

Rolling the Stone Away Planning Team

Conference Call Notes

Monday, April 17, 2017 2:00PM Eastern/11:00AM Pacific

Participating: Ray Bagnuolo, Jim Mitulski, Rick Mixon, Sylvia Rhue, Mel Soriano, Justin Tanis, Marnie Warner, Judith Wray. Staff: Mark Bowman, Ann Craig, Carl Foote.

Mark welcomed everyone and noted that Lauren Bennett & Pamela Lightsey unable to join call; Marianne Duddy-Burke & Ryan Hoffman are ill and Barb Crabtree is now on sabbatical.

NOTE: See agenda for reports presented in this conference call.

INVITATIONS (Mark)

36 guests are invited and confirmed—see them on website. 10 were confirmed since our last call. 13 persons are still thinking about it or we are still contacting. No more invitations being extended until more funds are available.

We now have a Scholar Advisory Group—available to answer our questions—which can be seen on the web site.

Rick will help track down Rodger Harrison. Marnie asked if we know who will be in the next round of invitations. Mark indicated that the planning team hasn't indicated that yet—sentiment being to firm up program first and then invite persons to fill out program.

WEBSITE (Carl)

The website is up and running. Biggest change has been a revised Donation page on which persons can make a gift directly without being routed through LGBT-RAN. Planning team members noted that website is attractive and functional. Rick asked if publicity information would be available—see below.

Marnie asked if July 1 is too soon for the early registration deadline—whether we have enough time to really circulate publicity before then. Mark recommended that we leave at July 1 and later decide to offer a two-week special extension on early registration if that seems appropriate.

REGISTRATION (Mark)

Lauren is in class and not able to be here. Three persons from the general public have registered. Most of the invited guests have registered. 8 planning team and staff have registered. Reminder that all expenses for planning team and staff members are covered; however, contributions—including paying registration fee—are most helpful. Let Mark, Ryan or Lauren know what you can contribute. Here are Lauren's instructions (circulated earlier) on how you should register:

Following a recommendation from the meeting, I have created a separate registrant type for staff in case you or your organization wants to either pay the cost of your registration or offer an initial donation.

The cost of regular registrants right now is \$280 and goes up to \$330 in July. Your registration rate will still be \$0.00 but you can click the donate tab when prompted and enter this or any amount in order to cover your own registration costs if you so choose.

To register, follow this link:

<https://www.gifttool.com/registrar/ShowEventDetails?ID=1668&EID=23611>

When prompted, enter the code: Staff

Please note that if you are seeking a single room or brining a spouse or partner, you will be charged the rate in the system.

Let me know if you have any questions.

PUBLICITY/COMMUNICATIONS (Ann)

An email went out last week to leaders and communicators in the 13 participating groups that included an announcement and pdf and eps placeholder ad. Ann will follow up with each group this week with calls and collaborative strategies. Then will also follow up with other interested groups. We will be providing graphic art for ¼, ½, and full page ads. Ads and other resources will be posted on the RTSA website. The current publicity graphics & info will be posted by Tuesday, April 18.

FUNDRAISING (Mark)

We have raised about \$10,000 so far with \$5,000 is from the planning team and invited guests. One large gift (\$5,000) came from an invited guest. Ryan is well-organized and will keep track of potential donors and how to follow up to ask them for support. However, the process of getting donor prospects is very slow. Our two primary sources of donor prospects are: 1) from invited guests; and 2) from participating organizations. Mark has made a couple requests to all of the invited guests, but only received a few responses. He will follow up individually now. We are getting varying responses from participating program leaders: RMN will do the ask themselves; MCC has given some names (just arrived); More Light Presbyterians not willing to identify donors. Mark will continue followup. Remember that small groups and congregations might make \$100 gifts. Planning team members encouraged to think about their personal connections. Remember that the #1 reason someone gives is “someone they know asked them to give.” It’s not about being eloquent. “This is a lifetime opportunity and if you can give, that would be a great gift.” Ryan & Finance Team can provide a script to help make an ask. Everyone on call asked to say the next steps they will undertake in this effort:

Judith—has identified a couple of prospects and will follow up with those.

