



The Nehemiah Process

Class of 2008

Nehemiah 2008 approach underwent some radical restructuring. In previous years parish leadership teams were the focal point for activities of the Nehemiah Process. In the Nehemiah 2008 process, the Clergy and key Lay Leaders' personal and leadership development were the major focus. Participating clergy and their key lay leaders were assisted in discovering their strengths and how best to use their strengths to improve themselves, enhance their leadership skills and their overall parish ministry. Nelson Searcy's, *10 Systems of a Healthy Parish*, model was used as a building block for parishes to implement their **H**ospitality, **I**nvitation and **I**ncorporation (HII) Process and HII-BHAG (Big Holy Audacious Goal) event.

The Nehemiah Steering Committee developed a joint ministry with the Parish Finance and Assessment Committee (PF&A) and the Executive Board. The Executive Board resolved that parishes who received either Aid to Congregations or an Assessment Reduction in 2008 were required to participate in the Nehemiah 2008 Process. The purpose for their attendance was to receive tools and coaching on how to improve their parish's ministry within their unique setting. (Failure to agree to the monthly meetings or absence from two meetings would result in stopping their aid payments and/or their assessment returning to the Convention approved level). The hope is that through participation in the Nehemiah Process, the parish leadership would develop the necessary tools and skills to continue growing a healthy, vibrant, and exciting parish ministry that would be increasingly inviting to new members. Clergy who lead self-supporting congregations were also strongly encouraged to participate.

Clergy and Lay Leaders from 29 parishes participated in the Nehemiah Process. Ten of the parishes who participated self-supporting.

The number of sessions were increased. Four of the sessions (10:30pm-3:30pm) were offered at two different locations in the diocese (Holy Family Episcopal Church and Holy Spirit Episcopal Church) to accommodate the participating parishes from around the entire diocese. Two overnight retreats were also held.

Participant's expectations included utilization of the Nehemiah on-line database to record weekly AWA and Plate/Pledge, developing a 12-24 month parish calendar, discerning ones strengths via the *NOW, Finding Your Strengths*, developing a Personal Ministry Plan, developing a parish HII Plan (Hospitality, Invitation, & Incorporation) and a HII-BHAG (Big Holy Audacious Goal) plus five reading assignments.

External Factors Impacting Parish Ministry:

- Economic Downturn
- Exodus due to rising cost of housing, property insurances, and low wages as aftermath of hurricanes

Phase I – Based on the 10 Systems of a Healthy Church

- **January 23/February 14, 2008 - Introduction to Nehemiah 2008**

2008 Goals

- *The Ten Systems of a Healthy Church*
- Clergy discover their Gifts (Strengths Finder) and develop a Personal Ministry Plan and with a goal to grow One Ministry Level
- Focus on Hospitality, Invitation, Incorporation (HII Process and the HII-BHAG)
- Establish Criteria to measure progress (AWA, Plate/Pledge, Leadership Development)
- Create and train a Parish Leadership Team
- Develop and maintain an 18-24 month Parish Calendar

March 12/13, 2008

- *NOW, Discover Your Strengths*
- Personal Ministry Plan
- *Parish Ministry Plan: 10 Systems of a Healthy Church – Nelson Searcy*

May 19- 21, 2008 - Overnight Retreat (Lake Placid Retreat Center)

- Personal Ministry Plan
- Elements of the HII Process
- Parish Development of HII plan
- Newcomer's Class - Annabel Hobbs
- HII –BHAG Concept Introduced

August 27/28, 2008

- 5 Primary Concepts of Nehemiah Process to Address AWA Decline
 1. Nehemiah as a Model of Strategically Developing a Healthier Church
 2. Clergy Personal Ministry Plan – Build on Strengths, Manage Weaknesses
 3. Parish Ministry Plan – Focus on 1) What Happens on Sunday and 2) 12/24 Month Calendar
 4. HII Process and HII-BHAG as it Relates to the *10 Systems of a Healthy Church*
 5. Recruitment, Formation and Training of Leadership Team
- HII –BHAG Concept Developed More Completely
- Nehemiah On-line Database

September 23/ 24, 2008: Overnight Retreat (Duncan Conference Center)

- The Nuts and Bolts of Effective Stewardship – Bill Wrenn
- Church Economics –Archdeacon Tom Bruttell
- Time Management Best Practices – Bob Moore

October 22/23, 2008

- Introduction of 2009 Letters of Agreement (LOAs) –Archdeacon Tom Bruttell
- HII BHAG Reports
- How to Look Ahead on Church Finances – Archdeacon Tom Bruttell

December 10, 2008

- Christmas Party