

# NOTES of MEI Core Leadership Team Planning Retreat

Thu May 4 5:30pm – Fri May 5, 2017 1:30pm

## Purpose and Goals

To plan for the continuing leadership of the MEI program at the School of Theology

1. Describe the current state of the program, its momentum and emerging opportunities and challenges.
2. Envision a team that could lead the program into the future
3. Identify three levels of support needed from the School of Theology
  - a. Support for growth
  - b. Support for basic maintenance
  - c. Little support – exit strategy
4. Develop a shared sense of the gifts and desire of each team members to contribute to the leadership team going forward.

Present: John deBeer, Tricia deBeer, April Berends, David Cobb, Evan Garner, Marilyn Lands, Lisa McIndoo, Andy Thompson, Kammy Young.

Absent: Rob McAllister (*prayers for his family and thanksgiving for life of his grandmother*)

## THURSDAY

7:00 *After dinner and the evening worship, all shared around the questions:*

How are you personally challenged by this transition in leadership? When have you faced a similar challenge, and how did you respond?

7:50 *Covenant for what we need from one another for this time to be safe, comfortable, enjoyable*

- Start/end on time
- What is said stays in the room
- Agree on what gets communicated out
- Listen charitably
- Honest communication
- Open and receptive to difference
- Willing to engage with tension
- Ask about values
- Have fun

7:55-8:00 PM *2 Timothy 1:6-7 I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you... for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.*

BCP O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which were cast down are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things are made, your son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FRIDAY

After breakfast and morning prayer in COTA with the seminary, as a group we worked together to:

Describe the current state of the program, the contributions it has already made, its emerging opportunities and challenges.

Where are We:

OBSERVATIONS	CONTRIBUTIONS	CHALLENGES	MOMENTUM
Meaningful committed relationships at all levels of the church – parishioners, clergy, diocese	People and parishes committed to work of taking the church in the communities	“Thing that Kammy does”	Energy and direction – stories of those who have been involved
Community organizing as lay empowerment		Challenge in the S.O.T. and outside “Kammy keeps calling.”	Opportunity to implement more fully.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basic course</li> <li>- Elective</li> </ul>		Coaches who were seminarians had mixed results. How to equip coaches better	Gives churches a way to get from here to there
Mission work ⇒ relational		Can’t do traditional field ed and coaching at the same time	“Essential Practices for Christian Discipleship” – curriculum residing in the Beecken Center – 36 week, EfM-like format designed for EfM grads
Program evolved in constraints of grants – size of communities, locality, personnel, etc.			Cultural shift toward lay empowerment
Been hard to get people together			If S.O.T. support, can be implemented in variety of ways
Name change / loss of momentum			People want to be relational

Been operating on a very tight budget			Funding for doing the work in rural communities – broadly defined. Is money out there. Attractive program with several years of success.
Field ed parishes have been participating			Non-degree programs – field ed – MEI might be a good fit – people who come fit the profile of people we are looking for. Could bring team to day long event.
1) Students connected in advance with their congregation (2014-2015) 2) Could be field ed in one parish and coaching in another (2016-2017)			Field ed as lay empowerment Newcomer engagement program – give field ed mentors suggestion for projects to implement

**Envision a team that leads the program into the future.**

Team Visions:

- ¾ to full time position
- Faculty member “with seat at the table”
- Team
  - o field ed mentors with mixture
  - o more closely geographic centered
- More integration into life of seminary
- Beecken Center involvement
- Non-degree program
- Recent graduates, alums of MEI
- Trained, paid coaches

**What support needed from the School of Theology:**

- a. **To take advantage of the current momentum, exploring the potential of the program to expand locally and by extension.**

- 1) Full Faculty Member (PHD?)
  - Dedicated to MEI

- Separate from Contextual Ed
- 2) Connection with Beecken Center
  - Grants, Financial sustainability
  - EfM
- 3) Connection with College
  - Civic Engagement office
  - Karen Procter
  - Episcopal Service Corps
- 4) 2<sup>nd</sup> 3 Years Program
- 5) Affiliation with Community Organizing network

**b. To maintain the program at its current level**

- 1) \$7,500 for events and trainings
- 2) Staffing
  - College-level course (as seminar with theological component)
  - Identify parish for fall
  - Staff program with trainers, coaches, and S.O.T. personnel/teachers
  - Leadership: Sewanee staff, field education, Beecken Center, Parish Lay leaders, NDTP
- 3) Long Range
  - Explore Beecken
  - Non-degree Theological Program (NDTP)
  - Funding/Grants

**c. To close the program gracefully (Leadership Team Exit Gracefully)**

- 1) Conant Grant collaboration: report and website of resources and best practices in seminaries
  - a. Website could be owned by the collaborative or by Seminaries that Change the World or LDI Praxis community
- 2) Split off as coaches, presenters, trainers for diocesan and parish events
- 3) Individuals contribute to the Episcopal Church
  - i. Jesus Movement curriculum/training – FORMA
- 4) Direct people to the LDI Praxis Community
- 5) Train the trainers event in the fall or summer of 2017
  - a. Either MEI shut down, or
  - b. Equip contextual education program staff more fully to incorporate into MNST 521/522 (required course)

Subgroup to describe support needed for the three possibilities above.  
Share in whole group and find consensus

How will this be communicated to the School of Theology?

