

General Board of Discipleship of  
The United Methodist Church  
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## THE GENERAL BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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*This is a periodic newsletter to resource  
FaithQuest congregational leaders.*

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## News from the Net

[www.speaking.com/articles\\_html/KatieDavis\\_583.html](http://www.speaking.com/articles_html/KatieDavis_583.html)

*Listening Skills: How to Recognize and Repeat Them* is an article that describes keys to effective listening and communication.

[www.listen.org](http://www.listen.org)

The International Listening Association website includes numerous articles, a discussion forum, and a list of recommended books and tapes.

**The new FaithQuest web site is live!**

Go to [www.faithquest.net](http://www.faithquest.net) or [www.gbod.org](http://www.gbod.org) and click on FaithQuest in the menu on the left of the page. We welcome your feedback and suggestions for improvement.

# FQ

Order FaithQuest  
materials toll-free:  
877-899-2780,  
Ext. 7674.

## New Address?

Help us keep you in the FaithQuest network. Send your new email or ground mail address to [jnewell@gbod.org](mailto:jnewell@gbod.org). Share your experiences and discoveries as we build FaithQuest knowledge! We welcome email reflections, book reviews, and suggested website addresses that relate to FaithQuest.

# FQ

## NEWS & NOTES FOR FAITH QUEST

# TOPICS

THEME:  
LISTENING  
(add to Tab C,  
Leadership, in your  
revised Leader  
Notebook)

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## Standing in Between

There he stood—a tired man in between the past and the future. Moses had led God's people to the very brink of the Promised Land. He could see it. He could almost taste the milk and honey! God had delivered . . . not only God's people, but God's promise! Although Moses' journey was complete, the possibilities for the people were endless, thanks to the grace of God. (See Deut. 34cf.)

As he stood looking into the future, he also realized how important all the experiences of the past had been—forty years of them! In almost every case, leaving the past behind felt right. No more slavery, no more Pharaoh, no more bickering, and, hopefully, no more golden calves! Good riddance! The old was passing away!

For those of us on the FaithQuest journey, our eyes are beginning to be opened to a vision that God has placed in our hearts and minds. But I wonder if we ought not pause for a moment at the beginning of this new year to look back, to remember that, although we look forward to the transformation of our churches, we need to give thanks for all the work of all those whose lives and commitment have made this moment possible. We would not be standing looking into the Promised Land of possibilities if it were not for their faithful witness.

One more thought . . . We're not there yet! As students of FaithQuest, and of John Wesley, we understand that our journey is never complete. God is always renewing the vision as God is always helping us prepare for the next journey. It's like always standing "in between" where we are and where God wants us to be.

The articles in this issue will offer a brief look at where we have been, where we are, and where we might be going as our FaithQuest continues. Enjoy!



Michael A. Bealla ([pastormike@endwellumc.org](mailto:pastormike@endwellumc.org)) is Senior Pastor of Endwell United Methodist Church, Endwell, NY, and a FaithQuest Trainer.

## The FaithQuest Journey to Date

The FaithQuest journey began in November 1998 when the Bible study was published. After some initial experiences with pilot churches, the first official training event was held in June 1999.

Since that time, 402 churches have been enrolled. Individuals trained now number 1215. An additional 2729 Bible study books have been sold in addition to those provided through the

training. The Spanish-language edition, *Camino de fe*, was published and the first training for it took place in January 2001.

Dedicated to continual improvement, a second edition of the notebook has been released which combines the teaching helps with the leader's guide. You can purchase the new pages for your first edition notebook by contacting Joan Newell at the FaithQuest office, toll-free 877-889-2780 Ext. 7674 or [jnewell@gbod.org](mailto:jnewell@gbod.org).

FaithQuest is beginning to have a significant impact on our churches. "A new way of thinking" is growing across the connection.

## IN THIS ISSUE

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Journey to Date

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## Note from Betsey...

This issue of *FaithQuest News and Notes* welcomes guest writer Mike Bealla, one of the first pastors to lead FaithQuest Bible study with a church group. (More information about Mike appears at the end of the article next to his photo.)

Betsey Heavner is Director of FaithQuest at the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, Nashville, TN. You can e-mail her at [bheavner@gbod.org](mailto:bheavner@gbod.org).

# Listening to Our FaithQuest Community

You've been asking how churches have been changed by the FaithQuest experience. We've done some listening and here is a small example of what we've heard:

Congregations are finding new excitement and vitality among their FaithQuest participants, and that excitement is being experienced throughout their entire congregations.

■ A church in the Wyoming Conference is building a new "vision-driven" structure. Their first of four FaithQuest class participants are now working as their "ministry team" to build a new system of ministry aimed at making "every member a minister."

■ A church in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference has come to understand that change shouldn't be feared; it is God's way of creating something new in the midst of their ministry.

■ Several congregations tell us that their participants are offering to serve in significant leadership roles, and many are new leaders.

