



## **ECF Fellows: Innovating in The Episcopal Church July/August 2022**

### **The Role of Scholarship in The Episcopal Church**

It's been a while since the academic track of the Fellowship Partners Program has been put on hold, but in October of 2021, the Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF) announced a one-year pause in the Academic Track of the Fellowship Partners Program to review program goals and the needs of the Church. The last hold was in 2006, the year that the Ministry Track was introduced.

Looking back on the list of ECF Fellows, it is easy to see that brilliant minds are engaged in academic endeavors and making significant contributions to scholarship that directly affects The Episcopal Church. While that quality is clear, our hope is that this pause in 2022 will help us review the goals of the program – making sure they are clear and attainable and that they impact the Church now and into the future.

To that end, surveys were sent out to all ECF Fellows and program stakeholders. Below, we share our findings from the responses we have received.

### **Scholarship matters in a changing world and Church**

The understanding that scholarship stands to strengthen The Episcopal Church as it responds to the changing contexts of the Church and theological education seems universal. More than three-quarters of the survey respondents see scholars in the role of forming the next generation of clergy, connecting church practices and theology, and casting vision for the Church. While seldom in the spotlight, Church affiliated scholars influence not only leadership and practices of the Church, but they also help create a vision for its future.

The Episcopal Church is a denomination that prides itself on scholarship and the invitation to bring your full self into a worshipping community. That means not only your spiritual identity, but your intellectual identity as well. Several respondents commented on the history of scholarship, noting that “we are an intellectual tradition,” and “our Anglican tradition has always honored learning.” One respondent even went so far as to say that “the Church has always relied on intellectual leadership for theological vision, especially during times of massive change.”

There is no doubt that the Church is standing in a world facing immeasurable changes. Our ability to adapt in the face of those changes will determine our ability to continue to thrive as communities of faith, as well as a larger body of believers. The importance of listening to scholars will become more apparent as we embark on adaptations to traditions and to our attitudes and respect for our historical roots.

### **Needed: Encouragement and support for scholars**

In order to allow scholarship to be an integral piece of the Episcopal identity, the Church needs to find ways to continue to foster and support theological scholarship. This means financial support like ECF's fellowship, but goes well beyond that. There seems to be a desire to reinforce the intellectual backing of the practices of the church.

One survey respondent stated, "It is quite shocking to me that the Anglican tradition has such a strong scholarly focus that seems to have dissipated in recent years." In the face of major changes, instead of leaning into the theological scholarship of these individuals, there is a sense that the Church has pulled away and broadened the gap. That individual went on to note, "It is difficult for scholarship to strengthen the Church when the Church doesn't value scholarship."

While the values of the Church are more easily defined as on a spectrum, it is easy to feel the lack of support or acknowledgement this individual expressed on behalf of the Church. Another Fellow pointed out, "There are a lot of well-trained and talented academic theologians in the [Episcopal Church]. Too few of them have opportunities or the platform to share their work with the body of Christ."

This is where ECF has the capacity to step in and re-write the narrative for scholars and the Episcopal Church.

### **Looking to the future**

As we look towards the future of the Church, ECF and the Fellows program, the possibilities are endless. Official reports will offer suggestions for the future of the academic track in the Fellowship Partners program later, but here we are sharing some thoughts as we sit with survey responses and begin our recommendations for the future of the program.

The Fellowship Partners Program is only as strong as our Fellows, so recruitment for the Academic Track will need to continue to be at the forefront of our conversations. Suggestions for recruiting sources include existing institutions, including but not limited to Episcopal seminaries, divinity schools and/or Anglican studies programs, as well as current and past Fellows. Other ideas include seeking Fellows investigating particular topics, as well as continued consideration for diversity in recruitment. There were also recommendations for post-fellowship support.

One fellow said “This is a really important program for the next generation of Episcopal scholars.” We couldn’t agree more.

***Sally Benton** serves full-time in parish ministry at St. Paul’s in Chattanooga, Tennessee, as the Director of Children’s Formation. She has a passion for forming young people and their families and building community. Sally has recently joined the ECF team and is helping to connect ECF Fellows with each other and to offer opportunities to share their work with the broader church.*

#### **Resources:**

- [Lucinda Mosher and Building Bridges](#) by ECFVP editorial team, Vestry Papers, July 2022
- [Liturgy Notes](#) by Lisa G. Fischbeck, an ECF Vital Practices blog, August 15, 2019
- [Rethinking Clergy Education](#) by Gary Shilling, Vestry Papers, September 2016

#### **Flight Adjustments in a Changing Church**

Ten years ago, I began a doctoral degree with twin desires: to learn and write about Anglicanism in its global context, and to further a vocation in theological education. The two desires were related. In travels in the Anglican Communion before the doctorate, I spent time in seminaries and theological colleges and delighted in the thoughtful, hopeful, creative and critical engagement with the reality of the church I found in them. I began to understand my vocation to include a connection to these vital centers of church life. The support provided by the Episcopal Church Foundation fellowship allowed me to complete a doctoral degree and take steps into the work of theological education. But it hasn’t always worked out the way I anticipated.

#### **Church leadership and the Millennium Falcon**

I have recently become fond of describing institutional church leadership these days as [being akin to flying the Millennium Falcon](#), the bucket-of-bolts spaceship piloted by Han Solo and friends in the Star Wars movies. What stands out to me about the Falcon in those movies is the way it suddenly, frequently and abruptly makes changes to its course, first flying one way, then flipping over, then zooming through the Death Star and so on. In this day and age, church leaders are, I believe, in a similar position. We inherit a great stock of resources – buildings, wealth, relationships – that are suited for the church in a previous era. Our role today is to flip, twist, turn and somehow transform these resources so that they can serve the church that is emerging today.

