GENERAL SYNOD 2022
FEEDBACK FROM BREAKOUT GROUPS
FRIDAY 10 JUNE 2022

SESSION 5 – INSTITUTE COUNCIL: "HOW THE SEI HAS BEEN SUPPORTING THE DISCIPLESHIP OF THE BAPTISED"

Questions:

1. *What enlivened you in what you heard? [ie during the prior presentation]*
2. *Name 3 ways — topics, courses or series — in which you think SEI could help support your discipleship and the missional future of the SEC?*

Table 1

Q1:

1. Personal experience of session very positive.
2. Richness of resources available, especially online. Reflects "just in time" learning.
3. Popularity of activities is encouraging – there is a hunger for the resources.
4. Innovate use of digital media to educate and inform – great that distance is no object. NB is this accessible to all?
5. Availability of resources and work on "greening the church".

Q2:

1. Neurodiversity and its impact on the Church.
2. Ensure that there is a forum for discussion linked with all training events and resources.
3. Issue to do with slave trade and decolonialisation.
4. How to develop a personal spirituality?
5. Gender identity – issues for the Church?

Table 2

Q1:

1. Great resource and well presented
2. Welcomed the idea of group discussions that could follow the talks - be they by zoom or in person.
3. Comments around IT poverty in general and how that could be enabled by congregational study sessions watching together on a big screen followed by groups.
4. Grateful for the opportunity for continuing learning and discipleship that the courses offered.
5. ***Suggestions for further development:***
   - a short summary video at the end of the course to bring together the threads of what has been learned

- notes/handouts that can be used by those who do not want to engage via internet but also as helpful for all
- Questions and discussion points would be welcomed
- shorter talks would be helpful for some
- discussion about the way people learn in different ways and perhaps a need to address that-for example visuals to aid visual learners etc
- perhaps link up the doctrinal with practical application

Q2:

1. Future courses would be welcomed on
2. History of SEC
3. Liturgy and creed -origins and meaning
4. Reconciliation and human relationships
5. Poverty
6. Celtic tradition and spirituality

Table 3

Q1:

1. Comment - one member: it would have been helpful for congregations to be made aware of Lent course. [It was pointed out that it had been mentioned in *Inspire*s [nb the member said she gets *Inspires on line* but had not seen it]. So perhaps Charges could be sent information from SEI and also information in *Inspires* made more visible?
2. Digital resources useful, but there needs to be awareness of demographics and could be limiting for some people. Not everyone will use Zoom or know how to link into You Tube.
3. Training needed at Diocesan level. It was mentioned that St Andrews Diocese is attempting to provide training for authorised Lay Ministries – so it was felt that Diocesan level training could be more acceptable.
4. It appeared that SEI were only using their own material and there is perhaps a "quality control issue" and perhaps they need to get some training themselves in the best way to produce material as it should be "high quality".
5. Other than "likes" or attendance numbers shown on You Tube, which is not a true indication of real appreciation or how useful the material was, has there been any other form of feed back?
6. During the input from SEI we were told that one SEI member (Michael Hull) had spoken on camera for an hour. If people are watching on small screens viz Tablet or Phones – this requires a huge amount of concentration and how much has the viewer actually gained from this monologue?
7. Was the apparent "success" with the YouTube material because there wasn't a lot else going on during the Pandemic before a "near normal" started to return? So, has there been a decline in viewers?
8. Perhaps a need to be "snappier" and is it being focused (aimed) on church going people who might have learnt some things via sermons etc, or the totally unchurched?

9. Age demographic – it was felt that the present material might appeal more to 60-70+ rather than much younger people.

10. It seemed there was no mention of spirituality teaching mostly theological – but maybe there is more of a mix but we didn't hear about that.

11. Over all the group felt that SEI would be helped by getting some really good professional training for delivery, content, marketing etc – as mentioned above.

Q2:

1. Need for an 'SEC Production Company' to put our material into the public domain which is professionally produced and also to help train others in the best way of producing material for a wider audience.