**What role on the team am I feeling called to play? What support do I need to do this? What is my next step?**

- 1) Andy
  - a. Thinking about MEI as compliment to Non-degree Theological Studies program
  - b. Will raise with Dean and faculty as important (advocate)
  - c. Help with elective course (MNST 562) in future, as schedule allows
  - d. Liaison to schedule MEI team meeting with the Dean
- 2) David
  - a. Being part of this as a crucial element of contextual education (engagement vs. observation)
  - b. Interim Leadership Team communication coordinator
- 3) April
  - a. Help build the case for continuing MEI
  - b. Participate in 5/24/2017 conversation
  - c. Continue, if others do, on MEI Leadership Team
- 4) Evan
  - a. Communication strategy with wider community
  - b. Further strategic planning
  - c. Set up work for hand-off
  - d. Make space for MEI, coach, student and specific, carefully defined role
- 5) Marilyn
  - a. Continue on Leadership, training, and coaching teams
  - b. Part of group presentation to Soft to articulate MEI options
- 6) Lisa
  - a. Share any of my knowledge about this program (training, coaching, etc.)
  - b. Alumni storyteller (Public narrative call to action)
- 7) Kammy
  - a. Finishing follow up to grant
  - b. Sabbatical  $\Rightarrow$  disseminating knowledge / network
  - c. Being part of LDI praxis community  $\Rightarrow$  info to rest of group
  - d. Central Gulf coast work

1:15 Evaluation, Closing prayer and Departed at 1:30 PM

# Kammy's additional NOTES of MEI Core Leadership Team Planning Retreat

Thu May 4 5:30pm – Fri May 5, 2017 1:30pm

## SHARED STRATEGY IDEAS:

- 1) In the 5/24/17 meeting Evan will be the spokesperson for our common agreement on what is communicated out:

**Start with sharing what support is needed from the School of Theology for a. (To take advantage of the current momentum, exploring the potential of the program to expand locally and by extension; see below), then here's what b. looks like (To maintain the program at its current level; see below) or else let's release that energy in the wider church with c. (To close the program gracefully; see below).**

- 2) In 5/24 meeting will raise MEI as important component of the elective course MNST 521, "Transforming Congregations & Communities"
- 3) Communicate that what is essential for this to be viable is:
  - **25 hours per week** - the level of human resources devoted to this
  - **Integrated** – how central it is for this position working with MEI and the MNST course to be integrated with the whole of the contextual education program and the day in and day out life of the community, faculty, curriculum and program committee, etc.
  - **Accountability** – the institution can invasion growth, in time, or else pivot to exiting gracefully
- 4) Andy will raise MEI as part of Non-degree Theological Studies program
- 5) Owning bishops – of students who've benefited from this program; kind key success stories and then have those bishops tell the Dean about that
- 6) Research to support this
- 7) Legislative process of General Convention; See attached GC Resolution 2012-A135 and 2015-A096 which strongly support our MEI work and community organizing
- 8) Without a hub position the MEI Leadership team cannot continue

**What support needed from the School of Theology:**

**A. To take advantage of the current momentum, exploring the potential of the program to expand locally and by extension.**

- 1) Full Faculty Member (PHD?)
  - a. Dedicated to MEI
  - b. Separate from Contextual Ed
- 2) Connection with Beecken Center
  - a. Grants, Financial sustainability
  - b. EfM
- 3) Connection with College
  - a. Civic Engagement office
  - b. Karen Procter
  - c. Episcopal Service Corps
- 4) Optional: 2<sup>nd</sup> 3 Years Program
- 5) Optional: Affiliation with Community Organizing network

**B. To maintain the program at its current level**

- 1) \$7,500 for events and trainings
- 2) Staffing
  - College-level course (as seminar with theological component)
  - Identify parish for fall
  - Staff program with trainers, coaches, and S.O.T. personnel/teachers
  - Leadership: Sewanee staff, field education, Beecken Center, Parish Lay leaders, NDTP
- 3) Long Range
  - Explore Beecken
  - Non-degree Theological Program (NDTP)
  - Funding/Grants

