

# Team Building in the Orthodox Parish



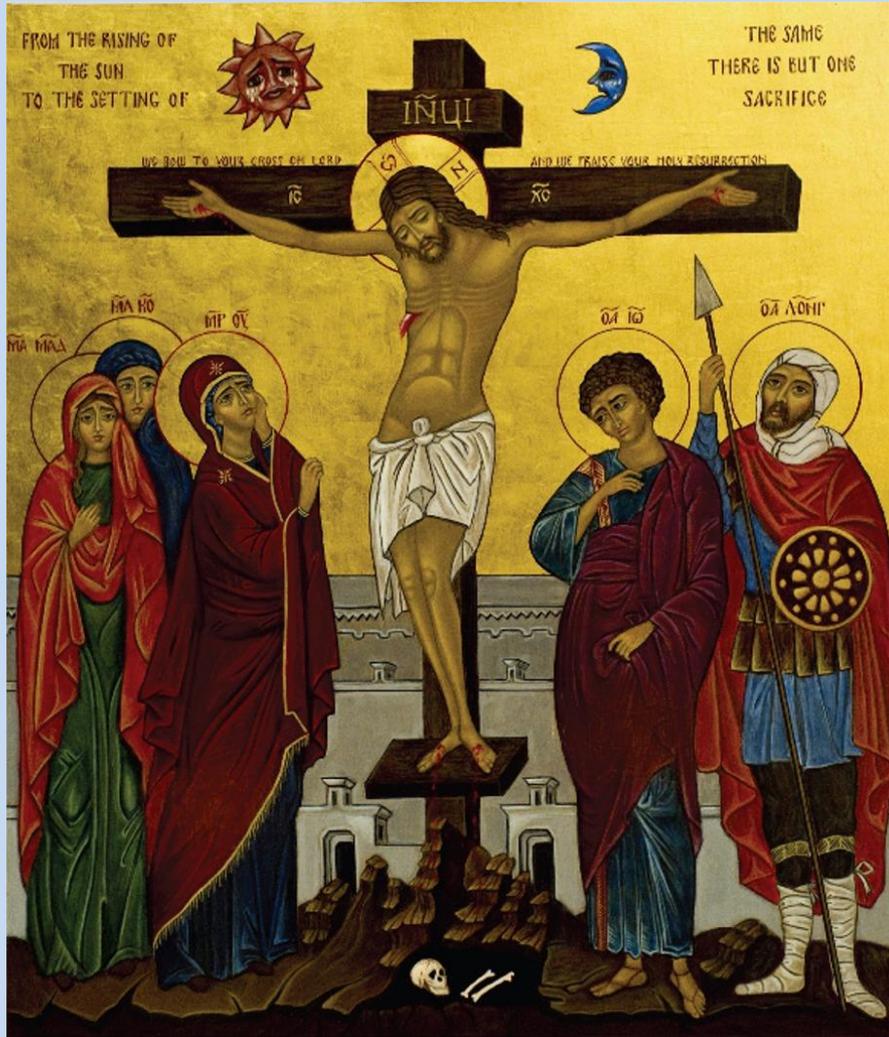
**Stewardship Advocates™**

# Good Precedent: New Testament Teams

- Jesus led and directed at least two teams
  - The 12 apostles: commissioned by Jesus to teach, preach, heal and cast out demons
  - The 72 disciples: sent two by two to prepare villages and cities for the arrival of Jesus and His work there
- St. Paul led a team of at least 40 people
  - 14 co-workers are mentioned in Acts; 10 gospel workers are greeted in the epistle to the Romans; many additional workers are mentioned in other letters
  - There were scribes, field agents, community leaders, traveling missionary colleagues and philanthropists
  - St. Paul was also a member of a team – the apostles

# The Orthodox Principle of Teamwork: Synergy

- Synergy means “working together”
- Origin of this principle is grounded in the Trinitarian nature of Father, Son and Holy Spirit – three separate “persons” interacting perfectly together
- Synergy is extended to humans by means of the Incarnation in which a fully human and fully divine person (Jesus Christ of Nazareth) perfectly participates with God the Father in the salvation of the world
- St. Paul writes, “We are fellow-workers (*synergoi*) with God.” (I Corinthians 3:9)



Ultimate Divine/Human Synergy

From a spiritual point of view synergy activates the power of the Holy Spirit to inspire, motivate, prioritize and direct the choices and actions of parishioner and staff team members. And from them it flows out into the parish.

