

## Sending, Serving Script for Convention

Bishop Harris:

As all of you unquestionably know by now, the theme of this convention is “Sending, Serving.” For the next half hour or so we are going to hear about some parishes that have worked in partnerships to live out these themes, but we won’t just be listening to them, we will take time to talk among ourselves about how God might be working in our own parishes to stir us up, to help prepare us to be sent in service.

Then we will hear from two people who will present mission opportunities, opportunities in other countries but also here, in this diocese, working in what Bishop Roger Blanchard observed was “our greatest domestic missionary field.”

I would like to welcome Dean Jep Streit who will serve as master of ceremonies for these presentations.

Jep:

Thank you, Gayle.

We’re going to begin with a video about a summer program designed to decrease youth violence in the City of Boston. The program has been based at St. Stephen’s Church for the past several years, but this summer two new sites were planted, one in Codman Square, Dorchester based out of Epiphany School and one at St. Mary’s in Upham’s Corner in Dorchester

**SHOW VIDEO**

I’m amazed at the program, how great it is, and right away I have questions. How did it all come together? If we think of the program as the fruit of faith in action, what were the seeds of that fruit? What kind of ground received the seeds so they grew? How were the seeds cultivated so they flowered and finally bore fruit?

We're going to use these planting metaphors as a way to think about three programs in order to understand better how they developed and bore fruit, which can help the rest of us think about what might grow where we are, in our neighborhoods and parishes.

We will hear about mission trips arising from a partnership between St. John's, Westwood, and Holy Spirit, Mattapan, a meal preparing and sharing program in the town of Chatham, and the anti-violence summer program described in the video we just saw.

### SEEDS

As the presenters come forward, let me describe the first category, the Seeds. There are two kinds of seeds. Gardeners describe their excitement as they look through seed catalogues in the winter, thinking about their summer gardens, eager to plant, but seeds can also be irritants, painful; think of the grain of sand in an oyster, the seed that eventually becomes a pearl.

The first question for these groups, what were the seeds that became the fruits of your partnerships?

### PICTURE

*Holy Spirit/St. John's.* “With Mattapan and Westwood it was friendship. One seed was the relationship between two former rectors, Michael Corrigan and Paul Schweinzfier. That relationship, begun several decades ago, led to an urban/suburban linkage between our two parishes, and that linkage led, eventually to grassroots mission projects under the direction of clergy who succeeded them, Steve Smith and Dan Crowley in Westwood and Zenetta Armstrong in Mattapan.

### PICTURE OF BEAUTIFUL TOWN OF CHATHAM.

#### *St. Christophers*

“In Chatham it was suicide. Over a 12 month period three teenagers in our town took their lives, and these three suicides rocked our community. How could this happen here? What was going on? Was there anything we could do?”

## PICTURE OF KIDS IN ST STEPHEN'S SUMMER PROGRAMS

### *St. Stephen's*

In Boston and Dorchester it was kids. Kids and violence. In 2005 there were 341 victims of shootings in Boston, the highest number since 1996. This year, the city is on track to have 616 shootings—nearly double. It is easy to find guns, hard to find jobs, and hard to fund educational opportunities, which creates a situation of desperation and violence. The neighborhood around St. Stephen's church is one of the city's hot spots for this violence, and it is a place where these statistics become real people, the brothers and cousins and friends of the kids who come to our programs every day. In June, the 35<sup>th</sup> person murdered in Boston was killed two blocks from our church. Our children witness violence around them all the time, but this is not the seed we wanted planted within them.

## PICTURE

### *St. Anne's*

(Jim Coyne) In Lincoln it was buildings. Our seed was the completion of our own building project, renovating our church and our education and meeting space, which led us to a strong feeling that we could perhaps help others with their building projects or needs. Moreover, we recognized the imbalance of financial and educational resources between the suburbs and the city and we wanted to become a positive force for rebalancing this equation.

Jep: Now stop. Everyone here take a minute to think about your congregation. What are your seeds? These can be positive, fruitful seeds, or painful, discomfoting ones. Don't think about next steps, what you should or need to do to respond; for right now, what seeds do you notice when you think about your church or your community? Think about this for a minute.

...

Now find a partner, someone you can talk to without moving much, preferably someone you don't know well, and take a couple minutes each to share your seeds. Be as specific as you can be.

