

## **Vestry as Team**

**January - February 2019**

### **Vestry As a Life-Giving Team**

Chris Holmes

You have surely experienced teams that were life-giving and productive, and I'll bet you've also served on teams that were energy-suckers and a waste of your time. What caused those to be such different experiences? Which kind of team is your vestry?

Life-giving teams build community and synergy around a higher purpose while utilizing the gifts of each member of the team. This kind of a team doesn't just sort of happen. It is the consequence of a process of careful selection, intentional development and team leader training.

### **The difference between a group and a team**

The first thing to realize about teamwork is that a team is fundamentally different from a group. Groups come together for sharing or learning and then apply that learning to their individual lives. Teams develop a common vision with established goals, and rise or fall together because their members share responsibility for the results of their work.

The church vestry is innately designed to function as a team with shared responsibility for church governance, structure and selection. It holds a place at the top of the local congregation's organizational structure, with the purpose of helping the congregation fulfill its mission. The best of vestry life happens when the organization functions as a team accomplishing its work productively and collaboratively. The worst of vestry life plays out when it behaves as a group of individuals protecting their silo areas, fighting for turf and refusing to budge for the greater good of the congregation.

### **Six conditions of team effectiveness**

A research study involving thousands of teams identified as effective, found these six common factors:

1. Effective teams have a compelling direction. The purpose for meeting is captivating and clear and the team is able to measure what success looks like.
2. The right people are on the team for the right reasons. Most often these are stakeholders in the mission of the organization who have the ability to play well with others.
3. Team membership is well defined. There is utter clarity about who is on the team and who is not. You would be surprised at how often this is unclear.

4. The team matters to the organization and its leadership. The team is given enough authority to carry importance, has an adequate budget and undisputed organizational buy-in.
5. The structure of the team is solid. There is administrative support, a reasonable time-line, role definition and clarity about critical details.
6. The team is adequately led/coached. The leader of the team is trained and has a good grasp of working with others.

The study on Team Effectiveness found that when the first five of these factors are in place, there is a 60% chance that the team will be effective in doing its work. The other 40% chance of success in effectiveness depends upon the quality of leadership provided to the team.

This research suggests that it is imperative for the vestry to have a clear sense of purpose, membership that is chosen with intention and leadership that is capable. These elements are sometimes challenging in volunteer organizations with limited resources. However, they are essential for vestries in the process of becoming life-giving teams.

#### **Four marks of a life-giving vestry**

1. Shared leadership with clergy. Rector and vestry serve as an aligned team viewing their relationship as a partnership of shared responsibility for leading the congregation and bringing about transformation.
2. Aligned with purpose. The vestry does the important work of listening to the congregation while visioning what is possible, and then from that input, discerning a compelling purpose for the congregation. That discerned purpose becomes more than a statement on paper when the vestry constantly examines where it is spending its time and money by asking, "How does this embody and fulfill our purpose?"
3. Mission focused. The vestry shares with the rector the task of discerning where God is calling the faith community to be active beyond the walls of the church. As much time is spent in meetings discussing ministry and mission as is spent talking about governance, structure and selection. Life-giving vestries have a clear vision for how to live out God's call in the world in service to and with others.
4. Understanding of holy work. Vestry members understand that their service on the vestry is more a calling to be in ministry than an election to a position. Life-giving vestries spend time in prayer listening for the direction of the Holy Spirit. Members are faith-centered, biblically grounded and spiritually mature.

#### **Growing life-giving leadership**

Strong leaders are shaped, not born. In vestry life we have the great opportunity to help increase the leadership ability of those placed in positions of leadership in the church by teaching them the skills needed to succeed.

Consider holding a vestry workshop for new church leaders called, "How to Lead a Stellar Church Meeting," covering these essential ingredients:

- Basic group facilitation skills
- Meeting reminders with an attached agenda

- Starting and ending on time
- Grounding the work in the larger purpose of the church
- Including prayer and honoring the work of the Spirit
- Ending each meeting with clear action items and a person's name attached to each commitment

Very often, this kind of workshop can be led by a vestry member who learned team leadership skills in their workplace.

Vestry service does not have to be contentious, frustrating drudgery. Who wouldn't rather serve on a vestry that works joyfully as a team and focuses on God's amazing work in the world as the body of Christ? Life-giving vestries don't just materialize on their own, they happen on purpose when attention is given to careful election of membership, clarity of purpose with a focus on mission and intentional training of leaders.

*Chris Holmes leads The Holmes Coaching Group, Inc. specializing in coaching church vestries, pastors and denominational leaders. He is a United Methodist Pastor, consultant to the Episcopal Church Foundation, and author of The Art of Coaching Clergy.*

#### **Resources:**

- [There is No "I" in Team](#) by Richelle Thompson, ECF Vital Practices blog, April 26 2016
- [Norms and Covenants—Tools to Strengthen Your Team](#) by Nancy Davidge, Vestry Papers, January 2016
- [Why Team Building Matters](#) by Lesley Hartley, Vestry Papers, January 2016
- [Team Leadership](#), an ECF webinar led by Rosa Lindahl, March 26, 2015
- [Structuring Leadership Teams](#), an ECF Vital Practices Tool

#### **Music for Team Building**

Sandra Montes

When I was teaching elementary school, the easiest and fastest way to get my students to pay attention and remember what we were working on was to start singing or chanting. Somehow, putting something to music for the class to recite or sing back to me was powerful and built community. Later, when I taught music, I included easy, multilingual songs to foster community in our diverse environment.

A technique that is easy to use combines call and response phrasing, chants or songs with well-known tunes (including popular or classical music). I have used Beethoven's Fifth to say: Ready to learn? And the students' response was: Oh yes we are! I often used popular songs like "Jingle Bells" or "Thriller" to teach a variety of math or reading facts. Classes with older students came up with their own songs to help us learn. This often brought us together and helped build excitement about any subject.

## **Songs for building community at church**

When I am invited to teach a song to a group of people at church, there are several that I use. If I have very little time, I start singing the gospel spiritual “Amen.” Most people know it and will start singing along. When we finish, I say, “do you want to learn it in Spanish?” Everyone shouts: “YES!” And, I start singing it, but with the Spanish pronunciation (short A instead of long A). People usually laugh. If I have more time, I do “Somos uno en Cristo/We are all one in Christ” (found in Oramos Cantando/We Pray in Song), “Create in Me” by Mary Rice Hopkins or one of my short songs like “No tengas miedo” or “Remain in Me/Permanece en mí.”

I asked some of my musician friends to tell me what songs they use to build community and why they think music is important in team building. All of them talked about ease, repetition and the importance of the message that invites us to become one.

Jeannine Otis, Music Director at St. Mark’s-in-the-Bowery, New York, says that her favorite song for building community is “Guide my Feet.” She feels it’s easily sung and the lyrics speak to the prayer and aspiration in life to walk with God – Guide my feet while I run this race, cause I don’t wanna run this race in vain. Other verses expand on that prayer. “I want to use my life to show gratitude to God and the universe through living a life that is meaningful and of service to humankind,” says Jeannine. “For me, this song is a prayer to move forward with God, no matter what, in faith, in love and forgiveness, confident that all is well.”

Dent Davidson, Interim Director of Emerging Liturgy and Music, St. Bart’s, New York, uses a paperless song, “Come, my Beloved. Make your home in my heart.” Dent says he loves using this song because it is easy to learn. He says that he is always overwhelmed with the notion of who is making the invitation – “Are we asking God to make a home in our heart? Or is God asking us to make our home in the heart of God? Or both!” He believes that making music with our bodies is a tremendously intimate experience. It can make us vulnerable and open to what is new. Listening to each other gives us permission to use our own voice and to be heard. A group of single voices becomes one, a choir. “There’s also an element of sheer magic,” he says, “that science will never be able to explain. It’s all God, and a total gift.”

Gus Chrysson, deacon and Costa Rican seminarian at Virginia Theological Seminary, says that he teaches three choruses that will eventually overlap – “This Little Light of Mine,” “Glory, Glory Hallelujah” (Since I Laid my Burdens Down) and “When the Saints Go Marching In.” He learned this from Dr. Ysaye Barnwell, formerly of the a cappella group, Sweet Honey in the Rock. People usually know those three choruses or can learn them very quickly. He will form three groups, and ask each to sing their chorus once alone and then all together. When the groups sing together, these overlapping choruses make such nice harmonies. He thinks folk songs also work well to get people singing, and he really enjoys teaching by call and response and then making the singing progressively fancier.

Gus thinks that music is important in community building because we are human, and humans have been building community with music (and food!) forever. “Music mirrors how we praise God,” he says, “how we find joy and how we cope with grief. So, when we build community with music, it

allows us to lean into our humanness together, even if the music we know and love individually is very different.”

### **Singing together can show the way forward and bring hope**

Ana Hernández, a member of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, describes herself as a “composer/arranger, workshop facilitator, author, and mischief maker.” She discusses the power of singing together:

Whether surrounded by actual fires or communicating around dismantling racism, singing prayers together is possibly the strongest thread helping us to see a way forward on a previously unseen path. I’ve watched rooms full of people completely transformed when confronted with the following two tunes and an urgent need to work together.

John Bell's “Don't Be Afraid” reminds us to be present and faithful, even if we’re petrified. Singing together, adding harmonies and counter melodies, opens us to see new possibilities as we begin to move in sync. The fact that we notice our comfort growing as we sing allows us to explore what transformation and communion look and feel like as we practice inviting and encouraging one another and make space for each voice by deepening our capacity to listen to one another.

“All Shall Be Well/Another World” combines texts by Arundhati Roy (“Another World is not only possible, she is on her way; on a quiet day, I can hear her breathing”) and Julian of Norwich (“All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well”) in an original tune, building on the themes of God's presence and comfort by adding hope. Hope adds energy to the room, permeating each person with a confidence that makes it possible for even timid singers to find and share their voices. With this kind of wholehearted participation, all shall indeed be well.