From a professional point of view synergy creates new untapped alternatives and resources; it values and capitalizes on the mental, emotional, psychological and technical abilities that differentiate, but ideally, do not separate, people.

# The Orthodox Christian Team

- Guided and directed by the always welcome presence of the Holy Spirit
- Adheres faithfully to the teaching of the Church
- Loves and accepts every team member unconditionally as God loves and accepts each of us (this does not mean that poor performance or lack of commitment is tolerated or acceptable)
- Listens carefully to others
- Collaborates with charitable honesty, common purpose and authentic humility
- Strives for excellence, high performance, dependability, wisdom, attentiveness to the task, skills development, and spiritual maturation in Christ through service

# Formal Team Definition



- Team
  - Two or more members
  - Specific performance objective
  - Coordinating activity amongst members is a must
  - Mutually accountable to God and each other
- Pseudo-Team
  - Two or more members
  - Lacks collective focus
  - Does not perform together, rather individually
  - Individual accountability to God

# Priests are Already Working with Teams

- Parish councils
- Staff
- Ministry and program heads
- Advisory Committees
- Capital Campaign Committees
- Strategic Planning Committees
- Evangelization Committees
- Extra-parish teams for the deanery, diocese, national church or Orthodox agency

For greater effectiveness and efficiency why not give this casual and possibly chaotic activity professional structure and intentionality?

# Parish Benefits from Structured Teamwork

1. Applies a mix of skills that exceed the abilities of any one person
2. Solves complex problems that take more than one mind
3. Generates new ideas
4. Coordinates individual activities towards a common goal
5. Provides support and help to all team members
6. Gives parishioner team members a sense of purpose and belonging that leads to commitment
7. Enhances communication
8. Helps people to learn from each other and to further knit the fabric of social connectivity in the parish
9. With timely and helpful coaching from the priest fulfills the mission of the gospel

# Priest Benefits from Structured Teamwork

1. Taking the time to understand, develop and lead a team becomes an important acquired leadership skill for a priest, easily replicated
2. A team amplifies and extends the pastoral leadership of the priest
3. The process develops leaders within the parish
4. Can remove administrative items off the priest's desk so he can do more pastoral work and teaching in the parish
5. Teams function as a source for parish intelligence of what's going on in the community
6. Teams can provide reliable support groups within the parish
7. Increases efficiency, not just the effectiveness, of the priest
8. Offers an opportunity to teach groups of people rather than one person at a time

# Types of Teams in a Parish

- Strategic teams (the parish council or strategic planning committee) provide leadership and direction for the parish, keep in touch with the external environment, set key objectives, develop strategy, and monitor progress.
- Operational teams (staff and volunteers) are often seen as the “face” of the parish to parishioners and the public. They provide support and services, perform the primary “work” of the parish, implement its policies and maintain its standards.
- Support teams to programs and ministries (specialists and knowledge workers) provide the necessary back-up to enable others to get the job done efficiently and effectively – tech support, finance, office management and administrative support.
- Temporary teams or task groups develop new initiatives or undertake specific tasks, bringing together different perspectives and resources.

# 10 Aspects of Effective Teams

1. Clear purpose – mission statement describing purpose, goals and objectives
2. Balanced roles – skills, abilities and aspirations
3. Effective processes and procedures – meetings, communications, schedules and agendas
4. Appropriate leadership – trusted team leader who is comfortable sharing leadership
5. Support and trust – listening, evaluating, offering ideas, encouraging experimentation
6. Openness and conflict – willingness to work through difficult situations constructively
7. Mutual co-operation – readiness to be involved and committed, acceptance of each others' strengths and weaknesses
8. Personal development – individuals are given opportunities to develop new skills
9. Sound inter-group relations – the team enjoys good relations with other teams, committees and authorities within the parish
10. Reviews – team regularly reviews its performance and goals accepts accountability

# Team Member Interactive Modality

For our purposes a “modality” is not necessarily the title or specific skill of a team member. Rather, a “modality” signifies a person’s default *interactive modality*. For example, some people naturally lead, others are more analytical and still others are consensus builders.