**C. To close the program gracefully (Leadership Team Exit Gracefully)**

- 1) Conant Grant collaboration: report and website of resources and best practices in seminaries
  - a. Website could be owned by the collaborative or by Seminaries that Change the World or LDI Praxis community
- 2) Split off as coaches, presenters, trainers for diocesan and parish events
- 3) Individuals contribute to the Episcopal Church
  - i. Jesus Movement curriculum/training – FORMA
- 4) Direct people to the LDI Praxis Community
- 5) Train the trainers event in the fall or summer of 2017
  - a. Either MEI shut down, or
  - b. Equip contextual education program staff more fully to incorporate into MNST 521/522 (required course)



**Resolution Number:** 2015-A096  
**Title:** Affirm Relationships in Approaches to Social Justice Ministry  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 78th General Convention affirm the many justice ministries of service and advocacy throughout The Episcopal Church, ministries that are grounded in the Baptismal Covenant and that were initiated by General Conventions, dioceses, congregations, and other Episcopal organizations; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this Convention affirm and encourage the use of various methods to discern, develop, and sustain justice ministries, such as Asset-Based Community Development, needs surveys, and community organizing; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this Convention affirm and encourage the formation of partnerships between congregations and well-established community organizing groups in their local contexts in order to be trained in the practice of community organizing and sustained by those partnerships that they may do justice ministry more effectively and efficiently; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this Convention acknowledge that one of the greatest challenges of our time and culture is the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the sin of economic injustice that pervades our society; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this Convention challenge all Episcopalians to hear in a bold way the call of both Jesus and St. Francis of Assisi to befriend and be with the poor, and that we come to know that the future vitality of The Episcopal Church is grounded in our mutually affirming relationships with our brothers and sisters who are poor; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this Convention encourage all Episcopal congregations to establish relationship-based, social-justice ministries through which relationships are developed between those who serve and those who are served, resulting in shared and transformational experiences and in a greater commitment to work for justice on all sides of the socio-economic divide; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this Convention encourage churches and dioceses to discover and partner with local experts such as Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), Direct Action and Research Training (DART), Gamaliel Foundation, Asset Based Community Development, People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO), and other local formulations of interfaith or cross cultural organizations that use relationships to structure their transformative work; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this Convention ask Episcopal groups that are participating in relationship-based social justice to share their experiences with the broader Church through social media, the internet, and official communication channels, so that other groups can learn from their successes, challenges, and insights.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 368-369.





**Resolution Number:** 2012-A135  
**Title:** Commit to Alleviating Poverty and Injustice  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Substituted  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That a faithful response to the Gospel as well as the Five Marks of Mission in this time of growing economic inequality and political gridlock requires that we "respond to human need by loving service" and "seek to transform unjust structures of society"; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church commit to a triennium of teaching, preaching, organizing, advocating, and building mutually transformative relationships with those who are poor to focus our hearts and the mission of our congregations and dioceses on reducing poverty and increasing economic and racial justice; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the church cultivate mindfulness about poverty in our communities and world, as well as the poverty into which Christ calls us, by including in our prayer and in every meeting agenda, time for prayer and reflection on how our work engages issues of poverty and economic and racial justice networks; and be it further*

*Resolved, That we identify and build strong partnerships within The Episcopal Church as well as with interfaith organizations and secular agencies and institutions to increase our learning and to maximize our investment of time and treasure; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church encourage congregations to join local faith-based organizing networks such as PICO (People Improving Communities Through Organizing), IAF (Industrial Areas Foundation), Gamaliel Foundation, The DART Network (Direct Action and Research Training Center), and the Inter-Valley Project to build power and to increase our effectiveness in strengthening our communities; and be it further*

*Resolved, That congregations and dioceses seek out training in and use the tools of Asset Based Community Development recognizing that God has blessed each of us with gifts for the good of the kingdom and that we strengthen our communities not by implementing programs from outside but by identifying and building from the assets already existing in the community; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church continue its strategic and prophetic investment in locally defined community development initiatives in Native People's communities through an annual commitment of \$100,000 during the 2013-2015 triennium; and be it further*

*Resolved, That through asset based community development grants, community organizing grants, and Jubilee Ministry grants that [sic] The Episcopal Church support local ministries and regional trainings that increase the church's capacity to reduce poverty and increase economic and racial justice through an annual commitment of \$300,000 during the 2013-2015 triennium using available social media networks of the Offices of Missions and Communication of the DFMS to communicate availability of funds and provide reports on program activity and grants made; and be it further*

*Resolved, That The Episcopal Church's commitment to reducing poverty and increasing economic and racial justice be facilitated, encouraged, inspired, and supported by the Mission Program Office of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and by an Executive Council Advisory Committee on Domestic Poverty; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$400,000 for the implementation of this resolution.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), pp. 590-592.