Ellis Montes, music director at Grace, Houston, says music is a way for people to get on the same page when they are getting to know each other. He says that singing simple yet thought-provoking songs like “In My Life, Lord, Be Glorified” or “Tu fidelidad/I Depend Upon Your Faithfulness” can help people focus on an idea – especially when starting an important meeting, like one that includes multicultural liturgies, prayer book revision, inclusive language, and revising the liturgical calendar. (Ellis used these songs at his first Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music meeting.)

There is a saying: “To sing is to pray twice.” For me, singing helps in remembering prayers and Bible verses. And when music is used at the beginning of any gathering, it has the potential to bring unity, comfort and love.

***Sandra T. Montes** is the Spanish Language Resource Consultant at ECF. She has spent many years developing original bilingual resources for her church, school and others and has volunteered and worked in the Episcopal Church since she was welcomed in 1986. Sandra serves as a musician, translator, speaker, consultant and writer. She earned her doctorate in education in 2016 and is a full-time freelance consultant and musician.*

#### **Resources:**

- [The Power of Spiritual Practices](#) by Linda Buskirk, ECF Vital Practices blog, October 24, 2016

- [Walking the Road of Relationship](#) by Sarabeth Goodwin, Vestry Papers, November 2015
- [Discerning Need—The Power of Openness, Listening, and Music](#) by Erin Weber-Johnson, ECF Vital Practices blog, August 6, 2015
- [Keep on Singing](#) by Anna Olson, ECF Vital Practices blog, August 12, 2015

### **Listener, Trainer and Goal Setter**

John Thompson-Quartey

Two years ago, I had the privilege of participating in Vital Teams Academy, an Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF) program, aimed at strengthening congregational leadership teams in the Episcopal Church. In my work as Canon for Ministry Development and Congregational Vitality in the Diocese of Atlanta, I focus on congregational vitality, vocational discernment and seminarian support. This means fostering collaborative partnerships between clergy and lay leaders by equipping vestries with four basic skills – identifying a common purpose, building stronger relationships, having clear processes and focusing on results.

Over the past two years, I have worked with thirty-five vestries, using Vital Teams training as a facilitation tool. My most significant learnings over this period are that vital congregations have vestry members who:

- Understand leadership as a partnership with God in ministry
- Exercise leadership by mobilizing others in a shared common purpose
- Have strong healthy relationships and focus on one goal at a time

In my preparation for this article, I spent some time in conversation with three wardens from three different congregations of varying sizes. These wardens demonstrate, in my opinion, excellent leadership skills by creating a healthy ministry environment for their peers and the congregations they serve. I call these wardens: the Listener, the Trainer and the Goal Setter. In each warden, I find in the necessary ingredients for a vestry to become not simply a group of people working together for the church, but more importantly, a team propelled by the conviction that they are partnering with God to build God’s kingdom in their corner of God’s vineyard. Theirs is more a vocation than a job function or a role.

### **The Listener**

Joan describes herself as one who listens. A CEO (with a Ph.D. in Education) and a communications consultant, Joan brings her skills in the corporate world to her ministry as warden. She explained that in order to be successful in this translation of skills, one has to change from a “command and control” mindset to one of “holy listening,” discerning God’s mission for the congregation in its current context. Joan listens to her peers on the vestry, and the vestry team listens to the desires of the congregation. Together, they are able to discern and discover the skills and gifts they and members of the congregation bring to the service of others through the church.

It is through listening that one can determine the needs of others in order to address them. I am reminded of the story of Jesus and blind Bartimaeus, who called out to Jesus to have pity on him. When Bartimaeus finally came face to face with him, Jesus said, “What do you want me to do for you?” We cannot assume that we know what people want. We have to ask them, and listen to their response before we can meet their specific needs. Joan said that practicing the art of listening has deepened her spiritually and led to less turmoil in her life, making her more spiritually grounded.

### **The Trainer**

Ben describes himself as a consummate trainer. He holds a Ph.D. in human resource development and brings his extensive training (16+ years) to his role as warden. Ben focuses on equipping others through skill discovery and development so they can function effectively as a team. What I found most fascinating in our conversation was his deep desire to develop a strong spiritual base. He sees that as the foundation for training his vestry peers to become effective disciples of Jesus Christ.

Ben shared a conversation he once had with a priest. He told me he said to the priest, “I know what loving my neighbor is, because I see and know my neighbor, but how can I ever love God who is unseen?” The priest responded by asking Ben if he loved the sunrise and the sunset. When Ben commented that he loved sunsets, the priest said, “That is where God is.”

From this, Ben extrapolated that God is all around him – in the sunrise, the sunset, the blooming flower, the falling rain, the blazing sun and all that nature has to offer, including those who are right in front of him. He is able to use his training and facilitation skills help vestry members discover their God-given skills and talents for the sake of fulfilling God’s mission right where they are. Ben has written a customary for new vestry member orientation, ensuring that no one has to fly blind when they agree to vestry service.

### **The Goal Setter**

Gale sees herself and her peers on the vestry as “stewards of God’s house.” An accountant, and financial and medical office consultant, she brings her gifts of project management and consulting to her role as warden. She works with the vestry to focus always on setting SMART (Specific-Measurable-Assigned-Realistic-Time-sensitive) goals and getting feedback from members of the congregation. When necessary, they recalibrate or tweak their goals and objectives to achieve their common purpose, which is building a more inviting, welcoming and hospitable environment in their church. Gale’s leadership is focused on helping the vestry address goals one at a time and making sure that they take good notes about lessons learned, so that future vestry members will not have to reinvent the wheel.

Gale strongly believes in having the right people in the right ministries. A person trained in architecture and engineering may be more suitable for the building and grounds ministry, rather than stewardship or outreach. Her role as warden is to ensure that the right skills are deployed in the right ministries. This reminds me of Jesus calling fishermen as his disciples, and telling them, “I will make you fish for people.” He brought them into ministry, using the skills they had, but in a different mode.

These three wardens demonstrate to me that our call to ministry, whether lay or ordained, is to constantly seek and serve God's purpose in all that we do. With the right leadership, strong relationships and clear processes, all vestries can transform their congregations into thriving, vibrant and most of all, vital communities of faith.

*ECF's Vital Teams program is currently not available and the organization is in the process of reimagining the program.*

*The **Reverend Canon C. John Thompson-Quarley** is Canon for Ministry Development and Congregational Vitality in the diocese of Atlanta. Prior to arriving in Atlanta, he served as rector of St. Mary's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church in Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey for nine years. Before St. Mary's, he was Chaplain for Pastoral Care and Director of the Community Outreach Program at St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Rutgers University, New Jersey and a Master of Divinity from the General Theological Seminary, New York. In his current position, he is responsible for inspiring vitality in congregations through parish stewardship support and vestry coaching; vocational discernment and seminarian support; clergy events program planning; clergy continuing education support; serving as resource person for the Community of Deacons; and supervision of Campus Ministries and Youth Ministries.*

**Resources:**

- [Vitality is an Inside Job](#) by Altagracia Pérez-Bullard, ECF Vital Practices blog, October 28, 2016
- [The Vocational Vestry](#) by Alissa Newton, Vestry Papers, January 2018
- [The Power of Discernment](#) by Charles Fisher, ECF Vital Practices blog, April 6, 2018
- [Intentional Listening](#) by Linda Buskirk, ECF Vital Practices blog, March 28, 2016
- [Ways to Let God Lead Your Vestry](#) an ECF webinar led by Blair Pogue, February 23, 2017

## **10 Mistakes Vestries Often Make**

Donald Romanik

The vestry is at the heart of every Episcopal congregation. As the elected lay representatives of the parish, the vestry, in partnership with the rector or priest-in-charge, is responsible for the missional, spiritual, strategic and fiduciary life of the local faith community. Vestry service is holy and important work, and can be an incredibly rewarding experience for both the individual members as well as the entire group. However, maintaining an effective and functional vestry does not happen automatically. It requires a thoughtful, prayerful and deliberate process of discerning and responding to God's call in very practical and specific ways.

Prior to becoming president of the Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF), I served on vestries for almost twenty years. Since coming to ECF in 2005, I have had the honor and privilege of observing and working with vestries from congregations all over the country. Based on these experiences I have concluded that in order to be as effective, functional and mission-based as possible, a vestry needs to avoid the following ten common mistakes.

**1. Creating a vestry that is too large for the size of the congregation**

Not every vestry needs to have twelve members. Most congregations in the Episcopal Church are small with a median average Sunday worship attendance of only 57. Unless there are specific canonical requirements in your diocese, set the vestry at a number that is practical, manageable and sustainable given the size of your congregation.

**2. Recruiting and electing the wrong people**

Each member of the vestry must be responsive to all the needs and concerns of the congregation and able to make decisions as openly and objectively as possible. While you do not want to exclude potential vestry members who are active in a particular ministry, try to recruit individuals who get the 'big picture' and consider issues in a strategic and missional way.

**3. Failing to provide an orientation for new members**

While there is always the reality and necessity of learning on the job, there needs to be an orientation opportunity for new vestry members at the beginning of their term. It can be as simple as providing these individuals with important documents (bylaws, budget, audit, annual report) and convening for a Q&A session with the rector and wardens prior to their first meeting.

**4. Not having an annual vestry retreat**

In order to function as an effective team, rather than a group of random individuals, vestry members need to be able to get to know each other, share their stories and build community. The easiest way to facilitate this process is to conduct an annual retreat at the beginning of the new vestry year. While an overnight event has its advantages, it is not always practical or feasible especially with smaller congregations.

**5. Not establishing vestry norms**

The most effective vestries are those with clear norms and expectations on how they are going to conduct their business – starting on time, frequency and length of meetings, ensuring that everyone has a chance to talk, etc. Once established, these norms should be reviewed for compliance and continued relevancy on a regular basis.

