

CRITERION VENTURES



Church as an Economic Being

Full Conversation Listing: Times, Topics, Location, Questions

Tuesday, March 20th 2012

10:15 – 11:30 pm

Conversations – Set A: Seeing Economic Systems Whole

| Conversation Topic | Questions |
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| <p>Brokenness and Grace in our Economic System</p> <p><i>Laurel A</i></p> | <p>This conversation begins to name the brokenness in our economic systems in such a way that can be understood by others.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can we commonly define the problem and the cause in a productive way? 2. How do we make sure the problem gets framed comprehensively, with an emphasis on structural inequities and race, class, and gender dynamics? 3. How does naming who the system is <i>not</i> working for help us reframe for solutions? |
| <p>Frames to Understand Churches and their Local Impact</p> <p><i>Laurel C</i></p> | <p>There are lots of approaches to understanding the relationship between churches and their local communities. What are these frames? What are the different angles to understand the institution of church in the community?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What frames are more useful? What do they do? 2. Which are less useful (or perhaps just incomplete)? Why? 3. How can we use these lenses or frames to expand thinking, approaches to having impact on communities? 4. How does (or doesn't?) the language of local living economy help? 5. What are the conduits now connecting church into economic life, and what are potential conduits? 6. What are the boundaries and opportunities in the traditional lens of community development or parish-based economic development? |
| <p>Faith, Justice and Social Finance Movements</p> <p><i>Talcott</i></p> | <p>Our conversations are at the intersection of several movements. The purpose of this conversation is to map those movements, their defining moments, the trends, the leaders, and the message.</p> <p>Mapping social movements and the church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social justice • Social finance • Expressions of church <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What changes now that economic injustice and systems change have entered the public discourse in a new way? 2. How do church institutions serve the broader social movements? How do social movements serve the church? |

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| | <p>3. How do we take infrastructure created during social movements the church engaged with and repurpose it in today's movements?</p> <p>Quote from Laura "How do we operate in a context where the community conversation is including the justice issues we've been talking about for a long time? For a long time we've asked: What would happen if everyone were talking about injustice, inequality, the class divide? So now how do we reframe all of our work?"</p> <p>Quote from Michael "As the SRI pioneers transition off the scene (many are at retirement age or beyond) how do we engage a new generation of leaders who will be in it for the long haul? How do we begin to reimagine how the nature of our work might change, for example through the use of social media and networks?"</p> |
| <p>Shifting Rules of Finance and Boundaries of Church</p> <p><i>Laurel B</i></p> | <p>We live in a time where boundaries are shifting both in finance and in the church. Therefore, bridging these worlds requires greater empathy to recognize what is in flux.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where are the boundaries in church that are shifting? Where are dominant systems being challenged? Where are the margins? What is contested? 2. Where are boundaries shifting in the financial markets? Where are dominant systems being challenged? Where are the margins? What is contested? 3. How do we change the definition of "value" in order to create new approaches and outcomes? 4. What are the opportunities in these shifting boundaries? 5. Where is there retrenchment? 6. Where are these boundaries contested theoretically, and where in practice? |

| Conversation Topic | Questions |
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| <p>Theology of Risk</p> <p><i>Laurel A</i></p> | <p>We are seeing groups of investors come together around this question. How would you guide their exploration?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What traditions, practices and scriptures inform how we think about risk? 2. What is our relationship to the prevailing financial market’s approach to risk? 3. Do different theological frames or emphases impact one’s approach to risk? 4. How does risk play out beyond capital – into other assets like buildings, brand, relationships? 5. What is the language we can draw on to talk about this? |
| <p>Stewardship is ____</p> <p><i>Talcott</i></p> | <p>The focus of the conversation is to dive into the power of stewardship.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where is the power in the word stewardship? What is the struggle around the word? 2. How do we live in the paradox of stewardship to both protect and deploy our resources? 3. How do we ground the conversation within time, talent, treasure? (and not overly focus on the treasure part) <p>Quote from Mike Little “How can we help the church to move from “Stewardship campaigns, to Stewardship as a way of life?” How can we hold up a new model that offers more than a 2 week fall focus?”</p> <p>Quote from Jim Kucher “How to break through the stewardship notion that the assets of a church are to be held and protected rather than deployed into the community?”</p> <p>Quote from Jack Fitzelle-Jones “So I am saying that you, as a steward on behalf of God need to decide where you spend your money to get your stuff, in a manner befitting the love of god that dwells within you.”</p> <p>Quote from Aidsand Wright Riggins “Within the church, how might we re-conceptualize our understanding of “the tithe” as a means to build or restore the common good rather than as a means to simply build the church?”</p> |
| <p>Our Economic Call</p> <p><i>Laurel C</i></p> | <p>This conversation grounds language around vocation and call in and through the economy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can w re-imagine our role in the world through the language of our economic call? 2. How do people hear a call? How does word and sacrament ministry spark new activity, new imaginations, new commitments? 3. How does our community support our call? <p>Quote from Brian Becker “What are the resources that new ministry leaders really need in order to build and sustain new programs that really serve mankind and bring praise and glory to God at the same time?”</p> <p>Quote from Ryan Foss “I spent some time on church council and much of the economics discussion always revolved around the budget and how we could engage our membership in giving more to the church. Often times what gets missed is our responsibility as Christians to utilize our assets and gifts to</p> |

