Comunidad Bienamada, hacia un mundo de belleza, paz justa y alegría, en el que todas las criaturas de Dios pueden florecer.

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Recursos:

- [Dios, es tu iglesia](#) por Alfredo Feregrino, Vestry Papers, November 2016
- [Visión Para Tener Impacto, No Sólo Cambios](#) por Linda Buskirk, Vestry Papers, July 2014
- [Liderazgo efectivo en épocas de cambio y ansiedad](#) por Robin Hammeal-Urban, Vestry Papers, May 2015
- [Primeros pasos para liderar cambios](#) un webinar presentado por Sandra Montes y Juan Angel Monge, April 19, 2016

[1] Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, Columbia University Press, 2011, pp. 8. Lea el Capítulo 1 [aquí](#).

[2] *ibid.*, pp. 16

[3] Pero Dios ordenó el cuerpo, dando más abundante honor al que le faltaba, para que no haya

desavenencia en el cuerpo, sino que los miembros todos se preocupen los unos por los otros. De manera que si un miembro padece, todos los miembros se duelen con él, y si un miembro recibe honra, todos los miembros con él se gozan. (1 Cor. 12: 24b-26 NRSV)

[4] Srdja Popovic, and Matthew I. Miller, *Blueprint for Revolution: How to Use Rice Pudding, Lego Men, and Other Nonviolent Techniques to Galvanize Communities, Overthrow Dictators, or Simply Change the World*. 2015, pp. 73.

[5] Mi articulación de parentesco con los marginados está inspirada por el Fr. Greg Boyle. S.J., con el que serví por dos años en Homeboy Industries, la mayor organización del mundo para la intervención y prevención de pandillas. Puede explorar estas ideas en sus libros *Tattoos on the Heart* y *Barking to the Choir*.

[6] Filipenses 2:6-7a, CEB