**6. Spending insufficient time on prayer and other spiritual practices**

Unlike other nonprofit boards of directors, vestries are responsible for local faith communities who are actively engaged in God's mission in the world. Consequently, God needs to be at the center of everything a vestry does. This requires ample opportunity for spiritual practices during vestry meetings beyond just an opening and closing prayer. Bible study, often using the daily lectionary, is one easy and effective way of beginning a vestry meeting in a spiritually grounded way.

**7. Having an open-ended agenda without any priorities**

The best way to ensure an effective vestry meeting is to set the right agenda that includes ample time for prayer and Bible study and ranks individual items based on their level of importance, the need for extended discussion or specific action or follow-up. Consider using a consent agenda for those routine items, e.g. minutes, that don't require any discussion or for those matters that are fully covered or explained in a written report.

**8. Focusing too much on the 'weeds'**

Vestries often spend too much time trying to manage the minute details of individual programs or tasks instead of focusing on big picture issues that are essential to the mission

of the congregation. Vestries should set broad policy and priorities and leave the specifics to committees, task forces or other individuals.

**9. Working as individuals and not a team**

In order to discern and respond to God's call, a vestry needs to function as a team and not just a collection of individuals with their own personal biases or priorities. This is the reason why opportunities for prayer, Bible study and fellowship are so important.

**10. Failing to engage in succession planning**

One of the primary roles of vestry members is to help select their successors. Even in small congregations, vestries should always be engaged in the process of identifying, nurturing and developing new leaders for the congregation. This requires a deliberate and ongoing process of engagement, openness and outreach, especially to newcomers.

Making your best effort to avoid these ten mistakes will help ensure a more productive and mission-based vestry experience for the entire community. Please let us know if there is anything ECF can do to help you and your vestry on this important journey.

*Donald V. Romanik is president of the Episcopal Church Foundation. He is a strong advocate and proponent of lay leadership and the ministry of all the baptized and frequently writes and speaks on topics relating to leadership and resource development for Episcopal communities of faith.*

**Resources:**

- [The Vestry Goes on Retreat](#) by Nathan E. Kirkpatrick, Vestry Papers, January 2017
- [Today's Vestry Challenge—Keep it Simple and Nimble](#) by Randy Ferebee, Vestry Papers, January 2018
- [Vestry Orientation](#) an ECF Vital Practices webinar led by Donald Romanik and Brendon Hunter, January 11, 2018
- [Who Will Replace You--Succession Planning in the Church](#) by Annette Buchanan, ECF Vital Practices blog, August 7, 2017
- [The Consent Agenda—More Efficient Meetings](#) by Bob Schorr, Vestry Papers, January 2014
- [Models for Vestry Leadership of Faith Formation](#) an ECF Vital Practices webinar led by Lisa Kimball and Kyle Oliver, March 8, 2016

**Building a Diverse Vestry**

Anna Olson

How do you build a strong and functional vestry that reflects the breadth of your church's membership? In more and more of our churches, building a strong vestry includes creating and supporting space for ethnic, generational and linguistic diversity. A vestry that looks and sounds like your congregation and reflects the life experience of all your members (not to mention your changing neighborhood) probably won't "just happen" without intentionality. The good news is that building and maintaining a strong, multicultural, multilingual vestry requires disciplined and consistent attention to basics that will make any vestry stronger. Even congregations that don't identify as particularly diverse can benefit from these practices.

### **Pay attention, invite and innovate as needed**

Building your vestry starts well before the first meeting. It begins with paying attention. Who in your congregation shows signs of a fruitful prayer life, of spiritual growth? Who is patient and kind? Who solves problems rather than creating them? Who takes life as it comes, with calm and faithful resilience, instead of anxiety? Who pays attention to congregational dynamics? Who notices opportunities to connect with the local community? Who sets an example of service? Who is creative? Who serves as a bridge between language and cultural groups within the congregation? Who listens, at least as much as they talk?

The next step is invitation. In many, if not most, cultures, there is stigma attached to volunteering for leadership. Offering oneself may seem forward, pushy, presumptuous or arrogant. Many of your best potential vestry members need to be invited to serve and sometimes more than once. They may need time to think about it, or they may need to be invited several years running. It can help to invite more than one person from each of the major generational, cultural, gender and linguistic groups in your parish. It is tough and sometimes anxiety-provoking to be the “only” person under 30, Chinese-speaker, transgender or Latinx person.

Effective innovation may involve some compromise with typical Episcopal vestry practices. One innovation tried at my parish in recent years is offering potential members one-year terms instead of the usual three years. The one-year term allows those who have never served on a vestry to try it out for a reasonable amount of time. Building a vestry that looks like a growing and changing congregation may involve inviting people who have only been in the congregation for a few years. For them, a three-year term may look like an eternity. Interestingly enough, we have found that our old-timers appreciate the one-year option as well. People sometimes say no to vestry service because they don't want to fall short on the commitment. Work schedules, health, access to transportation and responsibilities for child or elder care can be difficult to predict three years at a time. Many people are more comfortable making commitments a year at a time. We have had several people serve three consecutive one-year terms!

### **Training and support help bring diverse gifts to the table**

Once you have assembled your vestry, the challenge is to enable everyone to bring their gifts. A diverse vestry brings varied experiences of being heard — from those who speak up and expect everyone's attention, to others, who long ago realized that speaking up in official contexts usually brings trouble. Some will be intimately familiar with financial statements and spreadsheet formats. Others will need clear explanations of what to look for in carrying out the vestry's fiduciary responsibilities. Many folks will never have dealt with a budget larger than their households and will need help scaling up and understanding concepts like liability. People's confidence in their ability to contribute will vary as will the ways they signal their interest in vestry process. Different cultures will show and perceive respect in different ways.

New vestry members need training and support. An extended vestry retreat early in the year provides an opportunity to set expectations and build relationships. Training should explain the roles of the various players in an Episcopal Church — vestry, rector, wardens, bishop(s), lay leaders

and active members of the congregation. Vestry members should know what to do when people in the congregation approach them with ideas or complaints, as well as what to do when they have a concern about or disagreement with the rector or another member of the staff. Vestry members need to understand and agree on basic norms for vestry communication, confidentiality, conflict resolution and consensus-building. These will vary from congregation to congregation.

Preparation for vestry meetings is critical. In our parish, the rector meets with the wardens two weeks before each meeting and works through the agenda. The agenda is written up in both English and Spanish and emailed to vestry members. In one case, the email goes to the daughter of a vestry member who does not have her own account. We have experimented with various formats for agendas, sometimes including notes on major agenda items. Another idea would be to have an experienced vestry member contact each first-year member before meetings to go over the agenda. This builds relationships as well as preparing people to participate actively in each meeting.

Vestry meetings should be planned to include every voice at the table. In our parish this means starting with a Bible study where each person invites another to share. It also means that when we are making a big decision we take the time to go around the table and ask for each person's input. Responses are translated carefully. There is time for questions. Because we are big on not un-making decisions, we try to make sure that everyone expresses their concerns before we move forward.

### **Overcoming the language barrier**

We handle language diversity in several ways in our parish. We made an intentional transition to bilingual meetings a few years ago. Previously, we had only invited vestry members who had enough English to follow along. Now we translate all our written materials, and invite several bilingual candidates each year who can help the monolingual folks keep up. We translate all of our important discussions, providing summaries of those that run long. We check in regularly to make sure everyone is following. Non-native speakers of both English and Spanish are encouraged to try out their second language skills in a supportive environment, but they always have the option of speaking in their first language. If this sounds like it makes for longer vestry meetings, it does. There's no way around that, although we all try to keep things moving. Our shared commitment to full participation usually provides sufficient fuel to get through the time it takes. A person who does not have the patience for multilingual meetings may not be a good fit for vestries in multilingual congregations.

Finally, diverse vestries need to work toward developing diverse vestry leadership. We have used a co-warden format at our parish – pairing experienced junior and senior wardens with co-wardens who represent various segments of the congregation. Working in partnership with the clergy leadership, they provide valuable perspective to the rector and assure the congregation that a wide range of voices are heard and taken into account.

***Anna Olson** is a graduate of Union Theological Seminary and Stanford University, and was ordained in the Diocese of Los Angeles in 2000. She lives and works in the diverse Koreatown neighborhood of Los Angeles, serving since 2011 as rector of Saint Mary's Episcopal Church, Los Angeles' only historic Japanese-American Episcopal church. Her interests and expertise in parish ministry include working*

*with historic congregations to connect with the needs and gifts of new neighbors; developing models for multilingual and inculturated liturgy; liturgy in public spaces; and opening space for marginalized communities to reshape and revitalize the church. She has a partner and two children, is fluent in Spanish and holds a second-degree black belt in taekwondo.*

#### **Resources:**

- [An Uncomfortable Home?](#) by Jeremiah Sierra, ECF Vital Practices blog, January 26, 2015
- [Multi-Lingual leadership and Multi-Cultural Churches](#) by Sandra Montes, Vestry Papers, July 2015
- [Is Gift-Based Ministry by of the Problem?](#) by Anna Olson, ECF Vital Practices blog, February 18, 2015
- [Investing in a Multiracial Vision of Church](#) by Kenji Kuramitsu, Vestry Papers, November 2017
- [Learning to Be the People of God—in Two Languages](#) by Sandra Montes, Vestry Papers, January 2018

#### **Música para fortalecer el trabajo en equipo**

Sandra Montes

Cuando era maestra de escuela primaria, el método más fácil y rápido para hacer que mis alumno/as prestaran atención y recordaran lo que estábamos aprendiendo era empezar a cantar. Por algún motivo, convertir algo en música para que lo recitara o me lo cantara la clase era poderoso y formaba comunidad. Más adelante, cuando enseñé música, incluí canciones fáciles y multilingües para fomentar comunidad en nuestro medio diverso.

