



Planning Team Conference Call Notes

Tuesday, May 16, 2017 12:30PM Pacific/2:30PM Central/3:30PM Eastern

Introductory question: "For me Rolling the Stone Away will be a success if....."

Mark: ... we have 400-500 people there.

Marnie: ... leaders of different denominations talk about experiences together

Ann: ... People really get involved with making and recording history

Judith: When all of these historic stories energize and empower the next generation

Jim: Something historic

Ray.... When people come together?

Sylvia ... when people who have been on the front lines know their lives work is important and they feel good about it

Ryan ... when people build relationships with new folks and gain new perspectives

MaryAnn ... when the saints and prophets learn there are new generations to take the work

Carl ... When the rest of you are happy

1. Report on meeting with Executive Directors Marianne
Marianne, Ray & Mark did a conference call with EDs/Leaders of our participating organizations (Rachelle Brown, Kathy Cheney-Egan, Mark Johnston, David Key, Andy Lang, Alex McNeill, Mel Soriano, Aubrey Thornvold, Amalia Vagts) on May 9th to fill them in on plans for the conference, answer their questions and suggest how they could support the effort. Ann joined the call to talk about publicity. Marianne will report on results of this conversation.

Marianne added that many of the EDs didn't know a lot about the event, so a lot of time was taken talking about logistics and details. Also talked about ways that Rolling the Stone Away can be used to advance communal and individual agendas.

They requested being in a communications loop, but not having future conference calls unless needed. Mark will take that on as a next step to put together a periodic email with major updates to send to these leaders.

Ray added that there was a lot of energy around how the various EDs can support, everyone was very energetic toward the conference.

2. Outreach trip to St. Louis Mark
- Mark will go to St. Louis May 31-June 2 to talk with members of local Welcoming Congregations about RTSA and how they can participate. He also will meet with Eden Seminary officials to discuss ideas for offering CEUs or even a seminary class. And will research local media. Lorin Cope (UCC Coalition) and Wes Mullins (MCC St. Louis) are helping organize the trip.
- Lauren Bennett will also be there for another meeting and will accompany Mark on the trip.
- After a question from Pamela, Mark reminded everyone that if they know any people or organizations in St. Louis that would be interested in our conference, send Mark their contact info. Ann offered that Washington U might be a great place to connect.
3. Personnel Report Mark
- Two candidates have applied for the A-V Manager position. Will start process of review with Personnel Committee & staff.
4. Financial/Fundraising report Ryan
- From Ryan: I have worked diligently the past month getting up to speed on RTSA's participating programs, giving options, and major donor prospects since beginning April 1. I continue to work closely with Mark to identify donor prospects and cultivate contributions (thank you to those who've sent prospect suggestions!). The past couple weeks have witnessed needed momentum in our fundraising efforts with a handful of major gifts. I will continue to work our donor list with outreach via emails, letters, phone conversations and video conversations. Additionally, we are pursuing a couple grant opportunities. I've also assisted with the RTSA Facebook page by inviting page likes and posting content. You can see an updated list of financial supporters on the SUPPORT page of the website.
- Thanked all those who have assisted with the process in offering names/contact information. Thanked Marnie in particular for her help with some of the grants. So far, we have raised about 35,000. 35% toward our goal of 100,000. Work to do but good start.
5. Registration & Website Lauren/Carl
- There have been no new participant registrations the past two weeks. We have a total of 5 registrants who are not staff, planning team or invited guests/their spouses.
- The RTSA website went live three months ago, on March 15. Since then it has received an average of 16 visits per day, with three pages viewed per visit. On peak days, it can receive nearly five times the number of visits -- 78 visits on April 19, 55 visits on March 31, 52 visits on May 9... Pages visited: Home page 35%; About Us 16%; Invited Guests 15%; Program 8%; Support 6%; Exhibits 5%; FAQ 5%; Location 4%; Donate 3%; Media 2%.
- The launch of RTSA's Facebook page on May 6 was viewed by 140 people, of which 21 clicked through to the website and 8 shared it with their friends. Since then, posts to the Facebook page are viewed by roughly 50 people, of which a few will click through or share.