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| | <p>bring social change to the people who need it most.”</p> <p>Quote from Julia Wakelee-Lynch “I am passionate that every member of my church should know how to make and manage a budget, have a proper will and estate plans, and be educated about how their financial choices affect their lives and the lives of others. “</p> |
| <p>Reclaiming Language</p> <p>Laurel B</p> | <p>Language is core to this vision as both financial and theological language gets watered down to find a middle ground? How do we reclaim language of church and language of economics?</p> <p>Brainstorm the powerful words. In finance and economy, in church. What’s worth saving? What words are, could we say, are bankrupt?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do we take words that have been labeled ‘evil capitalism’ and make them accessible? How do we translate social change vocabulary into marketplaces? Where should we infuse theology? 2. Does the language of economy and finance dumb down a conversation about faith and social change? 3. How does economic language serve as a whetstone for our faith? 4. How do we intersect/distinguish from prosperity gospel? Is that a useful question? 5. How do we compete, collaborate with the narratives from specific disciplines? Where does the academy play? <p>Quote from Aidsand “I am thinking deeply about spirituality and money, that money matters and we need to find ways to talk about it that do not echo the prosperity gospel.”</p> |

Tuesday, March 21st 2012

3:45 – 5:00 pm

Conversations – Set C: Opportunities in the Current System

| Conversation Topic | Questions |
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| <p>Church, State and Markets</p> <p><i>Laurel C</i></p> | <p>Church is a big system. This conversations looks at the trifecta of church, markets, and state.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What happens to theology when we move to the level of policy (either in states or markets)? 2. Churches have been deeply involved in governmental policy. What would it look like to engage more directly in market policy? What are the examples? 3. What are the organizations that build bridges between the three? What additional infrastructure is necessary? 4. Where is there particular room for church to lead? 5. What are the metrics? 6. Can this be a bottom up strategy? Or, how do we free the big organized bodies of religion to play a more generative, liberating role in the world? <p>Quote from Laura Berry “People of faith have impact on social justice issues but not questions of finance.”</p> |
| <p>Bridging: Suits (investment committees) and Hellraisers (activists)</p> <p><i>Laurel B</i></p> | <p>Tree huggers and investors, suits and hellraisers, whatever the labels, these are categories, and they don’t mix well, often.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do you shape financial decisions of an organization? 2. How do the ways in which a congregation handles money affect its identity? 3. What are the on-ramps that allow the non-financially literate to engage in financial conversations? 4. How do we make a connection between endowment and meaning? 5. Do we need to first change a conversation about budgets before we can engage investments (or the reverse?) 6. What needs to happen to make connections between finance and faith? 7. What intermediation would help? What intermediaries help now? <p>Quote from Laura Berry “How do we get investment offices and justice offices within the church community to take each other seriously? Why do we have these conversations in isolated spaces?”</p> <p>Quote from Noelle St. Clair. “I am curious how churches are investing their money and if they are considering the values of the church when making investment decisions. If not, what is holding them back and what types of products (or impact) would they like to see available?”</p> |
| <p>Congregations Taking Action to Shape Local Economies</p> <p><i>Talcott</i></p> | <p>This conversation is intended to be an inventory of what is currently happening in congregations to shape their local economies, and what is possible in the near term.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What’s the screen for what counts? (Bring in notes from “frames” conversation) 2. What are congregations doing currently? 3. What is happening in the social capital markets that congregations could engage? 4. What kind of intermediation would be necessary? 5. How does this bubble up from a local context and when is it imported? 6. Are there patterns to how congregations get involved in rethinking their relationship to the economy? What programs and opportunities are gateways? |
| <p>Church (in all its expressions) Creating Alternative Economic</p> | <p>This conversation is focused beyond using existing systems, engaging in the market, to the role of the church in creating alternative economic systems.</p> |