Una técnica fácil de usar combina fraseos de llamadas y respuestas, canciones con melodías muy conocidas, incluyendo música popular o clásica. Emplee la Quinta de Beethoven para decir: ¡A aprender! Y la respuesta de los estudiantes era: ¿Qué será hoy? A menudo usé canciones como “Cascabel” y otras similares, como “Thriller”, para enseñar una variedad de temas de matemáticas o de lectura. En las clases con alumnos de mayor edad ello/as traían sus propias canciones para ayudarnos a aprender. Eso a menudo nos unió y ayudó a crear entusiasmo sobre todas las materias.

#### **Canciones para formar comunidad en la iglesia**

Cuando me invitan a enseñar una canción a un grupo de gente en la iglesia, uso varias. Si tengo muy poco tiempo, empiezo cantando el espiritual “Amén” en español. Casi toda la gente lo sabe y empieza a cantarlo. Cuando terminamos digo, “¿Lo quieren aprender en inglés?”. Toda la gente grita: “¡Sí!”. Y yo empiezo a cantar, pero con la pronunciación en inglés (básicamente la misma palabra). Por lo general la gente se ríe. Si tengo más tiempo, cantamos “Somos uno en Cristo” (encontrado en Oramos Cantando), coritos, o alguno de mis cantos cortos, como “No tengas miedo” o “Permanece en mí”.

Les pedí a alguno/as de mis amigo/as músicos que me dijeran qué cantos usan para formar comunidad y por qué creen que la música es importante para fortalecer el trabajo en equipo. Todos dijeron que lo principal era que los cantos fueran fáciles y repetitivos. Además recalcaron la importancia del mensaje que nos invita a unirnos.

Jeannine Otis, directora de música en St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery, Nueva York, dice que su canción favorita es "Guide my Feet - Guía mis pies". Siente que es fácil de cantar y que la letra apela a la oración y a aspirar en la vida a caminar con Dios: Guía mis pies mientras que corro esta carrera porque no quiero correr esta carrera en vano. Otros versos expanden esa oración: "Quiero emplear mi vida en demostrarles gratitud a Dios y al universo viviendo una vida significativa y sirviendo a la humanidad", dice Jeannine. "Para mí, esta canción es una oración para caminar hacia adelante con Dios, pase lo que pase, en fe, amor y perdón, confiado/as en que todo está bien".

Dent Davidson, director interino de Liturgia Emergente y Música en St. Bart's, Nueva York, usa un canto simple: "Come, my Beloved. Make your home in my heart - Ven, mi amado(a). Haz tu hogar en mi corazón". Dent dice que le encanta usar esta canción porque es fácil de aprender. Dice que siempre está asombrado con la noción de quién está realizando la invitación: "¿Le estamos pidiendo a Dios que haga su hogar en nuestro corazón? ¿O Dios nos está pidiendo que hagamos nuestro hogar en el corazón de Dios? ¡O ambos!". Él cree que hacer música con nuestros cuerpos es una experiencia enormemente íntima. Escucharnos mutuamente da permiso para usar nuestra propia voz y hacernos oír. Un grupo de voces individuales se convierte en una, un coro. "También hay un elemento de verdadera magia", dice, "que la ciencia nunca podrá explicar. Es todo Dios y un don total".

Gus Chrysson, diácono y seminarista costarricense del Seminario Teológico de Virginia, dice que enseña tres coros que en algún momento se van a traslapar: "This Little Light of Mine (Esta lucecita)", "Glory, Glory Hallelujah (Gloria, Gloria Aleluya)" y "When the Saints Go Marching In (Cuando los Santos marchen ya)". Aprendió esto de la Dra. Ysaye Barnwell, anteriormente del grupo Sweet Honey in the Rock. Por lo general la gente sabe esos tres coros o los puede aprender muy rápidamente. Él forma tres grupos y le pide a cada uno de ellos que cante su coro una vez solo y después todos juntos. Cuando los grupos cantan juntos, estos coros superpuestos hacen armonías maravillosas. Él piensa que las canciones folclóricas también funcionan bien para inspirar a la gente a cantar y disfruta muchísimo enseñar llamadas y respuestas y después hacer que lo que se cante sea progresivamente más complejo.

Gus piensa que la música es importante para la formación de comunidad porque somos humanos, y los seres humanos hemos estado formando comunidad con música (¡y comida!) desde tiempo inmemorial. "La música refleja cómo alabamos a Dios", dice, "cómo encontramos alegría y podemos lidiar con el dolor. Entonces, cuando formamos comunidad con música podemos apoyarnos junto/as en nuestra humanidad, incluso si la música que sabemos y amamos individualmente es muy diferente".

**Cantar juntos puede generar esperanza**

Ana Hernández, miembro de la Comisión Permanente de Liturgia y Música, se describe como “compositora, arreglista, facilitadora de talleres, autora y revoltosa”. Habla sobre el poder de cantar juntos:

Ya sea si uno/a está rodeado/a de incendios o comunicando sobre el desmantelamiento del racismo, cantar oraciones junto/as posiblemente es lo más importante que nos ayuda a ver la vía hacia adelante en una senda que anteriormente no habíamos divisado. He visto salones llenos de gente totalmente transformada cuando se encuentran con las dos melodías siguientes y una urgente necesidad de trabajar conjuntamente.

“Dont Be Afraid – No tengas miedo”, de John Bell, nos recuerda estar presentes y fieles, incluso si estamos aterrado/as. Cantar juntos, añadiendo armonías y contramelodías, nos hace sentir receptivo/as a nuevas posibilidades a medida que empezamos a movernos en sincronía. El hecho de que nos empezamos a sentir más cómodo/as a medida que cantamos nos permite explorar cómo lucen la transformación y la comunicación y cómo nos sentimos a medida que practicamos invitarnos y estimularnos mutuamente y empezamos a dejar un espacio para cada voz mediante la profundización de nuestra capacidad de escucharnos.

“All Shall Be Well/Another World – Todo va a estar bien/Otro mundo” combina textos de Arundhati Roy (“Otro mundo no solo es posible, sino que está en camino; en un día tranquilo lo puedo oír respirar”) y de Julian de Norwich (“Todo irá bien, todo irá bien y toda clase de cosas irán bien”) con una melodía original, reforzando los temas de la presencia y el consuelo de Dios añadiendo esperanzas. La esperanza da energía al salón, permeando a cada persona con una confianza en sí misma que posibilita que hasta lo/as cantantes tímido/as encuentren y compartan sus voces. Con este tipo de participación incondicional todo realmente irá bien.

Ellis Montes, director musical de Grace, Houston, dice que la música es una manera de hacer que la gente sienta que parten de una misma base cuando recién se están conociendo. Él dice que cantar melodías simples pero que hacen pensar como “En mi vida, te alabaré” o “Tu fidelidad” pueden ayudar a la gente a centrarse en una idea, especialmente al iniciar una reunión importante, como una que incluya liturgias múltiples, revisión del libro de oración común, lenguaje incluyente y modificar el calendario litúrgico. (Ellis empleó estos cantos en su primera reunión de la Comisión Permanente de Liturgia y Música).

Hay un dicho que dice: “Cantar es orar dos veces”. A mí cantar me ayuda a recordar oraciones y versos de la Biblia. Y cuando se usa la música al principio de cualquier tipo de reunión, tiene el potencial de generar unión, consuelo y amor.

**Sandra T. Montes** es la Asesora de Recursos en Español de la Fundación de la Iglesia Episcopal. Pasó muchos años desarrollando recursos bilingües originales para su iglesia, escuela y otros, y fue voluntaria y trabajó en la Iglesia Episcopal desde que le dieron la bienvenida en 1986. Sandra se desempeña como música, traductora, asesora y escritora. Obtuvo su doctorado en educación en 2016 y es asesora y música independiente a tiempo completo.

**Recursos:**

- [¿Qué cantamos el próximo domingo?](#) de Sandra Montes, ECF Vital Practices blog, agosto 24, 2015
- [Alcemos cada voz](#) de Sandra Montes, ECF Vital Practices blog, julio 23, 2015
- [Recorrer la senda de las relaciones](#) de Sarabeth Goodwin, Vestry Papers, Noviembre 2015
- [¡El Espíritu de Dios se mueve, se mueve, se mueve! ¡Oh hermano deja que se mueva dentro de tu corazón!](#) de Ema Rosero-Nordalm, ECF Vital Practices blog, abril 25, 2014

## **There is No “I” in Team**

Diane Jardine Bruce

I haven't always been fond of this saying, but as a parish rector and now as Bishop Suffragan, I have come to relish it. As leaders, some of the most important questions we can ask of our vestries/bishop's committees are:

- What should we do?
- What are the group's feelings on XYZ issue?
- What do you all think about XYZ proposal?
- What are we missing?
- What voices are we missing in this conversation/decision?

## **The Goal**

Working through a tough budget or an issue requires a team approach, which means people should be able to express their individual opinions but come to a consensus on what is best for the congregation. This may seem to you like a no-brainer or like an impossible task. It takes work to get there, and early team-building is essential to equip any group with the tools they need to work well together.

## **The Process**

Everything we do must begin with prayer. This is the first and great commandment, in my mind. Every meeting. Always. If we are not praying together, we will never be able to make tough decisions together. As a vestry or bishop's committee starts its year, prayer and retreat are essential.

In a retreat setting, here are a few things I have found to help form an effective team:

1. Teach [Respectful Communication Guidelines](#) and [Mutual Invitation](#) as used by the Kaleidoscope Institute
2. Pray together and ask each member of the group to lead prayer at the retreat. Ask members to lead prayers at each upcoming meeting as well, making sure everyone has a turn. Do [Bible study](#) together. You can tie the Bible study questions to the mission statement of the congregation.