For the last five years, I’ve served as principal of Montreal Diocesan Theological College (widely known simply as “Dio”). We are preparing for our 150th anniversary next year and for most of that time we’ve had an affiliation with McGill University. We also work closely with two other denominational colleges in an ecumenical consortium. Our students are jointly enrolled in

programs at McGill and in our consortium. It is a complex institutional structure held together, at its best moments, by goodwill and a commitment to consensus. But it's also a structure that is perhaps best suited for the late 19th or early 20th centuries, when it originated.

### **Turns and course changes in the world of theological education today**

Part of my work over these last five years has been thinking about how we are called to restructure ourselves. That has meant lots of work with our partner colleges, particularly the United Theological College (UTC). We've recently reached an agreement that will see UTC continue a process of winding itself down while Dio takes on new programmatic commitments to ensure that ordination training for the United Church of Canada continues in our consortium. Reaching that agreement has tested all my skills and made me fall back on a piece of advice I often give my students: "the key to success in ministry is being willing to ask for help."

We've also launched several new programs that serve the needs of a changing church. One of the highlights of my time in this role has been seeing the immense interest from people in the church in our online, open enrollment courses. Well before the pandemic made everyone familiar with Zoom, we were using the platform to share congregational-based adult education courses with communities across Canada and the United States.

It's been such a treat to see how people in churches are able to connect with the college and realize how much their walk with Jesus can grow by engaging with the resources we have to offer. We continue to take steps towards new programs as well, including the recent launch of [a summer internship and vocational discernment program](#) for young people of faith from across Canada.

The work I am doing in this role is not work I would have imagined myself doing ten years ago. But it is energizing (also exhausting), creative (also challenging), and delightful (also difficult). It is what flying the Millennium Falcon through the world of theological education looks like today.

### **Global, cultural diversity, abroad and at home**

But what of my interest in Anglicanism in its global, cultural diversity? That, after all, has long been a key engine of my vocation. I did revise my dissertation and [publish it as a book](#) and have been grateful for the feedback and connections that has permitted me. But a regret of my current role is that it leaves me less time for the kind of writing that I would like to be doing. I have an interesting project on the Anglican Church in Rwanda to share more broadly at some point, and there is less time for the kind of travel I once did to connect with Anglicans around the world.

This is where I am realizing what a gift it is to live in a world-class city like Montreal. Montreal is a city of immense cultural diversity. While there is a secularization narrative that is strong here, you don't need to look far to find diverse and dynamic religious expression, including in the

Anglican Church of Canada. Shortly before the pandemic, the church I attend had a service of welcome for those who had joined the church in recent months. Of the twelve new people standing at the front of the church that day, not a single one was born in Canada or the United States. They were from Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa.

I had a vision then of what it means for people from “every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” to worship the Lamb on the throne (Revelation 7:9). It hasn’t always been easy for this congregation to come to terms with its intercultural reality. It demands all of our faithfulness and all of our creativity. But it is what Christianity looks like today and will continue to look like into the future.

It is a different shape than I imagined a decade ago, but in the interplay of Anglicanism, cultural diversity and theological education, I continue to find vocational satisfaction.

*The Rev. Canon **Jesse Zink** is principal of Montreal Dio and canon theologian in the Diocese of Montreal. He is the author of *Backpacking through the Anglican Communion, A Faith for the Future*, among other books.*

#### **Resources:**

- [Whatever you do now will prepare you for what you can do in the future](#) by Audra Abt, an ECF Vital Practices blog, July 20, 2020
- [Breaking Down Walls](#) by David Romanik, Vestry Papers, July 2020
- [Mission of Union and Integration](#) by Daniel Vélez-Rivera, Vestry Papers, May 2011
- [Navajo Millennial](#) by Gerlene Gordy, an ECF Vital Practices blog, June 20, 2019

#### **Truth, Lies, and Ethics: A Theological Journey**

Like many people, I’m intrigued by the ethics of lying. What does it mean to tell a lie? Is lying always wrong? Unlike most people’s experience, however, my search for answers to these questions led me to the thirteenth century.

#### **Searching Aquinas for the truth about lies**

I’m a theological ethicist by training, and in my work I frequently draw upon the thought of Thomas Aquinas, the thirteenth-century theologian and Dominican friar. I first encountered Aquinas’s writing on truthfulness when I was graduate student. What immediately struck me was the way in which he addresses lying as a moral problem. Unlike all the contemporary authors I had read, he doesn’t begin his analysis by considering whether lying is ever permissible. He doesn’t start by trying to answer the classical moral dilemmas, such as what one ought to do if an intruder asks if there’s a refugee hiding in the house. Rather, the starting

point of his analysis is the claim that truthfulness is a moral virtue, and from this it follows that lying is one of several speech acts that are incompatible with that virtue.

I was intrigued by Aquinas's approach to the morality of lying because it was unlike anything else I had encountered in contemporary Christian ethics or moral philosophy. There's no shortage of scholarly literature on Aquinas's views about lying, so I eagerly sought out interpreters who (I had hoped) would help me gain a better understanding of his arguments. Instead, what I found in the secondary literature was several conflicting interpretations – none of which seemed to reflect Aquinas's actual views.

One thing that nearly every author had in common, however, was the conviction that, according to Aquinas, lying is always wrong. This means that there must be a universal moral norm against lying, and it ought never be done under any circumstances. Yet, these authors couldn't agree on what exactly made lying intrinsically wrong. Some argued that lying is wrong because it violates the natural function of human language. Others argued that lying is intrinsically unjust or that it is opposed to the basic goods of human society. These divergent interpretations generated further points of disagreement, including differing views on what it means to tell a lie.