## GROUND

Jep: Now for the ground. What were the elements, resources, that received the seeds, that began to transform the seeds?

*St. Johns/Holy Spirit*

In Mattapan and Westwood several parishioners began working together in 1992 at the CHS after-school program, which strengthened our existing relationship. Also, one of the parishioners had a connection with Bishop Allen of Honduras, and he came to speak about short-term mission trips in 2001, which helped us connect with Honduras.

*St. Christopher's*

In Chatham we learned that teens were drinking, taking drugs, were bored. We learned there were no town programs to engage them. We learned that almost half the people in town over the age of 65 lived alone and needed support and nurturing. We realized our large, wonderful kitchen was rarely used, and the major passion of our director of Christian education, Ilene Bendas, is cooking!

*St. Stephen's*

In Boston we had a model for an exciting academic and enrichment summer program that had been developed and tested over the last six years, a program that had worked. We had newly renovated classrooms in our own building, with a state of the art technology center. We had relationships with great folks in our partner churches in the suburbs. We had connections with the Mayor's Boston Youth Fund, a jobs program that allowed us to hire and train teenagers to be Counselors in Training.

*St. Anne's*

Tim Crellin of St. Stephen's preached at St. Anne's, and he made an important point to us: "What would happen if a teenager was murdered in Lincoln? What if 2 or 3 were murdered in week? What would people do?" He helped us see that his neighborhood was our neighborhood, these teenagers were our teenagers, and so we wanted to do something with his church for these young people.

Jep: Now stop. What is the ground where you are? What are potential resources, connections, interesting people or skills? Again, don't worry too much about neatly applying them to your seeds, just notice what is there. . . .

Now take a few minutes each to share this with your partner, the same person as before.

### CULTIVATION

Jep: Now what did you do to prepare the ground, to cultivate the seed?

#### *St. John's/Holy Spirit*

At Holy Spirit and St. John's we wanted to go on a mission trip, and so we asked, "Who has already done this?" so we could learn from them.

We asked people in the congregation to pray to see if God was calling them to join, to participate.

We began to meet to prepare the team that would go, talking about language, culture, worship, nuts and bolts (shots, packing).

We worked closely with the receiving organizations: South American Missionary Society (SAMS) for the first two years, and then the Diocese of Honduras the last three years.

#### *St. Christopher's*

At St. Christophers we realized this needed to be a town-wide program, not just our church, serving our parishioners.

We connected the need to value, enable and involve young people by reaching Chatham's most isolated residents.

We sought referrals for those needing meals and visits from other churches, our own parishioners and staff, even the kids.

#### *St. Stephen's*

At St. Stephen's we tracked the crimes statistics and talked with people in different Boston neighborhoods to determine where there was a need to have programs like the one we were already running at St. Stephen's. We met with people at St. Mary's in Dorchester who were hungry for a return of youth programming to their parish. We prayed with our friends from St. Anne's in Lincoln and decided to put off a renovation project at St.

Stephen's in order to improve the space at St. Mary's. We built a staff team that included key people like Jeff Mello, Walker Coppedge and Thong Nguyen who had years of youth work experience and passion to make something great happen for our kids. We wrote grant proposals and met with donors; with the help of Bishop Shaw we raised money for the program.

*St. Anne's*

We had a long-standing commitment to inner-city outreach, but we took Tim Crellin's and Cathy George's preaching to heart, and asked where we could turn our resources to address the needs of others in a hands-on way. We first connected with St. Stephen's. We engaged our youth and formed two teams—one dedicated to after-school volunteer teaching and a second to refurbishing the basements space used for after-school and summer programs. We formed teams of clergy and parishioners, recruited volunteers, and raised funds from within the parish and also applied for a Sending-Serving grant from the Diocese as we next turned our attention to St. Mary's.

FRUIT

Jep: Although most of us either know or can guess, what is the fruit that finally grew from this process?

*St. John's/Holy Spirit*

We have taken six mission trips, one to Haiti, and five to Honduras, and these trips have been a powerful combination of adults and teenagers, working together. These aren't teen mission trips with adult chaperones, nor are they adult trips with a few young people tagging along. This mix of younger and older has borne fruit with us: untapped talents have blossomed, family ties have been strengthened, personal goals have been refocused, for both teenagers and adults, and we have experienced the privilege of laboring with and on behalf of people in need.