2. Instead of the videoed recording uploaded to YouTube – why not produce a series of shorter audio-only **Podcasts** (rather than the hour long talk) so that the resource would then be used anywhere – eg when driving or on a train etc.

3. Again, training needed. It is possible that a resource like the Open University might be able to offer this.

4. Has survey/questionnaire been considered to find out what the potential audience wants to learn about the need for knowledge can be very wide and there is so much new theology/spirituality coming out viz Richard Rohr people can access digitally.

5. One can hear on the Radio that many people are searching spiritually – meaning of life, coping with anxiety etc – does SEI produce material about different ways of praying/attempting to relate to their Creator? Also, the different traditions of praying, Benedictine, Ignatian, Contemplative, Imaginative and so on?

Table 4

Q1:

1. Encouraging to think of SEI further developing and offering a mechanism for engagement / meeting across the breadth of the church (nothing against Zoom, but it isn't of itself that great for getting people involved in informal chat in the way that an in-person gathering is).

Q2:

1. We would love to see contexts being created that deliberately bring together people who disagree / come from different perspectives.

2. Anglican Communion Office resources available and could be used… and the Office has offered to come and run work based on this material. No point in reinventing the wheel.

3. Could courses be lay led? Several people had examples of lay people with particular areas of expertise that could potentially be offered –
   - o eg Dr Deborah Lewer on art history & theology; senior business professionals on their own areas of expertise.
   - o Could SEI identify a "talent pool" of people with particular specialisms and areas of work who would be happy to be deployed to different dioceses / contexts?

4. Courses and offerings need to pass the "So what?" test: what practical difference and applications to people's lives will they make?

5. It's important that courses and offerings are not always hugely academic. At least some offerings need to recognise "simplicity on the other side of complexity", offering relevant and accessible content to people who are NOT highbrow… we often don't do well at this. Perhaps this points towards suggesting SEI might do better at facilitating rather than delivering all the time?

Table 5

Q1:

1. Sounded very positive but none on table 5 had really any awareness of the exciting opportunity.
2. There is a need to address the availability of suitable technology.
3. Increase the awareness of the opportunities available.

Q2:

1. The role of the Church – how laity play their <u>vital</u> part.
2. Ecclesiology.
3. Is it a role of SEI to teach the laity?

Table 6

Q1:

1. Pleased to know that Zoom has been so successful.
2. Inter-relational meetings even when we can't meet physically especially in communication and learning.
3. Brought Synod back to Christ and Doctrine.
4. Meeting people where they are, not where we are.

Q2:

1. A range of courses:
   - Prayer
   - Liturgy
   - Lament
   - The Church year
   - How the Church works
   - The Daily Office
   - The Creed
   - The Lord's Prayer
   - Creation and the environment – theological perspective

Table 7

Q1:

1. Much of what is going on at SEI which none of our table had heard of. Perhaps need better communication.

2. The fact that far parts of the Province could access such good learning, even being very far from Diocese/Province.

Q2:

1. Professionally made YouTube videos.
2. SEI could vet and recommend good courses provided by others as well as produce own ones.
3. Theology courses at lay level – perhaps linking with other disciples.
4. Thinking about communication at charge level – working with Mission Enablers?

Table 8

Q1:

1. Good resources – easy to access.
2. Didn't occur to tell others / involve congregations.

Q2:

1. Questions good?
2. Input meaty and full –split in sections to allow discussion in between - is it possible to have less intensive input.
3. Longer notice of what was coming would be useful for planning.
4. Making connection with Mission Boards.
5. Support for smaller charges to use the material contextually.
6. Possibility to use pictures/graphics.
7. Following the Lectionary – based on what Gospel we are following this year.
8. Keep the depth – appeal to a variety of learners/learning styles.

Table 9

Q1:

1. Feedback
2. Enthusiasm
3. People took up the challenge
4. Small churches joined with larger churches. Creating a wider community.
5. Good quality
6. Queries

   How do we bridge the technical gap?