### **Aquinas is more concerned with truthfulness and our humanity than the immorality of lies**

It seemed to me that everyone was missing the point. The key insight of Aquinas's approach is that truthfulness is a moral virtue. This claim is grounded in his broader theory of virtue and what it means to be a human being, but it gives us a different starting point for considering the morality of lying. Truthfulness, according to Aquinas, is related to the virtue of justice, but it's not the same thing. There are subtle but important features that are unique to the virtue of truthfulness. Many lies that we tell – lies to make ourselves look better, or to avoid hurting someone's feelings, or perhaps even to save someone's life – aren't unjust, even if there is something disordered about them.

It's also not quite right to say that lying is wrong because it's opposed to the function of language – as if language could be understood apart from a specific account of what it means to be human. If we want to understand what's wrong about lying, we need a moral concept of truthfulness. In other words, we need an account of what it means for humans to use language virtuously.

I concluded that a new interpretation of Aquinas's views was sorely needed, and I might as well be the one to write it. So I wrote a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Jean Porter at the University of Notre Dame. Along the way, I published portions of my research in book chapters and journal articles, and I presented papers at academic conferences. Most recently, I completed a book manuscript, *Lying and Truthfulness: A Thomistic Perspective*, forthcoming from Cambridge University Press. My research continues to generate new lines of inquiry, and I can't imagine ever feeling that I've exhausted this fascinating topic.

## **Truthfulness is more than refraining from lying**

One of the great advantages of Aquinas's understanding of truthfulness is that it illuminates so many aspects of the moral life, in both its personal and social dimensions. For example, it helps us to see that being truthful requires much more than refraining from lying. Aquinas explains that the truthful person's words are clothed with "due circumstances," meaning that they know when and how to say the truth. They also know when it's appropriate not to say anything at all.

Lying isn't even the only sin against truthfulness. Aquinas also lists boasting, mock-modesty and nonverbal dissimulation among the vices opposed to truthfulness. This rich analysis invites us to consider additional ways one might sin against truthfulness, and in my book, I propose that *truth indifference* is rife in the present day. As with lying, truth indifference involves a misalignment between what we say and what we actually think, but rather than asserting a distinct falsehood, indifference to truth means that we simply don't *care* if our words are true. We say them because we have some other objective in mind, whether it's to manipulate others or to make people like us more.

## **Truth and lies and health care**

Since finishing the book manuscript, I've begun to think more about the implications of this account of truthfulness for questions that come up in applied ethics. For example, there is vast literature in health care ethics on the question of whether it's ever permissible to lie to patients. It may seem that there are some cases where lying would be not only harmless but beneficial. Perhaps a patient who is terminally ill might be able to live her final days more peacefully if she (wrongfully) believes that she has a good chance of recovery.

But proposals like these don't simply ask us to consider the effectiveness of certain lies; they also assume a great deal about the nature of reality. In the Christian tradition, the concept of a good death includes adequate preparation for meeting one's Maker. As we pray in the Great Litany, "from dying suddenly and unprepared, Good Lord, deliver us" (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 149). Being deceived about your impending death hardly counts as adequate preparation!

In scenarios like these, the practice of health care leaves little room for neutrality. The intimate relationship between *truthfulness* and *truth* is brought into sharp relief, and health care ethicists need to take a more honest look at the complexities of this moral question. At the moment, I'm working on an article that addresses these complexities, and of course I'm drawing on my previous research on truthfulness and the thought of Aquinas, but I'm also extending it into new territory.

As a professor of theological ethics, I don't have the answers to all our complex moral questions, but I do have a calling to think through these questions within and on behalf of the Church. I'm profoundly grateful for organizations like the Episcopal Church Foundation that enable scholars like me to pursue this sacred calling.

*The Rev. Dr. **Stewart Clem** (ECF Fellow '17) is Assistant Professor of Moral Theology and Director of the Ashley-O'Rourke Center for Health Ministry Leadership at Aquinas Institute of Theology. He lives with his family in St. Louis, Missouri, where he also serves as Priest Associate at the Church of St. Michael and St. George.*

#### **Resources:**

- [Words Create Worlds](#) by Alan Bentrup, an ECF Vital Practices blog, January 16, 2017
- [The Truth Will Have To Do](#) by Erin Weber-Johnson, an ECF Vital Practices blog, April 1, 2014
- [A Practical Theology of Episcopal Evangelism](#) by Steve Pankey, Andy Doyle, David Gortner, Nick Knisely and Stephanie Spellers, Vestry Papers, May 2017
- [Lucinda Mosher and Building Bridges](#) by ECFVP editorial team, Vestry Papers, July 2022

#### **Center for Chinese Congregations in LA and Beyond**

Li Tim-Oi Center was established by the Church of Our Saviour, San Gabriel, and the Diocese of Los Angeles in 2014 to address an “evangelistic emergency” that arose with the waves of Chinese immigrants over last few decades. Between 1980 and 2014, the population of Chinese immigrants in the United States grew nearly seven-fold, from 812,178 to 5.4 million. With China replacing Mexico as the top country for sending immigrants to the United States, our Chinese ministry is faced with new challenges and wonderful opportunities. It is imperative that the Episcopal Church respond to the needs of the Chinese Americans, and especially newly arrived immigrants.

The Center in LA is named after the first female priest in the Anglican Communion, the Reverend Florence Tim-Oi Li. She was ordained in 1944 to meet the “evangelistic emergency” presented then by waves of war victims rushing into Macao from mainland China during the Japanese invasion. Bishop R.O. Hall, who ordained Li, compared her with Cornelius in the Acts of the Apostles. Her courage, bravery and faithfulness in taking up the challenge of her age means a lot to us, setting a good example as we carry out the Chinese ministry of the Episcopal Church today.



