



The Esther Project focuses on experienced-based learning. A key component of this initiative is reflection with a development coach to anchor the learning process. Reflection is the key to resilience in leadership competency development.

Tailored

“The consensus with my colleagues in the program we have done these things before, but this was one of the most helpful of all the things that we have done... to know that the conference wanted to invest in me. I really appreciate how tailored it was. Having someone to ask the right questions, hold me accountable and be in conversation with has been really helpful through all of it.”

Participant in similar program 2020

The Esther Project harnesses the knowledge gained through the firehose of events of 2020 – 2023 and the need for emotional intelligent and learning agile clergy leaders. Clergy develop learning agility and leadership competencies that prepare them to stay in and deepen their calling in times of challenge and the unknown. Clergy are prepared to lead in places they have never been, pulling on who they are, what they have been given and a deep trust in God to lead in ‘such a time as this.’
Esther 4:14

As a result of this initiative, clergy increase:

- 1.) Learning agility to prepare for and step into new levels of leadership responsibilities,
- 2.) Increased emotional intelligence,
- 3.) Increased resilience, with less ministry burnout .
- 3.) Enhanced competency in effective proven leadership behaviors, and
- 4.) Connection to colleagues for mutual support and accountability.

Ultimately this builds the individual’s resilience for life-long fruitful ministry, creates a culture of intentional behavioral development of clergy leaders, and establishes formal development plans for added accountability. In doing so, this process infuses a culture of everyday leadership development where clergy actively engage in action, reflect on the outcomes, and learn new behaviors. The result in more emotionally intelligent, learning agile leaders in the Church.

Measurable Outcomes

“As the participants are able to apply the principles and insights gained from ELI, not only are they better able to serve more effectively and faithfully in their current ministry context, they are better prepared and are more willing to transition into a new, and often more challenging, setting based on improved leadership skills, such as staff supervision, visioning, and clarity in calling (what is and is not in their “wheelhouse”). This has already become evident during participants’ clergy consultations in their ability to articulate their dreams for ministry and clear “step, stretch and leap” capacities for their next season of ministry.” WNC District Superintendent of participants in similar program 2019

"I gained better clarity of who I am as a pastor, of how God has been working in my life up to this point, what some of my gifts and graces and tendencies might be, so that I can identify that and start reflecting when situations happen."

Participant in similar program 2019



Specific Outcomes

- Explore how specific clergy behaviors and decisions contribute to accomplishing the mission to which Christ calls the church
- Improve ability to provide adaptive leadership in their respective congregations based on improved self-awareness
- Improved self-awareness leads to increased emotional intelligence
- Increased emotional intelligence allows clergy to better perceive, understand and manage emotions in themselves and others.
- Strengthen contextual leadership competency through experiential learning and application

"I had another job before being a pastor and I worked in a very complex environment, but I decided to become a pastor and now I know being a pastor is the hardest thing I have ever done. People are volunteers, you cannot fire them, you cannot give them a raise, they said things to me that one would wonder if they were a Christian and I need more tools in my toolbox and being exposed to PIP helped me personal growth and to work more efficiently and that for a pastor goes hand in hand." CHI 2022

- Clergy in similar programs, working with a development coach, report "lower anxiety, gaining coping tools, increased motivation and feeling like a real person, not just a pastor." CHI Research, PIP Coaching 2022

"There were key moments along the way where the hour I had in conversation with [my coach] was crucial for whatever was going on in the church. So as far as time was concerned it was almost like that one hour saved me three hours in floundering around trying to figure out a problem..."

Participant in similar program 2018

The Process

Assessment

Assessments set the baseline for the clergy invited into the program. They include assessments for Learning Agility, Emotional Intelligence, Workplace Big 5 Traits and StrengthsFinder 34. These assessments provide the foundation for the behavioral plan for each clergy person to utilize during the one-year engagement and beyond.

Development and Action Plan

"The process leads to an opportunity to develop a specific plan that uses your God given profile to then move forward to maximize your leadership potential to both. To really understand who you are and how you function and then to begin to apply that with wherever you are, but also in the big picture of [ministry]. Not just in, you know whatever context you're in, but how you can apply that across the board at all different levels of your leadership. You actually have a plan for in a specific way to continue to develop yourself." Participant in similar program 2020

Accountability and Support

Reflection with a trained development coach is foundational as clergy are encouraged to reflect, retool, and reimagine their ministerial practice. The development coach is a key clergy accountability partner alongside the District Superintendent and Cabinet.