*St. Christopher's*

Faith in Action, a town-wide, ecumenical program of preparing gourmet meals three Sundays a month and bringing them to elderly people living alone, which involves a partnership between churches, individuals, local civic officials, and (most importantly) between generations.

*St. Stephen's*

For seven years we have had summer programming at St. Stephen's. We've grown in numbers of kids served, from 20 to 100, the number of teens hired, from 10 to 30, and improved the program, hiring professional specialists to teach quality arts programs, technology classes, writing curricula and math

games. Of course, we also had fun! We went swimming and took dozens and dozens of field trips. Last summer we started two new programs, as you've heard, and with that expansion we gained a new name: B-SAFE program. The Bishop's Summer Academic and Fun Enrichment program. We strengthened our relationship with St. Anne's and build new partnerships with Grace Church, Newton and St. Michael's, Milton. We served breakfast and lunch every day for six weeks—over 10,000 meals—and had 33,600 “kid hours”—active, engaging, enriching and safe programming for 160 children in three Boston neighborhoods.

*St. Anne's*

We had the experience of working in a partnership with other suburban and urban churches, giving up some control we might have working alone, to clean, repair and restore space to make it inviting and welcoming for kids, and in the process received the hospitality from parishioners of St. Mary's as we worked together for this important program and goal.

NEW SEEDS

Jep: One last note. As we know, imbedded in fruit are always seeds for more fruit. Can any of you identify new seeds that you've discovered that come from the fruit of these programs?

*St. John's/Holy Spirit*

On our past two mission trips to El Cruce, near Tegucigalpa, we came to know Dr. Barbara McCune, whose clinic was operating out of the church we were renovating. We hope to continue providing much needed medical supplies to Dr. McCune. We will also be exploring the possibility of working at a bi-lingual school in Honduras, which is run by Veronica Flowers, a former parishioner of Church of the Holy Spirit.

*St. Christopher's*

The Sunday Chefs are going to host a monthly Community Dinner at St. Christopher's, open to everyone. Special guests will be recognized (commercial fishermen, seasonal workers, police and firefighters, elderly shut-ins.) The Chefs, while continuing to make meals for the elderly in Chatham, have also taken the show on the road, preparing meals for the folk on the Boston Common, a food kitchen in Chelsea, and a homeless shelter in Hyannis.

*St. Stephen's*

We already have plans underway for Summer 2007, when we plan to have programs for 350 kids in four locations. We hope to increase from 3 weeks to 6, and we are negotiating to use an elementary school so we can run a larger program from one site that will serve 150 children from the South End and Lower Roxbury. We are working to develop new relationships with parishes interested in being partners in helping this program, and the kids in it, grow and flourish.

*St. Anne's*

Where do we begin? We have helped refurbish classroom spaces at St. Stephen's and St. Mary's and we now have a crew of weekly volunteers who tutor at the St. Stephens after school program. We marched In Uphams' Corner, in the rain, alongside other clergy and parishioners to proclaim the need for safe streets for youth, and we have discovered a deeper spirituality through these small deeds to have awakened a renewed commitment of our parish to urban mission.

Jep: We began with a video, showing the fruit of faith in action, and then we've seen the growth process for three partnership programs bearing fruit; the seed, the ground, cultivation and finally fruit.

Let's bookend this with another video, showing the fruit of another program, a mission trip to help with Hurricane Relief.

## KATRINA VIDEO

Jep: Now we'll hear from two individuals who will describe mission opportunities for us to think and pray about. As you listen, think about what they say as possible ground for seeds you've identified in your congregation or in your community. Can you make any connections?

The first is Amy McCreath, who is the Episcopal Chaplain at MIT and also the coordinator of the Technology and Culture Program, which helps the university community learn and explore such things as the consequences of technology. We've learned a lot about missionary work, sending people abroad, and better models for this. Think of Amy as a missionary, as is Margaret Schwarzer at BU, and Judith Stuart at Boston College and

Northeastern, all of them serving not abroad but in the “greatest domestic missionary field” as Roger Blanchard described our colleges and universities.

#### AMY’s Presentation

Jep

Remember when the people from Mattapan and Westwood decided they wanted to do a mission trip abroad, and they spoke to people who had already done this to learn from them? This is the role that Ted Gaiser now plays in our diocese; he helps congregations who want to take mission trips, and he’s going to talk with us briefly about the opportunities that exist.

Ted