#### **Meeting the need for leadership training in the Episcopal Church’s Chinese Ministry**

Because the Church’s Chinese ministry had a severe shortage of lay and ordained leaders, the Li Tim-Oi Center began offering lay leadership training courses right from the start to raise up lay and ordained leaders. From 2014 and up to the Covid-19 pandemic, Li Tim-Oi Center offered



nine courses to more than one hundred students. Courses included: Liturgy and the Book of Common Prayer; Church History and Evangelism; Biblical Studies 1: Introduction to the Bible; Christian Education/Adult Formation; Lay Pastoral Care; Church Administration; Biblical Studies 2: The Geopolitical, Economic and Cultural Background of the Bible; Christian Worship; and Music and Worship.

These courses were culturally and linguistically sensitive to the needs of the Church's Chinese ministry. They were taught in Chinese, since many lay leaders were new immigrants and their English skills were not strong. Designed specifically for Chinese ministry, the course content would not have been taught in any Episcopal seminary. For instance, the course on Church History and Evangelism devoted one-fifth of its time on the history of Christian churches in China and on the Chinese churches in the U.S. The Christian Worship and Music and Worship courses dealt intensively with Chinese culture, Chinese music and hymns in Christian worship.

### **Online classes and social media help the Center expand its reach**

The COVID-19 pandemic prevented classes in the beginning, but when people became used to Zoom meetings, we realized that it was an opportunity to start online classes. At that point, we were ready to make video recordings of the lectures and to hold classes online. This also allowed us to offer our courses to the Chinese congregations in dioceses other than in the Diocese of Los Angeles. When we offered our first online course on Liturgy and Book of Common Prayer to the wider Chinese congregations last year, lay leaders from the Diocese of Long Island were able to join our classes via Zoom.

As hate crimes against the Asian people, particularly the Chinese, surged during recent years, Li Tim-Oi Center offered a timely online course on Racial Equality, Social Justice and Building up a Beloved Community. The course emphasized how the Chinese people, who are often victims of racism, should respond to this evil with Christian love and proper actions, instead of fear and anger, along with ways to build a beloved community to prevent and overcome social injustice. With the same purpose, the Center is making a series of short educational videos on Racial Equality, Social Justice and Building a Beloved Community. They will be soon offered to the Chinese community in the U.S.

### **Pilot program uses social media to ease immigrant isolation and build community**

Apart from lay leadership training, Li Tim-Oi Center explored another pilot program, which is reaching out to the Chinese people in neighboring communities and building up a faith community by utilizing social media. Today, social media is indispensable in our lives, and that is particularly the case for new immigrants, who have moved to a foreign country where they don't have many family members and friends. Almost all the Chinese immigrants from mainland China use a popular Chinese social media called WeChat. In the past, Li Tim-Oi Center took advantage of one of its functions, The People Nearby, to reach out to Chinese immigrants and inform them about the programs of our church, as well as to invite them to the worship

and events of our church community. By doing so, Li Tim-Oi Center built up a Chinese congregation of more than 60 members in about two years.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, before we were able to live-stream our worship services, we pre-recorded them and posted the video in our church WeChat group, so our Chinese members could join our worship at home. One of the most exciting outcomes was that we were able to send the video of our worship service to China, where a group of Christians faithfully followed it every week.

Li Tim-Oi Center has raised one English and Chinese bilingual ordained priest and another one is on the way. We will continue to offer lay leadership training courses to raise more leaders for the Church. And we are planning more courses relevant to the Chinese community, such as liturgies for Chinese festivals and Christian Ethics sensitive to the Chinese culture. It is our desire to better serve the Chinese congregations in the Episcopal Church.

*The Reverend **Thomas Ni** was ordained in 2007 as a deacon and 2008 as a priest, and is one of a few priests in the Episcopal Church from Mainland China. Shortly after ordination, he started a Mandarin-speaking congregation and has since been ministering to Mandarin-speaking Chinese immigrants, first at St. Edmund's Episcopal Church, San Marino, California, and now at the Church of Our Saviour, San Gabriel, California. Thomas also serves as the Executive Director of Li Tim-Oi Center, which explores creative ways to develop Chinese ministry. The Center's Chinese lay training program, launched in 2014, aims at helping not only Chinese congregations in the Los Angeles Diocese, but also all Chinese congregations in the U.S.*

#### **Resources:**

- [A New Gathering for Asian Pacific American Spirituality](#) by Yein Kim, Vestry Papers, March 2021
- [Focus on Chinese Ministry in the Episcopal Church](#) an ECF Vital Practices webinar presented by Thomas Ni, December 15, 2015
- [A New Paradigm for Reaching U.S. Latinos](#) by Albert R. Rodriguez, Vestry Papers, July 2022
- [Learning To Be the People of God—In Two Languages](#) by Sandra T. Montes, Vestry Papers, January 2018

#### **A New Paradigm for Reaching U.S. Latinos**

Albert R. Rodriguez

It is beneficial to know my background as a third-generation Mexican American born in San Antonio, Texas, with strong cultural and linguistic ties to my Northern Mexican roots. I feel comfortable in my identity as a hyphenated, acculturated *American*, a hybridized consciousness

that has been distilled and squeezed through the symbiotic cultural struggles of the Tejano Mexican American experience. This bifurcated identity has also produced a sense of “liminality,” – living in the hyphen – which gives me the ease of culturally navigating back and forth on the English-Spanish spectrum. There is no doubt that I need both cultures and languages to be psychologically and culturally whole. Although I was raised in the Mexican Westside of San Antonio, my Peace Corps stint in Venezuela instilled in me a strong sense of *Latinidad*, a pan-Latino awareness, which facilitates my interaction with the multiple U.S. Latino nationalities represented across the country and especially in Latino ministry.