Jim—thinks that his Boston MCC congregation will sponsor a guest and his UCC congregation is able to give. He will confer with MCC colleagues on whom in that arena to ask and also talk with his SF colleagues where he has more contacts. Also confer with other planning team members in Boston area on collaboration.

Marnie—has a letter ready to do out to 40 persons. Will send a few each day.

Rick—will confer with Katie (AWAB ED) and bring this up at their board meeting tomorrow night.

Mel—will make contacts with Integrity board and donor contacts.

Justin—thinking of some seminaries who might want to support their alums who are being honored at RTSA and also support students to come and interact with our guests.

Ray—will help promote through social media.

Sylvia—is thinking of organizations that could contribute.

PROGRAM (Jim, Ray, Judith)

Jim highlighted the report distributed prior to this call:

The program team has been meeting nearly weekly via conference call, looking at various considerations and how they inform what the program will look like. These include:

-the number of days we have, including the first day where we have invited guests principally, and then the remaining days where the conference attendees are infused

- the physical layout , the large assembly space, the number and size of break out rooms

-the age and health situations of some of the invited guests and the optimal scheduling of things to allow their participation

-how to provide access for interviews, the press, interested attendees, photo opportunities to people who will generate such interests

- what modes of presentation and interaction to employ at various times: plenaries, lectures, large and small

group interactions, fish bowls, panels,

-what kinds of late evening entertainment activities might incentivize registration and be open to public- concerts such as with Cris Williamson or Linda Tilley or Bobby Jo Valentine as examples of different demographics that might be engaged (ALL of these notes are confidential- none of these artists have been contacted- these are meant as examples)

-the role of worship- some extensive conversation took place about this, whether to have it all, whether to have it at off times, whether to have it as part of the schedule- some of our guests are renowned principally as preachers.

A Dignity Mass, an MCC service, a etc

-encouraging groups to schedule reunions during this period, or connected to the conference in some way

-we are establishing an academic advisory committee and have already had two extremely helpful consultations with two academics: Monique Moutrie and Heather White.

-We have spent considerable time considering how to make sure we address dynamics overall in regard to addressing a broad historical period. We are committed to maintain a commitment to issues of race, class, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.

There are two variables that will ultimately impact what the program looks like that all of us- the whole team- can impact

-how many invited guests we can include, and the breadth and variety as a result

-how many registrants we can deliver- the more the better, not just for revenue but for the synergy that will result

In the end we know this conference can be one that not only celebrates and preserves history but that becomes a moment history as well. By the next full team meeting- if we have full month at least to prepare we hope to have a preliminary schedule for you to look at.

Marnie encouraged that we be willing to get some program information on the website as soon as we can.

Doesn't have to be complete in order to start enticing persons to come. Also wondering if worship is something that draws everyone together.

Jim noted that we are hoping that the flavor of each group is not erased by ecumenical character of the event. There can be a range of spiritual participation—pastoral care, small groups, social events. Some invited guests have said "I am no longer a Christian, do you still want me?" Worship may be controversial. Discussion ensued on pros, cons and possibilities for different kinds of worship experiences. Justin pointed out the possibility to feature some creative liturgies and rituals which our movements have created in the past. Observations made that this discussion illuminates the complexity of the task of shaping our program. The program team asked to share their background discussions and reflections along with their report to help the full planning team understand the rationale behind proposed program plans.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS (Mark)

Justin noted that five seminarians from the Trans Cohort at CLGS will be meeting before and during our conference. They will be a strong resource to draw on. Mark reported that Mel White, after initially declining to participate because of his partner's health, is now planning to come and host a SoulForce Reunion over one of the mealtimes. There is great potential for other groups to have meetings, reunion and receptions around our ecumenical gathering. This will be a significant boost to participation in RTSA.

Mark will confer with Wes Mullins at MCC St. Louis about convening reps from area welcoming congregations to talk about plans and support for RTSA. He plans to visit there later in May.

NEXT MEETING Tuesday, May 16, 3:30PM Eastern/2:30PM Central/12:30PM Pacific.