6. Publicity report Ann

The communications staff has been reaching out to leaders of the sponsoring organizations to identify additional ways to participate in the conference which will enhance both their programmatic outreach as well as participation in the conference. Many groups have events over the summer which will be prime venues for promotion. Palm cards are available and will be printed and shipped on request. At RTSA there are time frames before and after the event, along with blocks during RTSA, which can be utilized by participant groups to convene constituents. Facebook posts are already being circulated and will be coordinated over the coming weeks and months.

Ann is talking with groups about ways to connect with their own constituents that serves their own self-interest, like helping groups come up with a time to meet during or around the conference.

Ann reported that the EDs prefer having printed materials sent to them for their conferences, rather than downloading and printing themselves.

On FB and website, low numbers will be helped by people on the planning team sharing the information with their friends, networks etc. Idea bank: early pics of some invited guests and “do you recognize this person?” —might be a way to generate interest and momentum. However, not to be a popularity contest.

Ray asked that publicity resources be uploaded on the website in jpg format and other formats easy to upload to html for websites.

7. Program Team report & discussion Jim/Judith/Ray/Mark

First, attached is a draft of a schedule for the Rolling the Stone Away program with general titles/descriptions of the sessions. Jim, Judith & Ray will provide more details about some of these sessions in the meeting.

Mark reviewed the outline of the program—suggested activities with the invited guests on the preconference day leading into the conference that begins at 4:00PM on Tuesday and ends at noon on Thursday. Two breakout sessions are planned (sessions 4 & 5 on Wednesday) in which six different panels or discussion groups would present. Rest of sessions would be the whole assembly. Have built in opportunities for groups that want to have their own reunion/gathering—these could be Tuesday dinner, Wednesday or Thursday breakfast and later evening reception time. Initial list of 12 panel discussion topics given that still need review & revision.

Judith reported initial plans for Session 1: Creative introductions. Recognize that some participants present could have been invited guests. Use video/photos, i.e., creative ways to introduce all of the guests. Want to affirm the importance of the presence of everyone there. On Tuesday evening proposed a Ritual of Remembrance. The closing session on Thursday could include video clips from the conference as well as looking ahead at what folks will take from this time together.

Jim reported on initial thoughts for Sessions 3, 6, & 8. Took all of the invited guests and divided them into three basic time periods of their activism: 1960-70s; 1980-90s; post-2000. Identifying the basic

historical activity/theme that was predominate in each period as way to focus presentation and conversation.

Ray shared interest in creating some places for people to participate in fun, informal ways – telling stories, offering poetry etc., in the evening sessions.

Needs a lot of tweaking. Pamela suggested that we not use “independent Black churches” phrasing.

Rick offered that there are a lot of big personalities who are invited and we ought to think through ways to invite full participation from them in appropriate ways.

Marnie likes the flow, in thinking of ways to involve people in the room – so it’s not all sitting. Remember that 3-4 guests can present on a panel so not everyone needs to present in the full group.

Pamela wants Mark to know that his work is celebrated and others want to know what he isn’t on the Invited Guest list. Mark mentioned that he considers all who are on the planning team a part of the invited guest list and that needs to be better communicated.

Ryan suggested we consider opportunities to have dialogue between persons of different generations.

Marianne suggested that it might be better to suggest groups have reunion or meal gathering on Wednesday night and not Tuesday night.

Secondly, the team is recommending that we invite all invited guests and planning team members to participate in one of six or seven scheduled conference calls during the first two weeks of June. These calls would be structured to invite sharing and reflections from everyone on what they bring to Rolling the Stone Away and how they might participate in the program—as a presenter or as a planner.

Feedback that this is a great idea and Rick offered to help participate shape/lead this process.

Judith asked if the program team would assist in leading this? Mark will follow up with interested persons.

8. Other Issues/Concerns

Ray asked about securing corporate sponsors and has had conversation with Marianne about doing this.

9. Next Meeting Date/Time

Wednesday, June 21, 2017 at 3:30p.m. Eastern/2:30p.m. Central/12:30 p.m. Pacific.

10. Jim closed us in prayer at 4:35p.m.