### **Evolutionary Impact of the Fellows Designation and Research Project**

Being named a Fellow through the ECF Fellows Program in 2013 proved to be a major catalyst in my developing an expanded and more inclusive evangelization concept which I call *Transcultural Latino Ministry*. My Fellows project was premised on the notion that our traditional Episcopal Latino ministry has been too narrow in its evangelistic scope since it does not generally include the American-born, U.S. acculturated and English-prone Latinos. My Fellows designation and related project research also resulted in a series of assignments and the rise of a ministry specialization that has enabled me to become an ardent advocate for expanding our traditional Latino ministry to include all the Latino generations, foreign-born and U.S. born. Fortuitously, the Fellows designation also opened the door for my becoming an adjunct instructor at the Seminary of the Southwest in 2014. A subsequent appointment followed, being named as the seminary’s interim Director of Latino/Latinx Studies, which provided an excellent opportunity over the course of three years to broaden the seminary’s concept of Latino ministry to include the so-called Later Generation Latinos (“LGLs.”)

Most notable in the development of my multigenerational Latino ministry was my partnership with the Rev. Canon Anthony Guillén, head of the Episcopal Office of Latino/Hispanic Ministries. Through the work done by Guillén in producing the 2009 publication, *The Episcopal Church’s Strategic Vision for Reaching Latino’s/Hispanics*, he also had concluded that TEC must expand its Latino ministry to be inclusive of all the country’s Latino generations. This partnership has proved to be fruitful over the last eight years, having now developed a variety of nationally offered, Latino ministry competency training courses and seminars aimed at seminaries, diocesan bishops and staff, clergy and lay leaders. Interestingly, this interaction with all types of practitioners in Latino ministry has further exposed the reality that our traditional Latino ministry is not culturally and linguistically adept at reaching the U.S. acculturated and English-speaking Latinos in the U.S. What is also interesting is that the other Episcopal ethnic ministries – Black, Asian and Indigenous – are also acutely aware of the challenges of their respective generational divides and the corresponding impact of their acculturation patterns and dynamics.

### **The Need for a Parallel Track in Latino Ministry**

This article suggesting that a new paradigm of Latino evangelism is now upon us should not be misconstrued as questioning the need for this Spanish-speaking ministry or the support

desperately needed by the traditional Latino ministry. The reality is that for the foreseeable future, we will still need pastors with the cultural and language competency to minister to the Spanish-speaking, first generation Latinos who form part of the Episcopal Latino “Ethnic Church.” Another fact is that the traditional Latino Ministry was never expected to reach out to the English-speaking Latinos/as in the general population. In truth, the existing Latino ministry paradigm is not culturally equipped for reaching out to these at-large LGLs. Regrettably, the reality is that the U.S-born Latinos are neither evangelized by the Episcopal Latino congregations, nor the “Anglo” or English-speaking congregations who predictably have very little interaction with the English-speaking Latinos.

In addition, a cursory peek at the socio-demographic realities surrounding the U.S. Latino population uncovers the following:

- Since 2001, there has been a dramatic and continued decline in Latino migration to the U.S. Conversely, we see the predominance of the native-born Latino population now being the driving force in the increase of the Latino population.
- Later Generation Latinos make up two-thirds of the nearly 61 million Spanish-surnamed persons in the country. This means that two out of three Latinos in the U.S. are born in this country and speak primarily English or are English-dominant.
- English is now the lingua franca among the US-born Latino/as, and their levels of acculturation are reflected in their very visible U.S. lifestyles and their steady upward trend of social and economic mobility.
- There is a significant increase in Latino/as marrying or partnering with non-Latino/as, a pattern that doubles as it goes up the generational ladder.
- Episcopal Latino clergy are now intensely feeling the pressure from their congregational US-born children and adolescent youth to include English in their congregational and worship life. This linguistic and cultural tension is felt more acutely among those mature Latino congregations who have second and third generation children and youth born into the congregation.
- Without question, analysis of the cultural/linguistic paradigm shifts now evident within the U.S. Latino world can only lead to one striking conclusion: The existing Episcopal Latino ministry paradigm must accommodate itself to a Transcultural Latino Ministry whose vision and strategy is to develop two parallel ministry tracks: 1) the traditional Spanish-speaking ministry aimed at Latino immigrants who come from Latin America and 2) the emerging, ministry focusing on the U.S.-born, English-speaking Latinos who can more easily be evangelized by “Anglo” Episcopal congregations, especially those who make the deliberate decision to become more multicultural in their ministry scope and worship life.

*The Rev. Albert R. Rodriguez has been involved for the past thirty-plus years in Episcopal Hispanic/Latino ministry on local, diocesan and national levels. His MDiv is from Seminary of the Southwest, where he currently is an occasional adjunct instructor. He previously served three and a half years as SSW’s Acting Director of the Latino/Hispanic Studies program in Austin. Fr. Al also was a founding director of the current El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission in Austin, a*

*non-profit, medical and human needs ministry now in its 35th year of operation. His parish background includes his 15-year tenure as rector of a dual language parish in Austin, which led to his receiving grants from the Episcopal Church Foundation's Fellowship Partners Program and the Episcopal Evangelism Society to research the changing dynamics of traditional Latino ministry. His specialty now focuses on the context of Latino ministry within the transcultural and multi-generational reality of the U.S. acculturated Latino. He describes this reality in his latest publication, "[Trans-cultural Latino Evangelism: An Emerging New Paradigm](#)," published in the 2019 fall issue of *Anglican Theological Review*. Currently, Al serves on the teaching team of the Episcopal Latino Ministry Competency course sponsored by the Office of Latino/Hispanic Ministries, as well as for its sister seminar, *New Camino*.*

#### **Resources:**

- [Celebrating Latin@/Hispanic Ministry and Leadership](#) by Anthony Guillén, Vestry Papers, September 2021
- [Reaching the American Born Latino](#), an ECF Vital Practices webinar presented by Al Rodriguez, March 25, 2014
- [Mission of Union and Integration](#) by Daniel Vélez-Rivera, Vestry Papers, May 2011
- [Web Conference: Out of Many, One](#), an ECF Vital Practices tool by Rosa Lindahl Mallow