3. Using respectful communication guidelines and mutual invitation, take time to learn something about each member, from the familiar to what will help your work together:
  - a. What is something that people don't know about you that might surprise them?
  - b. What is your favorite genre of book/movie/TV show?
  - c. What is your favorite food?
  - d. What is on your bucket list?
  - e. If you had a chance to work in another profession what would it be and why?
  - f. When I am in conflict, I tend to . . .
  - g. I know I am being respected when . . .
  - h. I know I am being heard when . . .
  - i. When I read our mission statement, I think about . . .
4. Assign each member an area of responsibility or focus: stewardship, finance, Christian Education, worship, etc., with an eye to match people's skills/interests with various areas of focus within the congregation, keeping in mind that this is not always easy, nor is it clear-cut.
5. Educate all the members on the finances of the congregation:
  - a. Using your mission statement as the guiding principle of your work, walk through your balance sheet and profit and loss statement. Using an annotated or narrative budget is always good to acclimate members to an area of some of the hardest decisions a vestry or bishop's committee have to make. You cannot separate mission and ministry from budgeting – nor from your finances. They are inextricably linked together.
  - b. Understand that all we have been given is a gift from God, and it is a gift that is meant to be shared. Talk about abundance – not scarcity.
  - c. Understand that money is always the hardest thing for a vestry/bishop's committee to talk about because the old adage is true: money is closer to people's hearts than God ever is. Trust me, I was a banker for 17 years. Now reread the part on the need to always start with prayer.

When we understand each other, it is easier to listen to each other. When we can talk about money from a sense of abundance and not scarcity, we can have fruitful conversations about how we are using the resources we have been given to the glory of God. Through all this, we can understand each other's perspectives better, and learn to work with each other. It does not mean we will always agree. It does not mean we will always like what we will hear. It does mean that being formed as a team, we will learn to work together in a healthy way, with mutual respect even when we work through hard decisions and issues.

### **Diversity/Cultural considerations**

As in any group, a mixture of voices in the team is always key to ensuring you are making the best collective decision possible. If you are in a group where there are multiple cultures represented – gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, etc. – it is important to understand cultural norms and nuances and to be sensitive to the people in the group. In some cultures, for example, people will not feel comfortable sharing their thoughts or feelings openly. In other cultures, looking someone straight in the eye is considered rude. Creating norms such as respectful communication guidelines and mutual invitation as a means of engaging people's thoughts and opinions is a great

way to ensure everyone is invited to speak and is being heard. Not dismissing a person's idea out of hand, even and especially if it is challenging, is essential to ensuring that people feel not only safe in sharing their thoughts, but also that their thoughts and opinions are taken seriously and respected. Invest in butcher paper when making tough decisions. Write down what people say and display it, so that all can feel – and see – that they are being heard.

### **Pitfall to avoid at all costs: Never load a vestry/bishop's committee with "YES" people**

It can be difficult to hear a dissenting voice on any issue, but it is important that all voices are heard, acknowledged and appreciated. How many times have you been excited about an idea or an opportunity and run into someone who, when you share it, gives you reasons it may not work or thinks it's a bad idea? For me, these are "Holy Spirit" moments. Every preacher can tell you stories about what they thought they were saying and what people heard – and how those two things did and didn't match up. No one person can hold all the answers. Listening deeply and not dismissing thoughts or opinions that don't support ours is important in seeing all possible facets of an issue or idea.

It is never a good idea to form a group with "yes" people who have similar backgrounds and thought processes and agree with everything you think or say. And before you ask, yes, some groups are formed this way. Every group needs diversity – not only as a reflection of the wider congregation, but as a way to give voice to all sides of an issue before a final decision is made. This slows the decision-making process as voices share thoughts that must be carefully weighed before the final decision is made.

If everyone on your committee is of one opinion on a matter, you haven't gotten a broad enough group together. Hearing all sides of an issue helps the group come to a better, well-formed decision. You can also anticipate potential questions or issues from the wider community, because you have included a variety of voices in the decision making process. One rule of thumb for me has always been that if there is a something controversial coming down the pipeline, and if the group I am working with is of one mind on the matter, I seek out other voices in the community to bounce the thought or idea off of. It may be that there are opinions in the wider community that your group didn't think of – or it may be that indeed, your entire community is of one mind on an issue – creating a food pantry, for example.

### **Who is impacted by the decision being made?**

If a group/ministry/people is impacted by a decision that the vestry/bishop's committee is making, why aren't they there? Why aren't their voices heard? Even if the decision is to change or sunset a ministry, those involved in that ministry should be asked for their thoughts. Always make sure those impacted by a decision have had their opinion/voice heard.

### **Bottom Line**

Taking the time to prayerfully listen to **all** voices may seem like a waste of time – but it is not. In the long run, the team building process and the use of respectful communication guidelines and mutual

invitation not only saves time and energy, it ensures that the best possible decisions are made by a team of people who love the congregation and love Jesus.

*The Rt. Rev. Diane M. Jardine Bruce, Suffragan Bishop for the Diocese of Los Angeles, was the first woman elected bishop in the diocese. Her areas of specialization include new community (formerly called multicultural ministries), stewardship and finance. Ordained a priest in 1998 in the Diocese of Los Angeles, Bishop Bruce speaks Spanish, some Mandarin and Cantonese as well as English. She holds a doctoral degree from Seabury-Western Seminary, as well as a master of divinity degree from the Claremont School of Theology and a bachelor's degree in linguistics from the University of California at Berkeley.*

#### **Resources:**

- [Lift Every Voice](#) by Anna Olson, Vestry Papers, January 2015
- [Anxious Decisions or Passionate Urgency?](#) by Joe Duggan, ECF Vital Practices blog, July 27, 2012
- [One Missional Way to Grow Your Small Church](#) by Sandra Montes, Vestry Papers, July 2017
- [Why Pray at Church Meetings?](#) by Greg Syler, ECF Vital Practices blog, December 3, 2014
- [Trust the Process](#) by Jade Mohorko Ortiz, Vestry Papers, January 2017

#### **How We Gather 'Round the Table**

Brian Prior

As I dashed down the stairs to the undercroft of the church to be the first in line for coffee hour treats, the first thing I noticed was the way the chairs and tables were positioned. Set in a big square taking up almost half of the room, the arrangement could only mean the bishop's committee meeting. I smiled, because when the bishop's committee meets two great things happen: great food and time to play with my friends!

#### **The table's at the center**

In some congregations, the leadership (vestry or bishop's committee or any other) meets in a specifically designated room; in others, in the library; and still others meet in their fellowship hall. Regardless of where they meet, they share one thing in common – tables and chairs configured to create the greatest capacity for seeing and hearing each other. While functional, the setup is also iconic of what is taking place.

As eucharistic people, the table is functionally and symbolically the most important piece of furniture for our communities, next to the baptismal font. As such, a central question for us all is: who is at the table and who is missing? Faith communities are often very good about asking who is missing from the eucharistic table, but miss the mark when it comes to who is sitting at the table of leadership. And there is another critical question: how do those around the table relate to each other?

In the fourth chapter of Ephesians, writing to the faith community in Ephesus, Paul makes the case for the importance of fully utilizing what we now refer to as the ministry of the baptized: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift.” He goes on to suggest, “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” Ephesians 4: 4-7, 11-13.

### **Representation, gifts and collaboration at the table**

Who is at our leadership table? Or more importantly, who is missing? Do those sitting around the table represent the fullness of the ministry of all the baptized? The healthiest leadership tables are those that are intentional about three key components: demographic representation, gift discernment and shared collaborative leadership.

Does our leadership table look like the complete make up of our faith community, including those we seek greater participation from or who have been historically marginalized? Engaging in the comprehensive work of understanding the full representation of the faith community is critical to having the broadest base of leadership.

Have individuals in the faith community been given opportunities to participate in some form of gift discernment exercise? Having an in-depth understanding of the variety of passions and gifts of all of the baptized is the work of the Holy Spirit that makes the missional vision come to reality.

Does the leadership table create a clear desire for shared collaborative leadership? When we acknowledge, affirm and respect the unique gifts that each of the baptized brings, the leadership is able to operate as a team for building up the body of Christ.

### **Changing the table transforms the leadership team**

In the faith community where I previously served, we set about to intentionally transition the functioning of our leadership table. One of the things most helpful things in accomplishing this involved the physical location for our meetings. For years we had met in the library of the church. Four times a year however, we would spend a Sunday afternoon together for a mini retreat at one of the members’ homes.

These meetings were not only incredibly productive, but had a completely different vibe than when we met at the church. We would begin around the dining room table, sharing a wonderful meal. It was a great opportunity to check in with one another, and even those who had gone to church together for years moved into deeper relationship. This connectivity was instrumental in gaining clarity about each other’s gifts and passions and built a significant amount of trust. The bonds that were formed increased both the health of the leadership table *and* created a greater sense of working as a team.

Shifting from the 'boardroom' table to the dining room table completely changed the leadership's functioning. In my experience, people would often arrive from their hectic business lives to the leadership meetings at the church and continue to function as if they were at work. Opening prayers and reflections were helpful, but many still brought a corporate perspective, rather than a Spirit-led, collaborative approach to the holy work to which we were called.

The difference in how the leadership functioned and related to each other was so obvious that they abandoned the boardroom table in the church library and decided to hold all leadership meetings around each other's dining room tables. The end result was that the leadership functioned with greater intention about who was at the table and who was not, with much deeper relationships and greater clarity about the gifts and passions of others – and in a much more shared, collaborative way.

The icon that most clearly depicts for me God's dream of our leadership table is Andrei Rublev's Trinity. God's beloved, uniquely created and uniquely gifted – all collaborating with the Holy Spirit and with each other in engaging God's mission.

