



## **Planning Team Conference Call Notes**

**Monday, August 28, 2017 1:00PM Pacific/3:00PM Central/4:00PM Eastern**

Participating: Ray Bagnuolo, Marianne Duddy-Burke, Pamela Lightsey, Jim Mitulski, Rick Mixon, Sylvia Rhue, Bernie Schlager, Mel Soriano, Justin Tanis, Marnie Warner, Judith Wray. Staff: Lauren Bennett, Mark Bowman, Linda Brenner, Carl Foote, AhSa-Ti Tyehimba-Ford.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTION: If you were writing your epitaph today, it would be...(6 words or less)?

Mark: Lived for Love, Justice and Music

Judith: Shared Love, Grace and Peace

Marnie: She never missed an opportunity

Linda: Living loved, seeking compassion living grace

Justin: Passionate for Justice and Love (prayers for swelling from lungs because of teargas at protest)

Jim: To be remembered

Sylvia: Relentless Drum maker for Justice

AhSa-Ti: Music, Family and Community

Mel: Cared, Listened, Did

Bernie: He was Kind, loving and generous

Lauren: Loved fiercely

Rick: Nevertheless he persisted

Marianne: Married, lesbian, Catholic Priest, Mom

Carl: Uncle, Husband

Pamela: Spoke her mind, even if her voice trembled

### **1. REGISTRATIONS Lauren**

Registration is slowly increasing - we have 34 regular registrants who join our invited guests. Now, we also have 4 scholarship recipients and a few sponsors. All adds up to 101 registrants. The most urgent thing right now is to talk to your organizations! The largest group who is registered is MCC, so please consider an immediate release for the September 1st deadline to save on the Early Bird rate for the conference. A number of planning team members have not registered yet—please do so.

### **2. SCHOLARSHIPS Mel & Marianne**

Eighteen applications have been received. One was international in origin, from the Philippines. All were active in LGBT ministry or outreach and only two were not currently students. Marianne and I decided to extend an offer to all who applied. Notifications were sent out this week. Two have withdrawn because of schedule conflicts. Applications will continue to be collected if people still apply and we will assess the merit accordingly.

Deadline has been extended and reviewing will be on a rolling basis. Date on website needs to be changed to "as soon as possible."

### 3. PUBLICITY Linda

Promotional Videos and Memes: Compilation video is underway. Promo Guest videos are being released on RTSA Facebook and reposted on MCC's page. Guests are being asked to repost videos and memes on their personal and organizational page.

Organizational Media Kit: A flyer has been designed noting the September 1 discount registration deadline and sent via Mark to Guests. A kit is being finalized for organizations to repost. It will feature compilation video, flyer, link that will allow a copy and paste feature into an organization's mailing platform.

Organizing a meeting this week to respond to the NAACP travel advisory. So far, Pamela, AhSa-Ti and Carl will be a part of that meeting this week and will have a draft out by Friday for review.

Pamela suggested looking to support minority owned businesses in the local area. Mark has contacted the St. Louis Minority Business Council. Rev. Willis Johnson might have other thoughts on tracking down minority-owned businesses.

Mark highlighted the need for more videos that represent a higher diversity of those who are involved with the conference. Justin: Do you need a diversity of messages and attendees? Linda: In short, yes, need all types of diversities, gender, sexual orientation, decades of active service etc.

### 4. WEBSITE Carl

A number of additional invited guests have been added in past month: Alison Amyx, Avery Belyeu, Darnell Fennell, Morris Floyd, Darlene Garner, Candy Holmes, Cedric Harmon, Malcolm Himschoot, Jamie Manson, Keisha McKenzie, Alex McNeill, Matthew Vines. Full list at: <https://rollingthestoneaway.org/invited-guests/> Delores Berry has died and Sarah Flynn decided not to participate.