#### **Alianza de Mujeres con Amor**

Daniel Vélez Rivera

In 2007, the Rev. Daniel Vélez Rivera became one of the first Transformational Ministry Fellows sponsored by the Episcopal Church Foundation. With that ECF funding, he created a pilot ministry designed and facilitated by Deacon Ema Rosero-Nordalm (Diocese of Massachusetts) called Abuelas, Madres y Más (Grandmothers, Mothers and More). It has been fifteen years since the first multigenerational spirituality, support and co-mentoring group for Latinas raising children was born in Salem, Massachusetts, and in September 2021, the most recent group was launched at St. Gabriel's ~ San Gabriel in Leesburg, Virginia, where Daniel serves as vicar. The women there follow the same principles as their predecessors, to help participants recognize and share the invaluable wisdom and spiritual resources that they have as mothers, grandmothers and caregivers raising children (their own or another mother's child).

#### **A ministry model for mothers, grandmothers and women raising children**

Ema was a recently retired Spanish language professor at Boston University when she joined Daniel to help plant an Episcopal Latino ministry that was launched at Grace Episcopal Church and subsequently moved to St. Peter's in Salem. Prior to serving as Episcopal clergy, they had volunteered as public health outreach workers for the Latino community during the HIV/AIDS crisis. Their community work inspired conversations that led Ema to create the first curriculum

for Abuelas, Madres y Más – adopting the popular education methodology of Paulo Freire into her program.

With his new Social Work and Divinity training behind him, Daniel was eager for his nascent Latino ministry at St. Peter's ~ San Pedro to become part of the fabric of the community. He and Ema found their first community connections with the mothers, grandmothers and women raising children. In addition to creating a network of mentors and companions there, Ema and Daniel hoped that Abuelas, Madres y Más would become a ministry model for the Church. They hoped and dreamt that a ministry founded on oral tradition, faith, child-rearing and companionship could be duplicated in congregations, especially those with Latino ministries. It was a way for women new to the Episcopal Church to feel part of and belong to a "comunidad."

### **A new chapter begins at St. Gabriel's ~ San Gabriel**

In 2020, at the beginning of the Covid pandemic, St. Gabriel's ~ San Gabriel received the first of many grants from private and government sources to provide emergency Covid rental assistance for undocumented and documented people in the County. Daniel realized that many of the most vulnerable applicants were single female-led households, and most of them undocumented Latinas. So, he asked Deacon Ema to partner with the St. Gabriel's ~ San Gabriel Community Education Ministry director, Eva María Torres Herrera, to launch a new chapter of Abuelas, Madres y Más. Nine Latinas, five parishioners and four from the broader community, were trained in mentorship and in group facilitation; the largest group of Abuelas, Madres y mass facilitators that Ema has ever had. This group of women chose their own name: Alianza de Mujeres con Amor (Alliance of Women with Love).

After three months of virtual training during the pandemic, the "mentoras facilitadoras" offered the first series of "charlas" (dialogues) at two locations with sixteen participants. As with every group before this one, the first charlas are designed to build group cohesion and trust. And, like all of the other Abuelas, Madres y Más groups formed over the years, these women decided by consensus what topics they wished to explore as multigenerational madres, abuelas and more. The themes included the physical, spiritual and emotional aspects of their lives – life skills, including something as practical as communicating with the predominantly English-speaking children in their care. A constant from the mentor facilitator's during these "charlas" is acknowledging the participants' wisdom and their reliance on an ever-present and loving God who provides guidance, inspiration and the strength to succeed in raising and supporting their families.



### **A ministry of love, shared across the U.S. and beyond**

Something new and different from other mentor facilitators formed by Ema in the past, was the desire of these women to launch new groups with other Latino ministries in the Diocese of Virginia. Eva María, who is also a vestry member of St. Gabriel's ~ San Gabriel, says, "It's a ministry of love and must be shared, this is how we are present to grow and love our community." She says that what inspired her to help launch this ministry was Daniel's willingness to trust and say yes to new opportunities for the well-being of people in the community. Saying yes to the Holy Spirit is how we are spiritual companions to one another and how we become part of the fabric of our community!

La Alianza continues to follow a well-proven evangelistic tool modeled by Christ: oral tradition. In dialogue, the participants understand that they matter, have agency, have wisdom and are valued. They no longer have to be so isolated as immigrants or as women raising children in a new country and context where their gifts, talents and dignity are often disregarded, as well as the truth that they are contributing members of God's community. The participants continue discovering that the love of God shines through them, and with an acknowledgment of their spiritual wisdom they too are becoming mentors and spiritual companions to others.

Ema's curriculum model has been shared in and out of the church across the United States (thanks to the network of congregations that have participated in Nuevo Amanecer, the Latino Hispanic Ministry gathering of the Episcopal Church), Central and South America, the Caribbean, Africa (South Sudan) and now at St. Gabriel's ~ San Gabriel in Leesburg, Virginia.