*The Rt. Rev. Brian N. Prior is the IX Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota. Before becoming Bishop, he served as the founding Rector of the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Spokane, WA, Executive Director of Camp Cross, the Director of Education and Development for the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane. He also served as Chaplain and Vice President for the Episcopal Church's House of Deputies and on the Executive Council for the Episcopal Church. He is currently Vice Chair of the Trustee for the Church Pension Group, Vice President of Province VI and Chair of the Visionary Council for the Episcopal Camp and Conference Centers.*

#### **Resources:**

- [Seats at the Table](#) by Alan Bentrup, an ECF Vital Practices blog, May 9, 2017
- [There's a Place for You at the Table](#), an ECF Vital Practices tool submitted by Doreen Rice
- [Church as Base Camp](#) by J. Fletcher Lowe, Vestry Papers, March 2014
- [Who Should Be at the Table](#) by Miguel Escobar, an ECF Vital Practices blog, April 12, 2012

#### **The MBTI and Strong Vestry Teams**

Jenny Replogle

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) offers many possibilities for enriching your understanding of yourself and enabling your vestry to work better as a team. It is a particularly apt tool for vestries in Episcopal parishes, and not just because it is an effective tool for team-building. Its core assumptions resonate with and reflect core tenets of our Anglican theology and ethos.

A tool created by Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers, the MBTI is based on Carl Jung's theories of personality types. The theory posits that all people inherently use four basic mental processes, or functions. Two of the functions, Sensing and Intuition, are ways of Perceiving,

or taking in information. The other two functions, Thinking and Feeling, are ways of making decisions, or Judging. (It is important to note that Feeling in this context does not refer to using emotions but rather to making decisions based on personal and social values.)

Jung also found that people tend to orient their energy toward the inside world of their ideas and thoughts (Introversion) or towards the outside world of people and activities (Extraversion ) and later Myers and Briggs found that people tend to prefer to use either their Judging or Perceiving function most. Together, the combination of these four preference pairs – Introversion/Extroversion (I, E), Sensing/Intuition (S/N), Thinking/Feeling (T/F), Judging/Perceiving (J/P) – form 16 personality types.

### **Seeing our diversity as gift**

Although MBTI personality types are used in common parlance, they are often presented as fixed stereotypes, devoid of nuance. One of the most important tenets of the theory is that everyone uses all of the functions and orientations, and all of them can be continually developed. One's preferences, commonly identified by their 'letters,' are simply that – preferences. The best analogy is that of a dominant hand. If you are right-handed, you still have the use of your left hand, but prefer to do most things with your right. These preferences tend to lead people to develop some functions better than others because they innately opt to use the preferred functions. None of these things are positive or negative, as MBTI is not based on a normal/abnormal scale. Rather, all of these functions and orientations are normal and the preferences are part of what make each person distinctive.

Core to our Anglican theology is the belief that diversity is a gift because the image of God is more fully reflected in the vast array of our humanity. The beauty of the body of Christ is in its many different parts working together to join God's work in our world. The theories that form the basis for MBTI offer a practical framework and common language for talking about the variety of personality and ability that each person brings to the table, especially in the context of a vestry working to lead a parish as a team. Based on the idea that we all have "unique gifts to offer and challenges to overcome,"[1] MBTI can be a lens that helps a group understand how each person brings different gifts and aptitudes to the table.

### **Using MBTI to build your vestry team**

In order to use this tool as a vestry, the first step is to have each member take the assessment and learn about their own type, with the guidance of a person certified to administer the MBTI. If the members would like to use the instrument to grow as a team, a good next step is to 'map' the personality types of the members on a grid. (Note: A fundamental value of the MBTI is each person's ability to choose whether or not to disclose their type, so all must agree to take part.) This creates a visual understanding of the makeup of the team. Important dynamics to notice are:

1. What is the balance between each function pair? (i.e. Extraversion/Introversion, Thinking/Feeling, Intuition/Sensing, and Judging/Perceiving)

2. Are there any outliers – i.e. Do most people prefer Feeling, while only one or two prefer Thinking? Consider whether these people are hesitant to share their perspective or feel silenced.
3. Does the team have any significant blind spots – i.e. Does everyone prefer Intuition over Sensing? In this case, the team may be inclined to focus on the big picture while neglecting the details.

Once again, the makeup of the vestry is not positive or negative, but this information can help the team grow more aware of its group dynamics. Generally, a team with similar types tends to make decisions more easily and quickly, but they might overlook critical points in the process. On the other hand, a team with a wider variety of preferences may take longer to come to a decision, but it may come to better results because it naturally considers more perspectives.

Personality types are never intended as an excuse for someone's behavior or a way to characterize them. In fact, MBTI offers a tool to help us see a fuller picture of another's gifts. The Rev. Ellen Ekevag, Rector of Emmanuel Episcopal Church in La Grange, Illinois, credits MBTI with helping her and the wardens understand each other better and work more effectively. She says, "Knowing my preferences makes it clear when I need to ask others for help, especially when a task is suited to someone else's preference and I know they would enjoy doing it."

MBTI is only one view into understanding the personalities that each of us were created with, but it is a powerful tool in self-awareness and growth that can enable a team to better appreciate, support and strengthen each other and their work together. By offering a lens for looking at the ways different people approach situations, and the gifts each brings to the table, MBTI enables vestries to work better as teams that live out the fullness of the image of God embodied in the diversity of God's people.

*The Rev. Jenny Replogle is the Co-Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Peoria, Illinois. She also works as a trainer for the College of Congregational Development and is a certified MBTI practitioner. She serves as Co-Rector with her husband, the Rev. Jonathan Thomas. They have stayed busy for the last year with their new son, Rowan, who turned one on Epiphany.*

#### **Resources:**

- [Getting to Know You: Tips for New Groups](#) by Kanuga Camp & Conference Center, ECF Vital Practices blog, November 6, 2015
- [Building Strong Teams: A Tool for Identifying and Addressing Five Commons Areas of Dysfunction](#), an ECF Vital Practices tool submitted by Rosa Lindahl
- [Structuring Leadership Teams](#), an ECF Vital Practices tool submitted by the Rev. Devon Anderson
- [Discernment in the Vestry Process](#) by Bruce A. Freeman, Vestry Papers, January 2017
- [Spiritual Gifts](#) by Jennifer LeBlanc, Vestry Papers, January 2017

[1] Elizabeth Hirsh, Katherine W. Hirsh, and Sandra Krebs Hirsh, *Introduction to Myers-Briggs Type and Teams* (CPP, Inc.), 1.

## **Setting Goals—Moving Your Mission Forward**

Melissa Rau

Vestries I've worked with want amazing things for their churches. Many express their desire to see a growing, thriving church family where people from all walks of life and generations learn, serve and grow together. Lots of churches have clear and compelling mission and vision statements, and many faith communities understand what they value and protect as a congregation. Churches all over have spent significant time and resources to discern who they are and what God is calling them to be in the world. And that's great. Mission Statement? Check. Defined Core Values? Check.

But how do vestry teams move beyond the dream, dig in and achieve results together?

Goals are what give your mission legs. Strategic planning is great. Strategic doing is better. So what are the elements that need to be in place to move a vestry from talking about something to achieving results?

### **Step One: Agree on what success looks like**

The vestry (or any ministry team working toward a common vision) should decide upon three God-sized goals that with grit, perseverance, a little bit of miracle and strategy can be achieved in perhaps three to five years. For instance, if your church has identified the need for a feeding ministry in your community and has decided to meet that need, the church might establish a goal to "Feed the hungry." But that's just a starting point.

### **Step Two: Make it S.M.A.R.T.**

"Feed the hungry" isn't a great goal since it can't really be measured. Or maybe it can, but the definition of success hasn't been set. To be SMART, your goal needs to be:

S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Assigned to/actionable

R = Relevant

T = Time-sensitive

How about, "Establish a Feeding Ministry?" It's a step in the right direction, but it could be better still. "Develop and launch a Feeding Ministry that feeds 100 families every week" is much more specific and measurable. That will be important when it comes time to evaluate the progress you're making toward achieving your goal. Your team needs to be able to tell when you've hit your mark.

### **Step Three: Make it even S.M.A.R.T.E.R.**

Michael Hyatt, author, blogger, speaker and former Chairman and CEO of Thomas Nelson Publishers suggests two additional criteria for making goals great. The first, "E," stands for "exciting." Let's face it. If it isn't exciting, then it probably shouldn't be a goal. Who wants to spend time and energy

moving something forward that doesn't really energize, engage and excite? Perhaps it should go without saying, but you'd be surprised by the number of boring and misguided goals I've seen along the way. Feeding 100 families every week might be exciting to your church. If so, great. If not, then consider ways to make it more exciting. Does the number need to be increased? Should it be turned into a daily ministry?

The second addition, "R," might be my favorite. It stands for "Risky." If what you're trying to do is necessary and it hasn't yet been done, chances are there is some sort of risk involved (or it would've been done before). The church needs to do a better job at being bold and taking risks to impact the world in the crazy, positive ways our culture needs. We can't afford to play it safe when the world needs us to step up and lead.

How can our goal be risky? What about something like this — "Hire a F/T Executive Director to manage a feeding ministry that serves free meals to 250 people every Monday through Friday." Wow! Do you see how something like this goal absolutely needs to be a church-wide endeavor? There's liability involved. It might fail. Agh! But if not you, who?

#### **Step Four: Establish a one-year benchmark for each goal**

Now the vestry needs to ask: If we'd like to achieve these three goals in three to five years, what should we be able to accomplish by the end of this year? This step is extremely important, because the goal itself is far too big and overwhelming to put action steps in place. A benchmark should be more manageable, designed to help you move forward in incremental and iterative ways.

Let's consider our feeding ministry goal. If, "Hire a F/T Executive Director to manage a feeding ministry that serves free meals to 250 people every Monday through Friday," is our goal, then the one-year benchmark could be something like: "Feeding Ministry Executive Director begins work."