An effective team should be selected to get a good mix of team member “modalities”. Some of these can be developed over time. Most people have a primary modality and also a secondary one.

Clashes can occur when several people are trying to take on the same modality, for example, “leader” or “evaluator”. In smaller parishes people often have to develop the ability to function in a variety of modalities. In larger parishes with more human resources, greater specialization is possible.

# Nine Modalities of Team Members with Blind Spots

1. Plant – creates ideas but can go too far out of the box and be forgetful
2. Resource Investigator – explores opportunities but can forget to follow up on possibilities
3. Coordinator – clarifies goals, promotes decision making but can over delegate leaving themselves little to do
4. Shaper/Leader – drives the team forward but can become overly aggressive

# Nine Modalities of Team Members with Blind Spots

5. Monitor Evaluator – discerning judgment but can be overly critical and slow-moving
6. Implementer – turns ideas into action but can be slow to relinquish plans
7. Completer – attention to detail but can take their perfectionism to extremes
8. Team workers – consensus builders but can become indecisive when unpopular decisions need to be made
9. Specialist – technical knowledge and skills but can display a tendency to focus narrowly on their own subject of choice

# Reflection on Pastoral Leadership

Often the priest is the cause for the fuzziness of team boundaries. Fearful of seeming exclusionary—or, on the other end of the spectrum, determined to put people on the team for purely political reasons—the priest sometimes creates a dysfunctional team. In truth, putting together a team involves some ruthless decisions about membership; not everyone who wants to be on the team should be included, and some individuals should be gently placed in another area of responsibility in the parish.