*The Rev. Daniel Vélez-Rivera is passionate about establishing loving Christian communities with and for all people. His congregational ministry focus is planting and redeveloping existing Episcopal congregations, enabling them to invite in the Latino population in the neighborhoods around them and create sustainable, integrated, dual-language congregations where their communities worship God in two languages (English and Spanish). As vicar of Saint Gabriel's ~ San Gabriel Episcopal Church in Leesburg, Virginia, he is committed to nourishing and strengthening the community's call to serve others as Christ's ambassadors. When St. Gabriel's launched its Hispanic Ministry in 2014, it became the first bilingual, multicultural and intentionally inclusive Episcopal congregation in Loudoun County.*

*Daniel is married to Parker Gallagher, his partner of twenty-seven years, who introduced him to the Episcopal Church in 1996. In his free time he enjoys being with family and friends, practicing Bikram Yoga, "attempting" to play golf, cooking (and eating), gardening, traveling, listening and seeing the world around him, and learning from others.*

#### **Resources:**

- [Multigenerational Reading Camp](#) by Allison Duvall, Vestry Papers, July 2011
- [Sisters in Ministry](#) by Alejandra Trillos, an ECF Vital Practices blog, July 16, 2020
- [Showing up for the Resurrection](#) by Anna Olson, an ECF Vital Practices blog, April 1, 2018
- [Together as Brothers and Sisters We Go to Meet the Lord](#) by Ema Rosero-Nordalm, an ECF Vital Practices blog, October 3, 2014

#### **Charity and Solidarity Must Come Together**

Derek Minno-Bloom

In 2017, I became an ECF fellow in the ministry track. The goal was to develop an intersectional Food Justice ministry and transform Trinity Church Asbury Park's charitable soup kitchen and pantry into a social justice mission that would be in solidarity with Asbury's community members experiencing systemic injustices. Today, five years later, I am very grateful to ECF for financially supporting that early vision that is now Social Justice at Trinity.

Social Justice at Trinity, takes an intersectional approach to its mission. We believe that all oppressions intersect with one other and that the transformation of unjust structures, including colonialism, systemic racism, economic injustice, patriarchy, LGBTQIA+ injustices and ableism, helps to create a truly just society. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." In Social Justice at Trinity, we created this three-pronged program:



1. We ask why people are hungry and houseless in one of the richest countries in the world.
2. We continue to meet the immediate needs of hunger and housing until we live in a country and world where hunger and housing is a human right.
3. We organize in the community to make justice here and now, to bring the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth.

To make these goals a reality, Social Justice at Trinity employs both a Social Justice Director and a Social Justice Worker. I serve as director with Kris Hlatky, who holds the worker position. Together, we do case work, organize for justice in the community and operate the following new projects.

### **A radical well-being program at Trinity**

Trinity Church's **Radical Well-being Program (RWbP)** is an intersectional, holistic housing program guided by the understanding that housing alone is not enough to create well-being. Well-being can only be achieved when physical and mental health, social support, treatment for and freedom from use disorders and addiction, communication skills and financial literacy are addressed. The RWbP recognizes that systemic racism, sexism, ableism, discrimination of LGBTQIATS+ and classism, among other kinds of discrimination, contribute to homelessness and have a significant impact on mental health. The RWbP offers the following holistic, wrap-around, preventative services – either in-house or through community relationships and partnerships – that provide community members with resources while addressing societal forces:

- Permanent housing
- Emergency housing and rapid-rehousing
- Job training and local job placement
- Opportunities for physical exercise in relaxed environment
- Community building conversations and casual walks in the community
- Mental health counseling, including referrals to local partnerships
- Use disorders and addiction counseling and meetings, including referrals to local partnerships)
- Community organizing for powerful and healthy communities
- Financial literacy trainings and tax assistance
- Craft and hobby workshops
- Movie and game nights
- Self-advocacy training

### **Committed to community organizing**

What really makes the RWbP stand out is our commitment to community organizing and training our clients to organize for power. While we provide direct housing and counseling in solidarity with our community members needs for health and well being, we also want to be

agents of change to create a system of government that sees housing as a human right. We have created, in collaboration with community members who experienced homelessness, the Asbury Park Affordable Housing Coalition (APAHC). In the Coalition's four years of work, we have created eight inclusionary zoning ordinances that require developers who build more than five units in Asbury to include 20 percent affordable mixed housing. We also organized to see that the city create rent control for the first time in the city's history. We believe that we must create the just world we want to see.

While thinking about how to be in solidarity with our community, we realized that as long as systemic racism is alive and well, hunger and housing would always be present. With this understanding, we created the Racial Justice Project at Trinity (RJP). Through it, we engage in popular public education and teach that racism is racial prejudice plus systemic power over one group from another. Our understanding that if the country is going to be equitable, we must recognize the first injustice of settler colonialism, genocide and land theft of the indigenous populations of Turtle Island (North America) led to resolutions passed in both the City of Asbury Park and the Diocese of New Jersey to adopt Indigenous Peoples Day. We started building a working relationship with the Palestinian American Community Center, connecting settler colonialism in the Americas with settler colonialism in Palestine. We partnered with the Urban Revitalization Task Force of the Diocese of New Jersey to bring ESL classes and job training to the city of Asbury Park. And we also started a Monmouth County Task Force for Reparations for Indigenous peoples and people from the forced African Diaspora.

To engage the youth in our community, Trinity Church collaborated with The Light Brigade Collective to organize monthly benefit shows featuring Punk, Hardcore, Hip Hop and other independent music art showcases in support of locally-run, community-based social justice organizations. We look to raise awareness around racial, economic, LGBTQIATS+, disability, housing, environmental, indigenous sovereignty, direct democracy, anti-speciesism, anti-war, food and feminist justice struggles. We are also looking forward to creating an all-ages venue to give youth creative ways to build community and help them connect with social justice organizations, express their art, and enjoy affordable inclusive events. We look to build community through the arts with an anti-oppression lens while also supporting large movements and organizations for collective liberation.