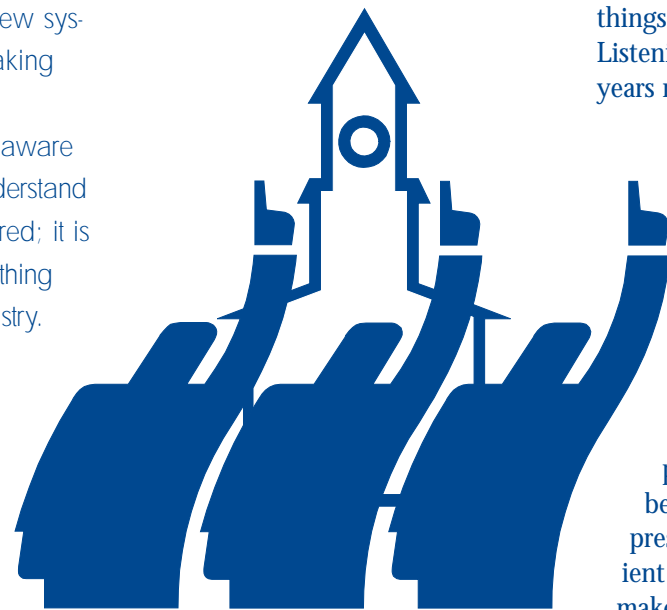
■ In the Virginia Conference a congregation is celebrating a new understanding of shared leadership—laity and clergy becoming partners in ministry.

■ Another Virginia congregation has posted a banner in their meeting room featuring the question, "Does it fit the primary task?"

■ A church in the Wyoming Conference has begun a significant lay visitation program aimed at shut-ins and homebound persons. This congregation has

added an annual "Spiritual Gifts Discovery" experience designed for nurturing spiritual leadership.

■ A congregation in upstate New York says that their group was so excited about the experience, they now meet every two months to review the progress and impact FaithQuest is having on their church. A new worship service has developed, and two new women's circles have been started.



■ A leader in the Pacific Northwest Conference called for materials for a fourth FaithQuest group described the impact of having another member of the congregation attend a training event. She said that his enthusiasm about FaithQuest has reenergized everyone—and they are already experiencing new life in the congregation!

■ Several FaithQuest congregations are connecting their new way of thinking with the Igniting Ministries campaign. As visitors have come to their congregations during this past fall and Advent season, the FaithQuest congregations are prepared to welcome them and the new ideas they bring.

How exciting! Churches are coming alive as they begin to refocus their energies on building faith-forming communities. We'd love to hear your stories. Please email them to Betsy Heavner, [bheavner@gbod.org](mailto:bheavner@gbod.org).

## The Importance of Listening

As a pastor I was trained to do many things in my seminary experience. Listening was not one of them! For years my pastoral visits included stimulating discussions about families and work, community issues and problems. What FaithQuest has helped me realize is that, although my visits were appreciated, I had been asking the wrong questions!

Part of being human is the search for meaning and purpose. Wesley called the beginning awareness of God's presence inside each of us "preventive grace." It is this grace that makes us want to talk about God. Wesley was not shy about asking someone, "How is it with your soul?" Such a question can lead us into a meaningful conversation about our relationship with God. That's the kind of question I should have been asking!

When we begin to talk with each other about God, we gain insight as we hear persons express their innermost, heartfelt needs. How are your listening skills? Are you asking the right questions? Strong spiritual leaders take time to listen and know how to really listen in order to make a difference in people's lives. Something to think about . . .

# Camino de fe in Santo Domingo

Rebeca Blondet

This workshop was sponsored by the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico and the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church in the U.S.

Although we did not have the number of participants we had hoped for, the five participating churches fully enjoyed the training that was led with great grace and skill by the Rev. Irma Violeta Cruz and Sarai Rosa de Pérez. These sisters conducted the program skillfully, under the leadership of the Rev. Victor Pérez Silvestry, the general coordinator of this and other efforts of the Evangelical Seminary for promoting "total quality" in the life of the church and of individuals.

On July 23, four of us met with Sister Irma and Sister Sarai for training as trainers. In fact, we are making plans to organize a workshop locally.

The workshop in our country was small in the number of participants, but it was intense and dynamic. We hope that it will also be rich in the fruits that result.

We give thanks to God for the opportunity to be a part of the *Camino de fe* family. We want to extend our thanks to everyone who made the project possible, including the churches in the U.S. that, through their donations, made the cost of the materials accessible.

And finally, with special warmth, we would like to end this brief testi-



## CAMINO DE FE

mony, offering our thanks to those who led the workshop, after overcoming many difficulties in order to arrive here: Thank you, Sarai! Thank you, Irma! Thank you, Víctor! God bless you!

*The Rev. Rebeca Blondet is Coordinator of Christian Education for La Iglesia Evangelica Dominicana.*

Your congregation can partner with a Latin American congregation by sponsoring their enrollment in FaithQuest. The enrollment fee for Latin American congregations is \$200US. If your congregation wishes to sponsor a Latin American congregation, please send a check (made payable to the General Board of Discipleship) to Joan Newell for Spanish FaithQuest, P.O. Box 340003, Nashville, TN 37203-0003.

## "Listening Nights"—A Practical Tool for Current Reality Assessment

In my third year as pastor of this church, I realized it would be almost impossible to visit with all the members in their settings. Yet, I wanted to know how effective our ministry plan was and, in general, how persons felt about our church. In FaithQuest language, "What was our current reality?"

I invited groups of 25 persons to a series of listening nights I called "A Night with the Pastor." A comfortable setting and refreshment made the evening pleasant. Two familiar FaithQuest evaluation questions (slightly altered for the situation) were asked: (1) "What do we do well as a church?" and (2) "What could we do better?"



Then a third question, "What one thing, if it were possible to do, would significantly change our church for the better?"

The listening provided very helpful information. Some of it reinforced our expectations, and some challenged us to rethink our current reality as we perceived it. A side benefit for members was a new feeling that the church and pastor cared enough to ask these questions and listen thoughtfully to the answers.

Listening, however, is more than data gathering. Listening behind the words to the real issues can make all the difference in the world in building a shared vision—especially to those of us who believe that "God plants a vision in the hearts and minds of God's people" and that to discover that vision takes some listening.