# Why Teams Often Do Not Work

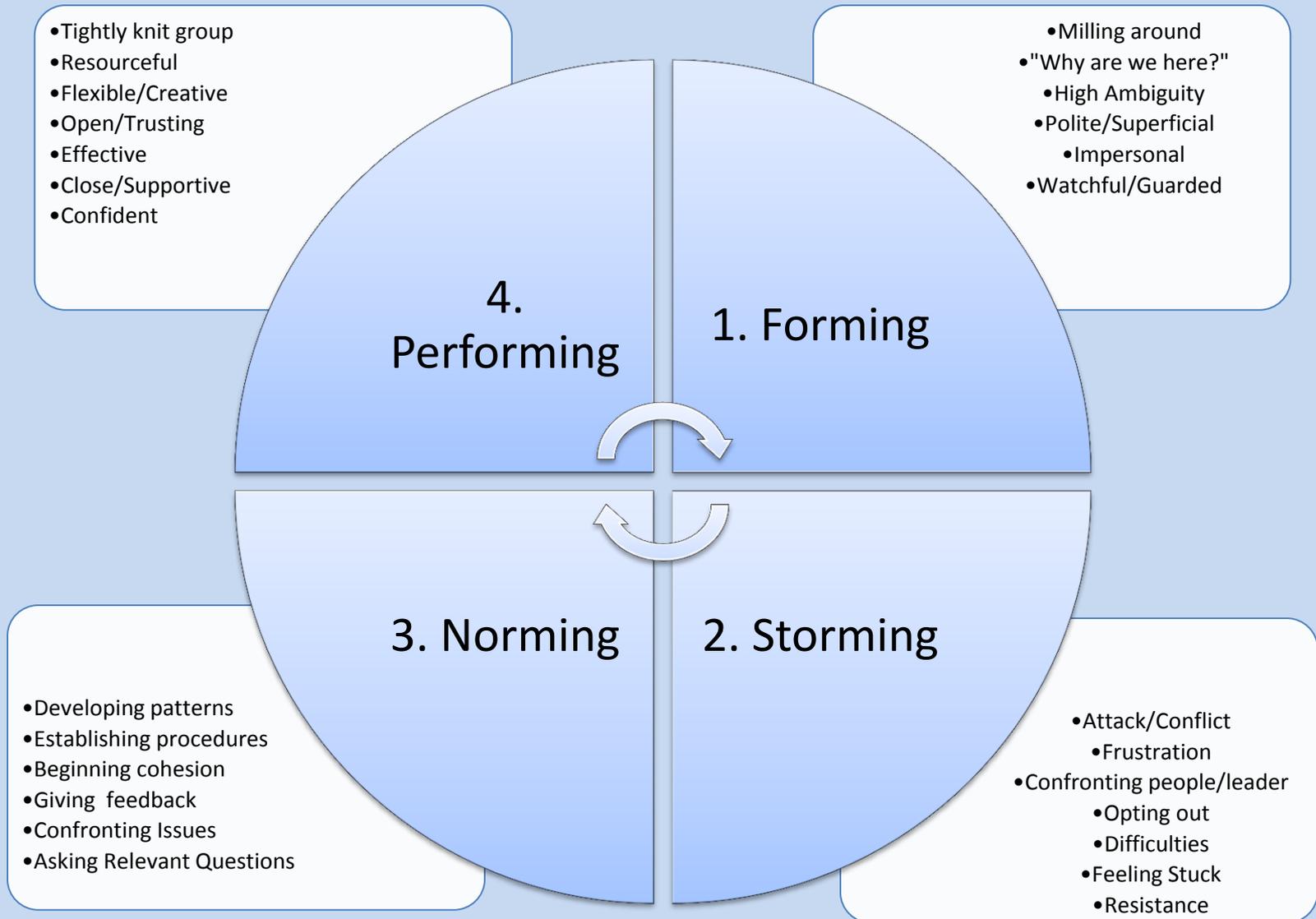
- Teams must be real. People have to know who is on the team, who is not, and why. It's the leader's job to make that crystal clear.
- Teams need a compelling direction. Members need to know, and agree on, what they're supposed to be doing together. Unless a leader articulates a clear direction, there is a real risk that different members will pursue different agendas.
- Teams need structure. Teams that have poorly designed tasks, the wrong number or mix of members, and/or fuzzy and unenforced norms of conduct invariably get into trouble.
- Teams need a supportive priest and parish council. Power and influence centers of the parish must facilitate teamwork as well as the team's work.
- Teams need expert coaching. Most coaching focuses on individual performance, which does not significantly improve teamwork. Teams need coaching as a group in team processes – especially at the beginning, midpoint, and end of a team project. The role of the priest is critical here.



# Characteristics of High Functioning Teams

- 1) A clear, elevating goal
- 2) Results-driven structure
- 3) Competent team members
- 4) Unified commitment
- 5) Collaborative climate
- 6) Shared standards of excellence
- 7) External support and recognition
- 8) Follow through on tasks
- 9) Principled and inspired leadership

# The Team Development Wheel



# Five Indicators of Team Dysfunction

Dysfunction #1: Absence of trust

Dysfunction #2: Fear of conflict

Dysfunction #3: Lack of commitment

Dysfunction #4: Avoid accountability

Dysfunction #5: Inattention to results

Identify dysfunctions as early as possible and address them effectively.

# Team Continuum Assessment

Identify team dysfunction using this tool

## **Trust**

Complete Lack of Trust-----High Level of Trust

## **Conflict**

Avoidance of Conflict-----Conflicts Managed Well

## **Commitment**

No Commitment to Team-----Total Commitment

## **Accountability**

No Accountability-----High Accountability

## **Focus on Results**

Inattention To Results-----Results-focused

# Defined Roles and Responsibilities

- Sponsor
- Team Leader
- Team Member
- Facilitator
- Recorder
- Communicator
- External Facilitator (as needed)
- Subject Matter Expert (as needed)
- Tech Support (as needed)

# Basic Considerations Before Launching a Team

- Mission
- Vision
- Goals
- Ground rules
- Research Plan
- Implementation Plan
- Resources Needed
- People/Skills Needed
- Review and Status Updates
- Recognition and Celebration

# Contact Information and Additional Material from Stewardship Advocates

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