As guests have confirmed the suggestion for their presentation role, their pics have been added to the Program Schedule page: <https://rollingthestoneaway.org/program-schedule>

RTSA website traffic has continued to grow, now averaging 60 visits per day (up from 37 a month ago). There is one change in the pattern of use -- visits to the Registration page have risen from 2% to 12% of the total traffic, placing the Registration page ahead of the Guests and Schedule pages (10% of total visits, each). A good sign that people are starting to think about attending.

A theory in the jump for people looking is that the program is now coming together and more details are being revealed.

To make the home page more dynamic, Carl will post one of our videos there. Linda proposed that the user have opportunity to turn on sound rather than it starting automatically.

### 5. AUDIO-VISUAL AhSa-Ti

We have received one more promotional video—from Karen Oliveto. It will be on the website soon. We need more, particularly representing diversity of race and faith traditions. AhSa-Ti and Mark will be in St. Louis on Sept 6th and 7<sup>th</sup> to meet with the hotel and A-V staff for a walk through of the spaces we will be using. AhSa-Ti also hopes to meet with several prospective AV vendors to begin budgeting equipment needs and cost.

Trying to get more companies to offer bids. Mark and AhSa-Ti are looking to expand staff a bit for the onsite work. Mark noted that they are going to St. Louis next week at the request of the hotel which is less busy.

For site visit: Marnie requested that the arrangement for the rooms for the breakout panels be laid out to prep for how to put in the video equipment, layout etc.

#### 6. DEVELOPMENT Ryan

Mark is handling the last phase of our fundraising efforts and Ryan is transitioning to managing programming in the exhibit hall. Ryan has done initial outreach to seminaries and LGBTQ organizations to consider sponsoring RTSA and/or exhibiting with us. Follow-up will be ongoing as the conference nears. Additionally, Ryan has set up a crowdsourcing campaign on [youcaring.com](http://youcaring.com) to help raise an additional \$5,000 for the young adult scholarship fund. We are planning to launch this after the Labor Day holiday. Your support in sharing this campaign within your networks will be instrumental to its success. More information forthcoming soon.

Ryan is also assisting with conference marketing by posting on the RTSA Facebook page and pushing out highlights, updates, stories, etc. We have recently invested in a paid campaign that targets those interested in Christianity and LGBTQ issues in the St. Louis, Chicago, Kansas City, and Indianapolis areas. Our hope is that this will grow our reach with those interested in our work within a drivable distance to the conference.

Mark reported that we are projecting our income to be \$15,000 short of the budget. The Arcus Grant proposal has been completed and we will get a response on September 29<sup>th</sup>. Now, the goal is to also look at how to make that up including with the exhibit hall and following up with planning team members and invited guests.

Rick asked if the \$35,000 Arcus grant goes toward the \$15,000 budget shortfall? The Finance Committee decided not to count on that money to make up the budget shortfall because it's too close the conference. But if we get it, the planning team will decide how to allocate that for conference expenses as well as the post-conference work of video editing and posting on website.

#### 7. EXHIBIT HALL & PROGRAM BOOK Mark

The staff have started brainstorming and gathering ideas for ancillary activities that will happen around our program, primarily the exhibit area and the program book. Review their initial ideas and plans here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-jEDG7w37fsY750rtg5u9AqRVV-ibgFeqqTUAItmsFU/edit> All suggestions and comments welcome. This will be reported in more detail in the next planning team call.

Planning Team members are encouraged to look at the list and put input on the list.

Rick asked if there could be a process to ask for specific Quilt panels of persons important to our movement from the AIDS Project.

#### 8. WORSHIP/SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES Mark

The Program Team in its early work proposed that we offer some spiritual exercises or worship experiences on Wednesday and Thursday mornings during last half of breakfast period, 7:45 to 8:30AM. One proposal was to offer experiences from our different traditions, i.e., a Dignity Mass, an MCC service, worship experiences from other groups/traditions, etc. In this case we could invite our participating organizations to produce a ritual activity that reflected their tradition/history. Another option would be to invite some appropriate duos or trios from our invited guests to offer a spiritual exercise or ritual activity of their own creation. The staff can pursue this but would like direction from the planning team on how to organize this? How many experiences to offer each morning—one, two or three?