   How do we get the message to people that may be put off at the idea of studying the bible.
7. Create DVDs that could be used for small groups who don't have access to technology.

Q2:

1. History of the Episcopal church.

2. Biblical art.
3. Lenten and advent studies.

Table 10

Forms unavailable.

Table 11

Forms unavailable.

Table 12

Q1:

1. Way that technology has enhanced and assisted communication, reaching more people, even though some are excluded by lack of internet facilities.
2. YouTube there forever - not just a passing discussion. Great resource and availability to most.
3. The increased connectedness, deepening relationships and discoveries of – 'I/we can do this' and we can belong – even in a very rural community
4. Ability to pick up increased knowledge – don't need access to physical resources, eg library, etc.
5. Dissemination of information assists the development of relationships in community and church.

Q2:

1. Prayer - very important – we need to up our game.
2. Sometimes we meet curiosity in people – an opportunity.
3. 'If you want more from people, ask them to do more.'
4. Rules of life helpful.
5. Don't abrogate all responsibility to SEI – knowledge needs to be locally developed as well.
6. Don't lose the place of spiritual practice to 'get the job done'.
7. Doctrine – do people want to engage or know more? How can we encourage people?
8. Topics:
    - What is prayer?
    - What is spirituality?
    - How do we interpret the two great commandments – Love of God and love of neighbour into daily life.

Table 13

Q1:

1. Being stretched; always more to learn.
2. Power and reach of Zoom. How do we in congregations know what is on offer.

3. Need promoters in each congregation? Constant plugging? How often do you send out publicity / communications.
4. Push congregations to use SEI material for Advent, Lent talks. We have discovered the resource.
5. Use YouTube to keep the material for longer term use.
6. Facebook has disadvantages.
7. Produce study guides and questions for discussion.

Q2:

1. More study guides.
2. Use generic titles, eg how do we read the Bible rather than how do Episcopalians read the bible.
3. Material on SEC identity and generic nature.
4. Material (on YouTube as well as on "dry paper"), as induction for cross border migrants.

Table 14

Q1:

1. Enlivened: by going straight to the second question.

Q2:

1. Formational course proper to SEC and our post-pandemic context and foundational introduction to Christianity for them that know nothing of the faith.
2. Formational course on theological approach to the climate emergency question of accessibility, [question of those who are not online].
3. Method: apply industry-based practices for online community (platforms like Reddit/TikTok, etc).

Table 15

Q1:

1. Availability of online resources. Distance is no barrier.
2. Enthusiasm from congregational members.
3. Empowerment in isolation.
4. Possibilities – it means small churches can learn. Fulfils a need. Enable us to follow current trends / be contextual.
5. Gives us an answer to 'what does the Province do for us?'.

Q2:

1. Community and belonging.
2. Interpretation and translation of scriptures for today (relevance, context, Episcopal viewpoint).
3. Healing – as a nation, community, church, individuals.

Table 16

Q1:

1. The way that the resources of the SEI are increasingly made available to everyone rather than just those being trained for ministry.
2. BUT … need communication to be improved, with long lead in times so that charges can get themselves organised.

Q2:

1. Like short videos (10-15 mins, not long lectures!) with ready questions for discussion groups.
2. In person is important so these videos are likely to be used as the starter for in person meetings.
3. Topics:
   - What is discipleship?
   - Apologetics for a new age,
   - How to have conversations with non-church goers,
   - Mindfulness / wellbeing.

Table 17

Q1:

"There was no response from the group for Question 1".

Q2:

1. The group expressed a desire for:

   - A catalogue of resources—a comprehensive list of available materials with names of those interested in and those offering content across the Province (not just SEI content)
   - Facilitated Zoom courses—specifically 'mini' courses—that are interactive
   - Courses for everyone, noting specifically that some people struggle with academic/scholarly contexts (meeting them may require varying messaging and 'branding' of materials. One member wondered if the word 'Institute' might put some people off.)
   - A survey, asking lay people what they want
   - Diversity of content, which might include subjects such as poetry and art
   - Delivery that addresses a breadth of learning styles and needs.