#### **Step Five: Determine the best next steps**

This is where the rubber meets the road, folks. Now your team is working toward hiring an Executive Director for the new ministry. What needs to be done between now and then? Here's how next steps will help your church hit its established benchmark:

- The budget is approved for salary and benefits
- A Feeding Ministry team is recruited
- The Feeding Ministry team creates a job description for the executive director position
- A job posting is written and released
- Applications are reviewed
- Phone screening interviews are made
- In-person interviews with 2-3 candidates are conducted

#### **Step 6: Assign next steps and deadlines**

After a timeline of next steps has been proposed, assign the goal to one vestry member who will be responsible for moving the goal forward. This person will coordinate the effort and next steps, holding people accountable for completing the tasks they have agreed to perform on time.

### **Step 7: Trust the plan and work the process**

Achieving results comes down to commitment and following the plan. Sadly, too few follow through with what they say they were going to do because life gets in the way. But when a team comes together and laser-focuses on two to three things that really matter to them, then the sky's the limit. Accountability is another important factor, and effective teams can have open and honest dialog about what progress has been made, what progress hasn't been made and why.

Action step by action step, you'll be that much closer to achieving the goals to which God is calling you.

*Melissa Rau is the Senior Program Director of Leadership at ECF. She joined the ECF staff in April 2018 and is responsible for overseeing the Leadership Resources area, which includes Vital Practices, webinars and training, publications and the ECF Fellowship Partners program. In addition to overseeing ECF's existing leadership initiatives, Melissa is helping ECF discern its unique contribution to entrepreneurial and transformational leadership in the wider church.*

### **Resources:**

- [You Can't Do It All...](#) by Janet Lombardo, an ECF Vital Practices blog, March 13, 2018
- [One Step Out of "Stuckness"](#) by Jamie Coats, Vestry Papers, September 2011
- [Ten Steps](#) by Anna Olson, an ECF Vital Practices blog, July 27, 2015
- [Stuck in a Rut?](#) by Chris Yaw, an ECF Vital Practices blog, April 13, 2012
- [Hard Decisions, Winning Strategies](#) by Richelle Thompson, an ECF Vital Practices blog, July 25, 2011

### **Essentials for a Healthy Vestry Team**

Victor Conrado

Vestries and bishop's committees in the Episcopal Church are essential for the healthy functioning of our communities of faith. They remind us of the need for lay and clergy leadership in our congregations. They help us recognize that each of our members has a unique function and responsibility and that the way to undertake this work is to be and function as a team.

Teamwork is a process of gathering different ideas and tools from various individuals to produce something new, something that one person would not be able to achieve by him or herself. This is why it is crucial that lay and clergy leadership intentionally invest time, talent and treasure to create good teamwork in their vestries and bishop's committees.

Each team has two essential functions: complete a task and maintain healthy relationships among the members. Clarity in these functions gives members a sense of belonging and assurance that their time, talent and treasure are well utilized. It motivates members of the congregation as well, encouraging their interest in the vestry/bishop committee's work.

The opposite is also true. When there is a lack of clarity in these functions, there is chaos and loss of motivation that filters down to the congregation at large. The result is fatigue and the congregation becomes less generous with its time, talent and treasure, since no one wants to commit to something that has no future.

Good teamwork in vestries and bishop's committees requires clarity in three essential elements: duties, maintaining mutual relationships, and personal needs. These three elements enable vestries and bishop's committees to function effectively and to be a source of vitality and energy in our congregations.

### **A look at each essential element**

#### **Duties: Our purpose**

A team is called to exist or is created to accomplish a task. The duty of the vestries and bishop's committees is to be the legal representatives of the parish concerning its corporate property, but that definition is not limited. There are additional duties, depending on the context in which a congregation is located and exercises its ministry.

Nothing should be taken for granted. It is important that vestry and bishop's committee members are made aware and have full knowledge of their main duty. We must be intentional about taking time to help new members become acquainted with their duties and remind veteran members of their role in this important entity in their faith community.

This is best done during an annual retreat to read jointly and individually the rules and statutes that guide their ministry. Other opportunities to reinforce members' understanding of their duties and purpose can be incorporated into meetings and other events throughout the year.

#### **Maintaining mutual relationships**

Effective vestries and bishop's committees maintain good relationships among their members, so that each member feels safe and free to contribute to the team. Our interpersonal relationships are constantly changing. When members recognize this and consistently help one another, it is easier to accomplish assigned tasks.

A common reality is that some vestry/bishop's committee members would rather work for their congregations in an individual capacity instead of as a team member. Sometimes people are invited by the clergy to exercise a function based on their individual interests and abilities. They may be recognized as leaders in their congregations for successfully completing a project or initiative. In many instances, those same gifts can undermine the group's teamwork. It is imperative that we know how to uphold our interpersonal relationships.

Time to get to know one another individually and to see that all members bring different gifts to the group is important. Icebreakers and other activities help foster team bonding. Tools for personal awareness, like personality tests, can be an important investment in maintaining relationships. Tools like the [MBTI](#) can help us know one another and work better as a team.

### **Personal Needs**

All individuals in vestries and bishop's committees bring personal needs to the team. When those needs do not find a favorable atmosphere, a person seeks ways to fulfill them, sometimes to the detriment of the team's functioning. It is in these instances when we see unhealthy behaviors that tend to disrupt the work and good relations of the group.

In vestries and bishop's committees, it is important to help members express their personal needs. These can vary a great deal and may be expressed in different ways. Some people need their work recognized and others need to be heard. A common need for many is to feel respected. It is important that lay and clergy leadership are aware of these needs during and outside of meetings. Granting participation and voice are concrete ways of showing respect for each team member.

### **A balancing act**

It is essential that vestries and bishop's committees balance these three functions – Task, Relationships, and Personal Needs. When one is neglected, the other two are affected and team performance is impaired. To do that, lay and clergy leadership need to invest time, talent and treasure in the good health of their leadership team. Our investment in nurturing these leaders in our congregations is an investment in an entire congregation that will strengthen their trust in their leaders and will motivate them to want to be part of the leadership in the future.

***Victor Conrado** serves as the Associate for Ministries for the Diocese of Chicago. Before being called to this position, he served for six years as Assistant Rector for Latino/Hispanic Language Ministries at St. Mark Episcopal Church, Glen Ellyn, IL. Victor was a Roman Catholic missionary priest for 11 years in Kenya, Africa. He was received into the Episcopal Church in 2011.*

### **Resources:**

- [The Vestry Goes on Retreat](#) by Nathan E. Kirkpatrick, Vestry Papers, January 2017
- [Why are we Here?](#) by Linda Buskirk, ECF Vital Practices blog, September 1, 2018
- [No Time to Hibernate](#) by Victor Conrado and Louisa McKellaston, Vestry Papers, May 2018
- [Relational Matters](#) by Greg Syler, ECF Vital Practices blog, August 14, 2013
- [First Steps in Understanding Church Conflict](#), an ECF webinar presented by Christy Shain-Hendricks, March 9, 2017

## **Church Partnerships and Collaborative Leadership**

Benge Ambrogi

As financial pressures ratchet up for our smaller congregations, the benefits from collaboration and partnerships with other congregations increase. There are many ways for churches to collaborate: sharing staff, sharing space, co-sponsoring programs. Since clergy commonly comprise the greatest cost for a small congregation, the most impactful collaboration is often sharing clergy. There are several models for doing this:

- Congregations can remain independent and not in relationship. The clergy person is essentially employed part time at each congregation.
- Congregations can work together on some aspects of their ministry, for example, sharing staff or common programming and perhaps occasional common worship.
- Congregations can be more tightly integrated, including worshipping together regularly, while maintaining their separate identities.

### **Worship, governance and finances call for teamwork**

For each type of collaboration, it is critical for the respective vestries or bishop's committees to work together as a team. There are three main areas for the team to consider: worship, governance and finances. With worship, the key thing is to work out service times that don't conflict and that allow the clergy person to spend meaningful time at each congregation before and after the service. If the clergy person is required to rush off to the other church immediately after worship, the earlier congregation can feel short-changed, as though they never get to spend time with their priest. For two churches with Sunday services, this often means moving one service earlier and one later, which can be a bone of contention among the members. Building a collaborative team from the two vestries or bishop's committees is key, along with understanding that partnership requires some give and take.

As an example, in New Hampshire we have one pair of congregations that chose to divide their worship by rite and style. There is an 8 am service in one church with a spoken Rite I Eucharist, then a Rite II Eucharist with music and choir at 10 am at the other church. The churches are five miles apart, making it easy for parishioners from either congregation to go to the service that suits them.

In the area of governance, it is important that the two vestries or bishop's committees maintain separate identities, yet encourage as much teamwork and collaboration as possible. The best way to foster teamwork is to have the vestries meet jointly. Votes can be taken by congregation where necessary, when approving a budget, for example, or major expenditures or calling clergy. One of our shared ministries meets jointly, and then the two bishop's committees break off separately to discuss and vote on items specific to their churches.

### **Things get more complex with finances**

Collaborations get trickiest when it comes to finances, an area where teamwork is crucial. Each church is still its own legal entity and as such needs to maintain its own accounts. It is very

important early on in the relationship to establish which congregation is paying for what. One church may have a rectory and provide the clergy housing. In return, the other congregation takes up a larger salary portion or covers other expenses, such as health insurance. This reduces the need for transfers or reimbursements between the two congregations.

One challenge arises when a parishioner wants to pledge to the partnership rather than one church or the other. It is important to have a system that designates how such pledges are to be split – which congregation will receive the funds and how the balance will be transferred over to the other church. Or alternatively, there may be a person who wants his pledge to go to just one of the congregations. Again, it is important for the vestries to decide ahead of time how they are going to handle these situations and to put appropriate systems in place.

Given the complexities of maintaining separate governance and finances, we have had congregations ask “can’t we just merge everything?” Unfortunately, since the churches are canonically and legally separate, you can’t. Even if you set up a new account to handle the combined funds of the two churches, the account has to be owned by one of the churches in the partnership. Likewise, canonically, each congregation has been admitted separately into the diocese. Partnering congregations need to continue to participate and vote separately and to pay separate diocesan assessments.