Jim: Originally proposed that we have someone or a group to do something short – 45 minutes – to match our deeply rooted worship body – one day Catholic and one day Protestants.

Rick: An idea is to ask a couple of people to ask people to do something.

Bernie: Was an idea to have an organization take responsibility for a day or two? Jim: Yes, Dignity, MCC, another Protestant. Bernie: Maybe Water?

Judith: A short homily to showcase the folks we have there to offer an opportunity; DoC would do a service.

Marianne: Maybe a meditation service when there is the Catholic Mass as some might not feel comfortable.

Jim: Maybe meditation both days Lauren suggested that Rev. Lillie Brock at MCC Greater St. Louis can do meditation.

Mark: Suggests that this not go back to the Program Team which has a full workload, but that the planning team provide direction to the staff who will organize.

Jim: MCC, Dignity, and DoC with meditation session.

Mel: Would be willing to lead a Taize service.

Rick: Propose that there be 3 opportunities each morning: a) liturgical tradition; b) free church; c) meditation/contemplation.

Judith: Reminder that we said we would offer AA meetings. Staff will follow up to provide space and times.

#### 9. PROGRAM TEAM Judith

The Program Team has brought the list of breakout panel presentations down to 12 through integrating and eliminating. Here is their proposed list along with notes/comments for review by the Planning Team. The next step is to identify speakers for each of these panels.

#### Session 4

**1 Allies, Parents, Grass roots organizing, Welcoming Congregations**

**2 Impact of AIDS**

**3 Facing persecution—church trials and defrocking**

**4 Uppity Women lead us forward, from Stonewall to today: Lesbian feminism and trans women**

**5 Organizing in church communities of color**

**6 Racism, sexism, classism, trans-phobia and bi-phobia in LGBT Christian movements**

#### Session 5

**1 Queer theology and Biblical Interpretation: Where do we go from here?**

**2 Emerging trans identities: Transforming Our Movement, Transforming Our Churches**

**3 Engaging the Religious Right & Ex-Gays and Ex-Ex-Gays**

**4 Becoming Mainstream /Shifting Perspectives on Marriage**

**5 Role of Sex in Shaping our Movement and our Theology**

**6 Intersection of Religion and Politics / Moral leadership / Values; Tensions between religious & secular activists and LGBTQ diaspora**

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Goals and Challenges:

Every invitee gets listed on the program in some leadership opportunity

Minimize conflicts of interest among breakouts within each session

Consider diversities on each and every breakout leadership team, where appropriate

How many leaders listed per breakout??

Leadership/Coordinator for each session??

How to include historians, scholars, current leaders in these breakout sessions??

Continue to be assertive about addressing Session 4.6 in all plenaries to avoid impression that we are relegating this only to a breakout.

Be intentional about including ecumenical/interfaith/globalization in plenaries.

Include session on healing wounds, resentments/support system for survival in pre-conference schedule.

Lauren: Session 4: 1 title is a bit long and might be ambitious – maybe shorten title and if all this fits into the session then that is great.

Rick: Looks like 12 strong sessions.

Linda: Sessions look great; particularly titles like “Uppity Women”

Session 5: 6 – looks complex – another title to shorten.

Justin: Thank you for making sure sex was a part and for putting in goals and challenges.

Mark: Once we assign people, they will decide to go the direction they will go – we are not going to control how folks will focus the conversation – this is a starting place.

Next step: Matching folks to which session. If you know someone who would be great for a session pass on to Mark, Judith or Marnie.

NEXT MEETING Monday, September 11 4:00PM Eastern/3:00PM Central/1:00PM Pacific

Mark noted that based upon input from the planning team, we will now meet every two weeks at this same time leading up to the conference. Pamela expresses appreciation for the consistent date.

Jim closed with prayer.