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| <p>Systems</p> <p><i>Laurel A</i></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can churches be a place where we can shape what is possible in a community? How do churches shape our economic future? 2. How do the day to day decisions of the church create alternative economic systems? 3. How do churches support the developing vocations in the pews? 4. How does this conversation begin? What are the seed stage programs that let us imagine our role in an alternative future? 5. What resources are necessary to play this role? 6. How do we engage in broader market systems? <p>Quote from Jarrod Shappell “I have been thinking about the fiscal and social accountability in the church. I believe that the church budget is a moral and theological statement.”</p> |
| <p>Economic Leadership: Entrepreneurs, Vocations and Organizations</p> <p><i>Penwood</i></p> | <p>Think through the multiple types of economic leadership, as entrepreneurs, as leaders in an organization and as an organization itself.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is this call important? Why does this aspect of leadership matter? 2. How do churches play a direct role in supporting economic calls? In particular, what would this look like for entrepreneurs? 3. How can church be an incubator for leaders? 4. How do the vocations of individuals in business connect to this question? 5. How do various styles of leadership play out in this call? 6. How do organizations take the lead? What kinds of organizations should lead? <p>Quote from Jarrod Shappell “I am currently interested in the intersection of our values (or “moral operating systems”) and our work. This includes systems of work such as entrepreneurship, management, and finance.”</p> <p>Quote from Michael. “How do you understand, support and leverage the power of an informed and empowered workforce and constituency in order to maximize an organization/ institution missional impact? And how do you create a culture where people are spending the majority of their time playing to their natural strengths in order to bring about desired change?”</p> |

9:45 – 11:00 am

Conversations – Set D: Designing the Right Economic Systems (Intermediaries)

| Conversation Topic | Questions |
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| <p>The Theologically Correct Intermediary</p> <p><i>Laurel C</i></p> | <p>An interesting challenge: A theologically correct intermediary.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you were going to design the perfect intermediary to work with churches, what would it look like? 2. How do we realign debt so it is in relationship with people? 3. How do you exist in a community with multiple assets and deficits and align them? 4. What would it look like to build financial Intermediaries oriented toward community organizers? 5. How can a denomination reflect its theology as a financial intermediary (not just in where the money moves to but how it moves)? |
| <p>Church As Bazaar: Sites of Economic Engagement</p> | <p>There is a role that churches play, have played as bazaar, as a center within the marketplace where the needs of the community get met. A culturally relevant financial intermediary.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the current and historical examples of this role? Cathedral as bazaar, for |

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| <p>Talcott</p> | <p>example.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How does the church begin to take advantage of its role as a trusted community ally in order to play a new role as the site of economic engagement and inclusion for the community? How does the church become an access point for congregants as financial agents – and not just consumers? What would it take to scale this kind of role and activity? What would make this role more efficient, and accelerate the movement of capital to points of need? Are the churches potentially an honest broker? How do churches have the map of needs in the local area and then find appropriate resources? Church as interpreter of poverty/needs. Authentic voice of those in need. How can churches play this role honestly, if they do not fully understand the financial systems that are pushing at them? Are they gatekeepers without being effective intermediaries? |
| <p>Collaborative Transactions</p> <p>Laurel B</p> | <p>At the level of two local organizations working together or at a broader engagement with systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we enable collaborative transactions to be transformative? How closely aligned are networks/communities How do we build trust into transactions and what does that really take, What becomes possible v. using traditional tools of a market to manage trust Real estate transactions... how to value real estate in the community Engaging in local communities |
| <p>New Ways to Move Money</p> <p>Laurel A</p> | <p>This conversation taps the momentum within the social capital markets and the new ways that money is moving. And, then explores how that can stimulate, mirror or learn from how money is moving in churches.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What are the new patterns? What is nascent? What is built out? What is the map of existing intermediaries? How do they line up inside and outside the church? Who is ready to partner with churches? How do churches access low hanging fruit in terms of intermediaries that could move money? |

