

Learning plan for leadership in diocesan environmental ministry

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1. Competency: Making connections theologically.

Goals: Become more facile at articulating environmental theology without oversimplifying and losing the nuances of science, theology, and systems thinking.

Learning projects: Write a tri-fold in the ST&F series on the three schools of creation theology I have identified. Helpful to the Committee, but also in the diocese.

Do more work on parables and ecology idea.

Push the envelope on a creation theology that respects evolutionary biology and is deeply informed by it.

Assessment/Accountability: For this goal, while there is colleague feedback in process, the emphasis will be on getting something into print that satisfies my criteria as articulated in the goal.

Background: When I was at the recent meeting of the Ecumenical Roundtable on Science, Theology and the Church, someone at my dinner table asked each of us how we were creative. I opined that I didn't feel I was very creative. One of the others at the table, a man who had sometimes challenged me or ignored me in plenary discussions in ways that seemed to suggest he was conflicted in his dealings with me, surprised me by saying he felt I was one of the most creative people there at connecting disparate bits of information, images, ideas. It was one of those "I didn't know you cared" moments. How does this affect my learning plan? It reminded me that I am a convergent learner, experimenting with concepts in ways that can generate new ideas or new understandings of old ones. So since life is short, developing this competence further is my top goal.

Progress so far, March 2008: I have drafted the document and gotten feedback from two fellow committee members. I now have to do one more revision and then take it to the meeting of the full committee on April 10.

2. Competency: Organizing people by developing, resourcing and collaborating (rather than only delegating, informing, and coercing or manipulating)

Goals: Using technology more effectively in organizing.

Learning projects: Do some group editing (relates to the writing project above, and maybe below) using the Google utility for on-line editing by a group.

Try other ideas from the Web 2.0 workshop at the recent Sustainable Enterprise

Conference, like building contact lists on line, or doing shared calendars, etc.

Share learnings about these with other networks of which I am a part.

Assessment/Accountability: The last aspect of the project - having enough familiarity with tools

to bring them into a different community and application - provides the assessment. Can I do this with at least two tools?

Background: I was encouraged by conversations with folks in Communication at the Church Center, reading Wikinomics, and the workshop at the SEC conference to get even more of a wiki mind set, and try more electronic collaboration. I like the idea of common values and tools among geeks, greens and ministry developers. And I always need to be doing some skill development, an area I can easily overlook.

Progress so far, March 2008: This is harder than I thought. I feel pretty fearless about computer applications, but getting everybody on board is a real chore. I have been surprised at how many people have difficulty getting beyond simple email to something like a yahoo or g-group or shared docs on google. And then figuring out how we are going to work together! One of the things I am trying is having the documents posted, but also have a dialogue document where we can have a running conversation about what we are doing with the docs.

I am still thinking about a blog for our diocesan Celebrating Creation Network where we can have a number of authors aggregating news and resource links. I love the simple blog format.

I need to figure out how what I am learning with the environmental stuff could work with the Redwood Cluster. Frustrating since there are many people with no net access. I'm encouraging the congregations to have a computer at church which those without one at home can use.

I did my calendar on line on Yahoo - a way to cut down on paper, by simply making it available to all in the Redwood Cluster with a need to know. I learned quickly how to protect my privacy and whereabouts with it - but I find that now when I don't have net access I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing!

3. Competency: Write about complex topics clearly and informally.

Goals: Claim what seems to be my gift and style and make it even better.

Learning projects: Continue to write for my blog and develop its audience.

Finish accessible versions, turning previous talks and sermons into articles that will be helpful to other environmental activists and leaders. (Relates to 1 above.)

Find and participate in a diverse writers' group locally where others who are not part of my church networks can give me constructive feedback regularly.

Assessment/Accountability: I am looking for two things here. One is an increase in "audience" feedback on my existing projects (writing for my blog and ENS/ELO). Of course I will look at the content, but I feel the same way about blogging and news writing that I do about preaching - it's getting specific feedback that matters, not necessarily favorable. The second

kind of feedback would be from a colleague group who write for a variety of contexts and purposes, if I can find or create such a group locally.

Background: I have gotten feedback from two friends who have no science background or training in systems thinking about the clarity of my writing. In one job application process the potential employer was looking for a combination volunteer developer and public information officer and was really impressed with my writing. In this and in my work for Episcopal News Service I have begun to see the connection between networking, relationship building and published writing. Also, I think I have always figured writing was just something anybody with a privileged education does, but I am learning that this is not true. I need to claim and develop this competence.

Progress so far, March 2008: I am continuing to blog, but not as frequently as in the first year. I do get good feedback on my style and voice there. But here's where I have trouble - re-writing, and doing third and fourth edits on my own stuff. Ugh! Right now I am writing this update on my learning plan instead of re-writing the main project of item 1. I did learn some things from having somebody carefully edit the article and sidebar I wrote for Episcopal Life print April. So I guess I really do need a buddy, if not a group, who could edit me. Particularly who might ask questions rather than making comments or corrections. Part of this resistance I know is being honest about one's strengths - I'm an idea person and an extravert - meaning I think with my mouth or fingers, and then get quickly bored at the idea of expressing it again, and again, and again....See # 4 below.

Other competencies which I have identified for this direction in ministry, but which are not to the forefront in my learning projects are:

4. Envision new realities; generate plans and ideas. (I am sometimes too good at this.)
5. Speak with passion and humor. (I'd like to do more work on preaching, but just don't have enough opportunities to practice at this time.)
6. Earn authority through building relationships. (I must already be pretty good at this because it's what seems to be what has in the past gotten me in trouble with my "superiors".)