Table 18

Q1:

1. Patsy's reflections - the benefit to some communities, well linked communities.
2. Worldwide communities created through IT.
3. Mike's lectures.

4. Pioneer Courses - ability to dip toe in the water to see/explore/discern/no cost.
5. Keenness of people to share experiences.

Q2:

1. Facilitated links to others.
2. Audit courses - more accessibility- costs etc/advertising.
3. Not to be too academic.
4. Christian life - to talk about their faith/to deepen their faith.
5. Partnership models - globally using links to inform/teach/connect universities draw on others teachers.
6. Lay Reader Course shorter and more concise to support lay reader/work in the churches.
7. For the whole people of God.
8. Recognising that we are all theologians but not all academics.
9. Home groups – discipleship.
10. All options to get the work out there.
11. Engage with faith - different way - not a one way/size fits all.
12. Different learning styles.
13. Awareness of IT poverty.
14. Support in using IT.
15. Use of resources in a church hall.
16. Leaders guide and discussions with DVD/digital version - off the shelf package that local leaders could use.

Table 19

Q1:

1. Good ideas for a local group using well produced high quality materials.
2. Technology changes everything
   o is it better than doing it face to face even?!
   o You can rewatch over and over to get the points being made – advantage of YouTube videos

Q2:

1. Something about Biocentric Heurmenutics.
2. Theological revelations are required as we address creation.
3. How do we share what has been done around Christendom?
4. SEI develop a library of courses indexed by topics with an SEC commentary or suggested group-work environment.
5. Video all the SEI courses and seminars to be available online for us to learn and enjoy at home outside of the constraints of the certificate courses.
6. SEI to make resources on the Catechism cast in the horizon of the Climate Crisis and care of creation

7. SEI to gather resources from elsewhere that course could be signposted as resources that Charges can use (A Quality Assurance task for the SEC).

Online Group 1

(The people on Zoom were not able to hear the presentation given by Willie Shaw)

Q1:

1. Richard Tiplady's Pioneering Course – energy, inspiration, out-of-the-box thinking.
2. The Monthly newsletters.
3. It is wonderful that resources are now being offered **free**!
4. Love the access through YouTube. Does SEI have a specific YouTube channel?

Q2:

1. Course topics suggested:

    - Discipleship – what do we understand by it
    - Evangelism – how to we get on with it?
    - Sexuality and the church
    - Gender identity and the church
    - Personal Prayer
    - Liturgy – why do we do *that*?
    - Greening the Church

2. School education requires differentiation – can we have materials offered at different levels so that we don't have people saying it was 'over their heads', eg Basics – level 101, intermediate level, clergy, academics, etc.
3. Beware of courses satisfying 'intellectual consumerism"! Ensure there is always a section on what this means for us now in our contexts and how do we get on and do this! So we move from knowing about God to knowing God.
4. Short YouTube presentations to start discussions. Discussion questions/practical tasks provided so that small groups can be run over Zoom or after church in an 'Adult Sunday School' USA style. List of facilitators?? Or training for those leading discussions.
5. Make Richard Tiplady's Pioneer course available on YouTube with discussion topics for clergy to lead in vestry sessions.
6. No dogmatism please. Allow for diverse views. Do not charge for access.

Online Group 2

Q1:

1. The determination to accept, adapt and be sustained through a very difficult and challenging past two years.
2. The national and international recognition of the SEI.
3. The newsletter and website.
4. Patsy Thompson's inspirational delivery at Synod.
5. Real experiences.
6. We were unaware of the real scope of the SEI.

Q2:

1. People felt that the SEI had not really 'put itself out there' enough and were thankful of recent developments with the website.
2. More work with ecumenical organisations.
3. The possibility of SEI visiting individual dioceses to offer courses and information.