11:15 – 12:30 pm

Conversations – Set E: Practices of Invitation

| Conversation Topic | Questions |
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| <p>Building On Other Movements and Momentum in Church</p> <p>Talcott</p> | <p>How do we build on exiting movements in the church and its communities?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What are the movements within the church? Which are resonating with whom? Work to reach across demographics and perspectives Are there any that would resist the idea of God’s Economy more than others? Which would be in alignment? Then, on to the question of infrastructure. These movements were, by definition focused on a set of questions. How can we invite them into thinking about economy and finance? What is the leadership and infrastructure that can be engaged? |
| <p>Kings/Queens and Priests</p> <p>Laurel B</p> | <p>A conversation about leadership, that classic divide between ordained and laity, priests and kings/queens, or, in this case, the kings and queens of finance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What kind of leadership is needed to re-imagine? Who holds the economic visions of God’s Economy? As important, who has the authority to give voice to those visions in ways they can be heard? Is the knowledge gap of the clergy a challenge? If you don’t know the rules, you can’t break them or rather re-imagine them. But the market leaders are fully embedded in the |

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| | <p>system and lack the theological knowledge?</p> <p>4. Who holds the power to reframe?</p> |
| <p>Entry Points in the Pews</p> <p><i>Laurel A</i></p> | <p>We are often asked the question, “how does this message reach the pews?” Would be wonderful to tackle that question (assuming those in Penwood are looking at the unchurched).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the accelerators and inhibitors to engaging people in the pews? 2. What are the hooks in existing programs? 3. How do we find the folks “one good sermon” away from getting it? Where are the great sermons coming from? 4. What are practices we can build on in different denominations? Coffee hour, Sunday school, Disciple Bible Study. 5. How do we get actual church communities, people in the pews, talking about this stuff? (Laura) |
| <p>Three Models for Evangelism</p> <p><i>Penwood</i></p> | <p>This conversation came from a riff on a comment on a participant. How do we connect the conversation about Church as an Economic Being to the unchurched? The safer word might have been engagement, but we went with evangelism.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are we evangelizing? Kingdom? New Economic forms? These get confused some times. 2. What is the arcs of conversation that would need to happen. What is the language that engages? 3. How does Church as an Economic Being engage people in their own frame of reference: whether it is gen y or boomers? 4. If 20-somethings are more interested in “ways of life” versus “systems of belief,” how does this change the approach to engaging? <p>How does this conversation connect to universities?</p> |
| <p>Identity Politics around Church and Money</p> <p><i>Laurel C</i></p> | <p>Our identities are wrapped up questions of faith and money. How do identity politics play out in conversations about market systems?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do we play out our economic identities? How does money define us? Has that changed in the recent economy? 2. How do we address issues of market systems with a clear awareness of structural inequities? 3. What are the strategies of inclusion, so we do not have a language of assumptive wealth, in the face of brokenness? 4. Where are questions of gender at play here? 5. Where are questions of race? <p>Where do we need to stand prophetic in the face of too easy answers?</p> |

1:30 – 2:45 pm

Conversations – Set F: Specifics of Implementation

| Conversation Topic | Questions |
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| <p>Who, Exactly, are the Next Leaders</p> <p><i>Laurel A</i></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the characteristics of leaders who can work toward God’s economy? 2. Where do these leaders tend to sit? Inside the church? Outside? 3. What movements/communities/identities are they connected to? 4. What are the relative costs and benefits of having a religious leader of an economic movement? Lay leader of church movement? 5. How do we support emerging leaders who do not yet have a platform? How do we create platforms for leaders that bridge? 6. How can we connect/create to denominational leadership? (assuming, for a moment, that it’s not okay if there isn’t leadership here) |

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| <p>Financing Specific Mission and Ministries</p> <p><i>Laurel B</i></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the financing opportunity? 2. What kind of capital is necessary? What kind of investors could be invited to participate? 3. What intermediation is necessary? What are the characteristics 4. Who are the right partners/ what are the next steps? 5. Where are the points of collaboration? |
| <p>Structure Lab for Churches</p> <p><i>Laurel C</i></p> | <p>Church as an Economic Being , as an initiative, has been thinking about adapting our Structure Lab to be able to support churches thinking about their role in the economy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who needs this program? 2. What is the core content needed? 3. What are the triggers for the organization to raise their hands? 4. What are the distribution systems within church that could help? 5. Who could deliver? 6. What are the right delivery platforms? |
| <p>Local Conferences and Events</p> <p><i>Talcott</i></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the national gatherings and who are they attracting? 2. What is the need for convening locally? 3. What did we learn from SoCap Soul? What other experiments are worth learning from? 4. What are the challenges in local gatherings? 5. How do we gage whether it is the right moment? 6. What are the geographic differences? What should we look for as fertile ground in communities? |
| <p>Media and Communications Strategies</p> <p><i>Penwood</i></p> | <p>Reflecting on the conversations to date, what are the communications and media strategies that we can collaborate on to invite other into this movement?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the channels? 2. What are the messages? 3. Who are the messengers? 4. What are specific next steps for collaboration? |