While the details of the process of merging are beyond the scope of this article, it takes substantial time and resources to dissolve the existing entities and to re-form a joined entity, which would then need to be legally recognized and canonically admitted to the diocese. Once undertaken, a merger is not easily undone, so it is important that the vestries establish a true and lasting partnership before making the arrangement permanent.

### **Case Study: The Seacoast Shared Ministry**

Christ Church Portsmouth and Trinity Church Hampton are about 10 miles apart and a 20-minute drive on the New Hampshire seacoast. Trinity has an ASA of about 40, and Christ Church’s ASA is approximately 30. In 2011, Bishop Gene Robinson invited the two congregations to form a shared ministry, where they would work in partnership with a shared full-time clergy person. This shared ministry partnership has grown over the years and continues today. Not only do the congregations share clergy, they also share a parish administrator, a music director and a bookkeeper. Services are held at Trinity on Saturday evening at 5PM, then again at 8:45 on Sunday morning. After having a little time at coffee hour at Trinity, the vicar and music director jump in the car and head to Christ Church for a 10:30 service.

Christ Church has a rectory on its property, which provides the vicar’s housing. In exchange for providing the housing, Trinity church pays for the vicar’s cash salary. They split expenses such as health care, pension and mileage evenly. The parish administrator, music director and bookkeeper are split 55/45, with Trinity paying the larger share. The bishop’s committees meet together monthly, with each group splitting off for part of the meeting to discuss matters particular to their congregation.

The two churches collaborate on a substantial list of outreach programs, although each program is housed at one congregation or the other and maintains its identity as such. They also share a pledge campaign committee. They worship together occasionally during holy week, Episcopal visits and for the pledge campaign kickoff. The two congregations have established a covenant that they renew every three years.

In 2017, a group formed to discern the future of the shared ministry. They looked at all options, including a merger, and after a yearlong discernment, decided not to merge. Instead, they chose to continue and grow the partnership they have built over the years. These two congregations offer a great model for the concept of vestries working together as a team.

***Benge Ambrogi** serves as the Canon for Mission Resources/COO for the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire. In this role, he is responsible for the operations of the Diocese, including financial oversight, the Bishop's staff and Diocesan properties. He began service with the EDoNH in 2002 as a volunteer with the Mission Resources Committee and later became a part-time Missioner for Congregational Initiatives. With Bachelors and Masters degrees in engineering from MIT, in the secular world Benge has 30 years of experience in the defense, medical, and robotics industries.*

#### **Resources:**

- [Collaborative Ministry Covenant](#), an ECF Vital Practices tool, submitted by Greg Syler
- [Shared Leadership](#) by Beckett Stokes, Vestry Papers, July 2014
- [Reimagining Leadership in Small and Rural Churches](#) by Kelsey Schuster, Susan Daughtry and Karen Olson, Vestry Papers, July 2017
- [With: Strengthening Congregations Through Partnerships](#) by Joe Duggan, ECF Vital Practices blog, July 18, 2012
- [Growing Our Church](#) by Estela López, Vestry Papers, July 2015

#### **Lo esencial para tener un Equipo de Liderazgo saludable**

Victor Conrado

Los Equipos de liderazgo\* en la Iglesia Episcopal son esenciales para el funcionamiento saludable de nuestras comunidades de fe. Nos recuerdan de la necesidad de tener liderazgo laical y clerical en nuestras congregaciones. Esto nos permite reconocer que cada integrante tiene una función y una responsabilidad única y que la forma de llevar a cabo esta labor es siendo y funcionando como equipo.

Trabajar en equipo es un proceso de coleccionar diferentes ideas y herramientas de varias personas para producir algo nuevo, algo que una sola persona no puede realizar sola. Es por esto por lo que es crucial que el liderazgo laical y clerical invierta, intencionalmente, tiempo, talento y tesoro a crear una buena dinámica de trabajo en equipo en su equipo de liderazgo.

Cada equipo tiene dos funciones esenciales: completar una tarea y mantener buenas y saludables relaciones entre los miembros. La claridad en estas dos funciones les permite a las personas que son miembros del equipo de liderazgo a tener un sentido de pertenencia y la seguridad de que su tiempo, talento y tesoro son bien utilizados. También motiva a los miembros de la congregación, alentando su interés en el trabajo del equipo de liderazgo.

Lo contrario es verdad también. Cuando no hay claridad en estas funciones, hay caos y desmotivación que es comunicado a la congregación. El resultado final es fatiga y disminución en la generosidad de la congregación en su tiempo, talento y tesoro ya que nadie quiere comprometerse en algo que no tiene futuro.

Una buena dinámica de trabajo en equipo en un equipo de liderazgo envuelve claridad en tres elementos esenciales: tareas, mantenimiento de relaciones mutuas y necesidades individuales. Estos tres elementos permiten que un equipo de liderazgo pueda funcionar de una forma efectiva y que pueda ser una fuente de vitalidad y energía en nuestras congregaciones.

### **Un vistazo a cada elemento esencial**

#### **Tareas: Nuestro propósito**

Un equipo es llamado a existir o es creado para cumplir una tarea. La tarea de la Junta Parroquial, Comité del Obispo o Comité Misionero es ser representante legal de la parroquia con respecto a la propiedad corporativa, pero esa definición no es limitada. Hay otras tareas que se pueden definir de acuerdo con el contexto en que dicha congregación se encuentra ubicada y ejerce su ministerio.

No hay que dar nada por hecho. Es importante que los miembros del comité de liderazgo se enteren y conozcan cual es su tarea primordial. Hay que tener mucha intencionalidad en tomar un tiempo para ayudar a los nuevos miembros a conocer sus tareas e invitar a los miembros que llevan más tiempo a que no se olviden la razón por la que están en este cuerpo tan importante en su comunidad de fe.

Esto se hace mejor durante un retiro anual para leer en conjunto e individualmente los reglamentos y leyes que son guían su ministerio. Otras oportunidades para reforzar la comprensión de los miembros sobre sus tareas y propósitos pueden incorporarse a las reuniones y otros eventos a lo largo del año.

#### **Mantenimiento de relaciones mutuas**

Las Juntas Parroquiales, los Comités del Obispo o Misioneros que son efectivos mantienen buenas relaciones entre sus miembros de tal manera que cada integrante se siente lo suficientemente seguro y libre para contribuir en el equipo. Nuestras relaciones interpersonales cambian constantemente. Cuando los miembros son conscientes de esto y se ayudan constantemente, es mas fácil cumplir con las tareas asignadas.

Una realidad común es que alguno/as de lo/as integrantes de los equipos de liderazgo preferirían trabajar individualmente en sus congregaciones en vez de ser parte de un equipo. A veces el/la

clero invitan a personas a ejercer una función basada en sus intereses y capacidades. Muchas de estas personas han sido reconocidas como líderes en sus respectivas congregaciones por un determinado proyecto o iniciativa que han llevado a cabo de forma exitosa. Muchas veces, esos mismos pueden debilitar el trabajo en equipo. Es imperativo que sepamos mantener nuestras relaciones interpersonales.

Es importante tomar tiempo para conocerse mutuamente y reconocer que todos los miembros traen dones diferentes a este cuerpo. Los rompehielos y otras actividades ayudan a fomentar la unión de equipos. Las herramientas para la conciencia personal, como las pruebas de personalidad, pueden ser una inversión importante para mantener las relaciones. Herramientas como el Indicador de personalidad de Myers-Briggs (o MBTI por sus siglas en inglés) pueden ayudarnos a conocernos y trabajar mejor como equipo.

### **Necesidades Personales**

Cada persona en los equipos de liderazgo trae consigo necesidades personales al equipo. Cuando esas necesidades personales no encuentran un ambiente favorable para ser realizadas, la persona busca las formas en que se puedan realizar algunas veces a detrimento de la función principal del equipo. Es aquí cuando vemos aparecer comportamientos no muy saludables que tienden a interrumpir el trabajo y las buenas relaciones del grupo.

Es importante ayudar a los miembros de los equipos de liderazgo a expresar sus necesidades personales. Estas necesidades pueden variar mucho y ser expresadas de diferente manera. Hay personas que necesitan que se reconozca su trabajo, o ser escuchadas. La necesidad común en muchas personas es el respeto. Es importante que el liderazgo laical y clerical esté consciente de estas necesidades durante las reuniones y fuera de ellas. El tener participación y voz son formas concretas de brindar respeto al papel que cada persona tiene en estos equipos.

### **El balance**

Es esencial mantener un equilibrio en estas tres funciones: Tarea, Relaciones y Necesidades Personales. Cuando una es descuidada las otras dos se afectan y el equipo tiende a no funcionar muy bien. Es importante que el liderazgo laical y clerical en una comunidad de fe invierta tiempo, talento y tesoro para mantener saludable su equipo de liderazgo. Nuestra inversión en la formación de estos líderes en nuestras congregaciones es una inversión para toda una congregación que fortalecerá su confianza en sus líderes y los motivará a querer ser parte del liderazgo en el futuro.

**Victor Conrado** es Asociado para los Ministerios de la Diócesis de Chicago. Antes de ser llamado a este puesto, fue Rector Asistente para Ministerios Latinos/Hispanos por seis años en la Iglesia Episcopal St. Mark, Glen Ellyn, IL. Victor fue un sacerdote misionero católico romano durante 11 años en Kenia, África. Fue recibido en la Iglesia Episcopal en 2011.

\* Nota: Usamos “equipo de liderazgo” para incluir a Juntas Parroquiales, Comités del Obispo y Comités Misioneros

### **Recursos:**

- [Orientación de la junta parroquial](#), un webinar ECF de Sandra Montes y Juan Ángel Monge, febrero 7, 2017
- [¿Selección apostólica? Cómo elegir miembros](#) de John Mark Wiggers, Vestry Papers, enero 2014
- [Descripciones del Trabajo de la Junta Parroquial](#), una herramienta de ECF Vital Practices
- [Episcopales Latinos](#)