



EDWARD WHITE

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Edward White has served as an Alban consultant since 1989. In his long and distinguished career he has served as general presbyter for the National Capital Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (USA) (PCUSA) and was at various times chair of the Alban Institute's board of trustees, president of the Council of Churches of Greater Washington, president of the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, and president of the Society for Advancement of Continuing Education for Ministry (SACEM). In the 1960s, Ed was active in the civil rights movement as a Freedom Rider and a coordinator for the Poor People's Campaign initiated by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Council. These experiences influenced Ed's outlook and commitment to congregations, as did his early years in parish ministry for an inner-city Manhattan congregation that found renewal by embracing the wider community.

Ed's consulting and teaching experience include leading the Alban Institute's Bishop and Church Executive Leadership Institute, training new presbytery and synod executives in the PCUSA and other denominations, and training and coaching clergy entering their first parish or moving to a new call. Ed has led interfaith team-building workshops and retreats for clergy, laity, and judicatory and congregational staff. He has also taught special courses at Union (Virginia), and Princeton, Pittsburgh, and Sewanee Theological Seminaries; written and read Doctor of Ministry examinations for Virginia Theological Seminary; and authored numerous articles.

PHILOSOPHY OF PRACTICE

I believe the primary task of the congregation is to equip its people to fulfill their “call to full-time christian ministry,” which is primarily in the world. The judicatory (presbytery, diocese, synod, conference, etc.) has the primary task of caring for the health of congregations and the development of congregational leadership, both lay and clergy. All of this becomes adventurous in the context of a culture that is at best indifferent and at worst hostile to Christian values. To be faithful in the midst of ambiguity, conflict, and uncertainty, and to support each other on the journey, is what the struggle of discipleship is all about. For too long, the mainline has been in the membership business rather than the disciple-making business. As a result, people went elsewhere or did not participate.

AREAS OF FOCUS

- **Congregational Transformation:** I help congregations to discern God’s will for their future or to reinvent themselves to be more fruitful in the twenty-first century. Typically, my involvement in this process unfolds over several months. It starts with an initial visit, then continues with ongoing consultation by phone and mail.
- **Leadership Transitions:** Search committees often realize they need to clarify the congregation’s mission or vision, or goals and values, before they interview candidates. Such reflection and planning benefits other leadership transitions such as a pastor’s retirement, or staff changes.
- **Leadership Development and Team-Building:** Too many congregations are overmanaged and underled. People get placed on committees or conduct the same programs year after year without asking what they want as an outcome. I work with clergy, lay leaders, boards, and staff on identifying outcomes, collaborating, communicating, holding one another accountable, and doing the hard work together.

EDUCATION

- B.A., Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut
- M.Div., Union Theological Seminary, New York, New York
- D.Min., McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois

PUBLICATION

- *Saying Goodbye: A Time of Growth for Congregations and Pastors*, 1990, Alban Institute