*ECF Fellow **Derek Minno-Bloom**, currently working as Trinity Church Asbury Park's Food and Social Justice Director, has been working with people experiencing homelessness and housing issues and with many organizations fighting systemic injustice for twenty years. He self-identifies as a white settler, cisgendered, antiracist, queer male currently living on Sand Hill Nation Lenni Lenape territory known today as Asbury Park, New Jersey. Derek enjoys long walks in what is left of wild places, reading, writing, surfing, liberation and earth theologies and spending time with friends and family.*

#### **Resources:**

- [The Art of Organizing](#) by Francisco Garcia, Vestry Papers, March 2020

- [Unprecedented Times](#) by Isaiah “Shaneequa” Brokenleg, Vestry Papers, July 2020
- [Triple Threat](#) by Adialyn Milien, Vestry Papers, July 2020
- [America, Why Can’t You Stop Killing Us](#) by Stephanie Spellers, Vestry Papers, July 2020

### **Lucinda Mosher and Building Bridges**

ECFVP editorial team

There is a back-story to the June publication of *The Georgetown Companion to Interreligious Studies*, ECF Fellow Lucinda Mosher’s most ambitious book project to date. As she prepared to defend her dissertation in February of 2002, Dr. Mosher took note of three Christian-Muslim relations initiatives launched by the Archbishop of Canterbury in January. Intrigued, she lectured on them that spring and then continued to follow them systematically. In time, it became clear that only one of the initiatives – the Building Bridges Seminar – was sustainable for the long term. Each year, the project invited some thirty Christian and Muslim scholars to spend several days together in dialogical close reading of texts (scripture primarily, but sometimes theological discourse and devotional literature as well) chosen to facilitate consideration of some specific theme, such as revelation, prophethood or justice.



**From Building Bridges invitee to seminar series rapporteur and editor**

The published proceedings were valuable resources, which Dr. Mosher put to use in her teaching and shared with workshop and conference audiences. In 2011, she became a Building Bridges Seminar invitee herself, and in July 2012, as the project transitioned to the stewardship of Georgetown University, she was brought onto the Building Bridges Seminar staff. As the project's rapporteur, she is active in each convening, but her primary responsibility is to edit the seminar book series, work that continues year-round. Over the past decade, she has edited nine Building Bridges Seminar volumes for publication by Georgetown University Press – seven in collaboration with David Marshall and two on her own. The most recent, *Freedom: Christian and Muslim Perspectives*, was released in December 2021. A tenth book entered the publication pipeline last month, and the eleventh is now in the first stages of formation.

In 2018, out of Dr. Mosher's long relationship with Georgetown University Press, an invitation emerged to craft [\*The Georgetown Companion to Interreligious Studies\*](#). In this comprehensive volume, released on June 1, she brings together an international roster of authors, each of whom offers a unique perspective on the nature of a rapidly developing, inherently multidisciplinary academic field. The book provides fifty thought-provoking essays on the history, priorities, challenges, pedagogies and applications of interreligious studies – which Dr. Mosher sees as the critical investigation of relations between people (whether individuals or groups) who orient around *religion* differently, however it is defined.

### **Prolific scholar, teacher and musician with a passion for interreligious understanding**

Dr. Mosher's work on these many edited volumes dovetails well with her role as a faculty member at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace (HIU; formerly, Hartford Seminary), where she has served since 2010. Working remotely from her home in northeast Florida, she teaches courses in interreligious studies, chaplaincy, theology of religions and ethics; co-directs the Master of Arts in Chaplaincy program; is a member of the Duncan Black Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations; and serves as senior scholar for Executive and Professional Education. In addition, she is the senior editor of the *Journal of Interreligious Studies*, an online publication created collaboratively by Hebrew College, Boston University School of Theology and HIU. During the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, she and her journal colleagues published *Deep Understanding for Divisive Times*, a collection of short essays on interreligious studies, practice, teaching and engagement. While working on *The Georgetown Companion to Interreligious Studies*, Dr. Mosher was also serving on the Episcopal Church's General Convention Task Force for Ecumenical and Interreligious Work. Likewise, she maintained her practice of occasionally accepting a request for a journal article or book chapter. Among her recent writing is an essay, "On Sustaining Religion-Community in America: A Glimpse through a Multireligious Lens," for James Murphy's *Faithful Giving: The Heart of Planned Giving*, due out in the fall.

As was the case when she was named an ECF Fellow, Dr. Mosher strikes a balance between her academic vocation and her calling as a musician. Currently, she is the organist and choir director at St Mary's Episcopal Church in Green Cove Springs, Florida. She also performs on recorder, bassoon and several other instruments – usually in an ensemble that includes her spouse of fifty-three years.

Will Lucinda Mosher take on another editing project as big as *The Georgetown Companion to Interreligious Studies*? "It's always a possibility," she says. But she has in mind a monograph on the arts and interreligious understanding – and hopes to get to work on it soon!

Compiled by the ECFVP editorial team

*Lucinda Allen Mosher (ThD, General Theological Seminary, 2002) was named an Episcopal Church Foundation fellow in 1999. She has been affiliated with Hartford International University, and serves as faculty associate in Chaplaincy and Interreligious Studies and senior*

*scholar for Executive and Professional Education at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace (formerly Hartford Seminary). Concurrently, she is senior editor of The Journal of Interreligious Studies and rapporteur of the Building Bridges Seminar (an international dialogue of Christian and Muslim scholars). A prolific scholar, Dr. Mosher has made numerous contributions to edited volumes and journals. She is the author of seven books, including Toward Our Mutual Flourishing: the Episcopal Church, Interreligious Relations, and Theologies of Religious Manyness (2012), and is the editor of eleven more, including The Georgetown Companion to Interreligious Studies. An accomplished performer on several instruments, Dr. Mosher maintains a parallel career as a musician. Currently, she is the music director at St Mary's Episcopal Church in Green Cove Springs, Florida.*

**Resources:**

- [Why I went to lunch with the Muslim man who hit me](#) by Alan Bentrup, an ECF Vital Practices blog, September 19, 2017
- [Responding to Injustice](#) by Annette Buchanan, an ECF Vital Practices blog, August 23, 2017
- [Feeding the Community](#) by Renee McKenzie, an ECF Vital Practices blog, June 6, 2017
- [Religion and Politics](#) by Ken Mosesian, an ECF Vital Practices blog, March 5, 2021