

## **Marie's Gift Proposal**

**Proposal:** Provide a seed loan funding advance of \$220,000 for a Peoples' Synod, modeled after the American Catholic Council conference held in Detroit in 2011.

**Proposed by:** Clyde Christofferson

**Project Anticipated Cost:** Net cost estimated to be zero; a small return on the seed loan is anticipated; the funds would be tied up for about two years.

**Project Name:** Seed Loan for a Peoples' Synod

**Brief Description:** This seed loan funding advance would provide the cash flow necessary to enable reform groups to implement a Peoples' Synod currently envisioned for Chicago in 2018.

### **Background**

The proposal is based on the practical experience of the American Catholic Council in putting on the Detroit conference in 2011, in which about a dozen NOVA members participated. In order to make that conference happen, one of the planners had to advance \$200,000 of his own money in order to reserve hotel and conference facilities and the like. This advance was effectively a loan, because the budget for the conference balanced costs against revenues from participant reservation fees and vendor fees. When those anticipated revenues came in, the American Catholic Council was able to repay the amount that had been advanced.

In the three years since Francis has been Pope, there has been a resurgence of hope in the vision provided by Vatican II. The American Catholic Council conference in Detroit in 2011 reflected lay leadership for Church renewal on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginnings of Vatican II. As those of us who attended the meeting in Detroit will recall, the local bishop was opposed to the meeting and forbid his priests to attend. Many attended anyway, under fictitious names, but 2011 was a different time. A similar convocation in Chicago in 2018 would have the support of Francis appointee Archbishop Blaise Cupich. This view is supported by ongoing contacts between ACC chair (and Chicago resident) Janet Hauter and the Archbishop.

The times are propitious. NOVA as a community has long been concerned with how and when to come out from "under the radar". This project provides a very judicious means of addressing that concern. We do not know how long Francis will be Pope, but he has already changed the sense of what the larger Church means. His political and charismatic skills do not conceal the opposition he faces from a cadre of bishops largely appointed in pursuit of a different agenda.

The opportunity presented by these times has not been lost on those around the world interested in updating the work of reform inspired and memorialized at Vatican II. Catholic Church Reform International (CCRI) was formed shortly after Francis became Pope, and has sought ways to find a common voice for those worldwide interested in reform of the Catholic Church. Reform groups in Europe assembled Council50 last November in Rome. African reformers have proposed that lay leaders of some 180,000 neighborhood Small Christian Communities be

authorized to lead Eucharistic celebrations of their communities, and hope this proposal will be considered at a forthcoming Synod of Bishops to be called by Francis on the subject of married clergy. The Australian group Catholics For Reform has been very active in supporting the government's investigation of clerical sexual abuse of children. Catholic women theologians in India have seen to the adoption by the bishops of policies addressing gender discrimination. In the United States, the American Catholic Council is pursuing development of local "listening circles" not unlike the listening sessions that preceded the 2011 conference in Detroit.

Most recently, as an outgrowth of the Council50 meeting in Rome, there is impetus for a worldwide Peoples' Synod in late 2018 in Brasilia to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1968 Synod of Bishops in Medellin, Columbia. This is being supported by CCRI and by the Small Christian Communities in Africa. There would follow another Peoples' Synod in 2021, also to be held in the global south, in Africa. Regional Peoples' Synods in New Zealand and the United States have been suggested, and could serve as lead ups to the Brasilia Peoples' Synod.

### **Proposal**

The time is ripe, and is also short. If a Peoples' Synod is to materialize within the next two years concrete preparations must be funded soon. If this proposal is adopted by NOVA as a community the terms would be as follows:

- We should hold open the seed fund for ninety days, and decide upon a suitably described and budgeted proposal and time frame no later than January 2017. No collateral will be required, but a contract responsive to a selected proposal will give priority to seed loan repayment from revenues budgeted for funds that have been advanced.
- The selected proposal should provide its own management and progress reporting within the targeted time frame for holding a Peoples' Synod and repaying the funds advanced. NOVA would keep a record of draws and repayment on the seed loan account, but would not otherwise have any responsibilities for management of the Peoples' Synod or performance of the tasks outlined in the description and budget of the selected proposal.
- If no suitable proposal is selected within the ninety day time frame, the amount in the seed fund account will revert to the community for further disposition. If a suitable proposal is selected, the seed fund account will revert to the community for further disposition when the repayments have been completed, due account being taken of the risks associated with an unsecured loan.

### **Connection to NOVA**

Francis' repeated use of the "upside down pyramid" metaphor, and repeated calls for the "grass roots" to "bother your pastors," mesh very well with the direction taken by NOVA over the more than four decades of its existence. We are an independent lay led community that maintains enough connection with the institutional Church to be able to credibly work for reform from

within. As we saw at the IEC Conference in St. Paul in June 2015, as compared to the earlier IEC Conference in 2009, more IECs are becoming less interested in reform from within, instead pursuing development of their own communities. This “seed loan” is an opportunity for NOVA to provide significant and critical support at an auspicious time for those like ourselves seeking to integrate into an old tradition new ways of being church that are more responsive to the People of God.

**My Involvement (Clyde Christofferson):** I participated as a member of NOVA in the CCRI “Forum on the Family” in Rome in the fall of 2014 that preceded the first of what turned out to be two Synods on the Family that were capped by Pope Francis’ exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. I currently serve on the boards of both the ACC and CCRI. I believe it is likely that the ACC or a collaborative combination of the ACC and CCRI would make a proposal to us for a seed loan for a People’s Synod in Chicago in 2018 if the community adopts this proposal.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Email 9/23/2016 providing context for a Peoples' Synod

Email from John Hushon showing advance funding requirements for ACC Conference in Detroit in 2011

## Clyde Christofferson

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**Subject:** FW: CCRI Advisors: Update on this week's ST call

**Importance:** High

**From:** Rene Reid

**Sent:** Friday, September 23, 2016 5:30 PM

**Subject:** RE: CCRI Advisors: Update on this week's ST call

**Importance:** High

To all CCRI Advisors:

On this week's call, we continued to discuss how our organizations – Council 50, Small Christian Communities, and CCRI – can work effectively and collaboratively together. The following briefly summarized the goals and visions of each of these organizations:

### [Council 50](http://www.council50.org/c55/) (<http://www.council50.org/c55/>)

Their objective is to work toward a series of People's Synods. As a lead up to these, they support the building of a church that embraces base ecclesial communities (replacing the model of the church presently organized as a hierarchical pyramid) as its fundamental model for being Church. Ideally, the focus of these communities is on (1) action for justice, peace and the integrity of creation as Church; (2) asking publicly for forgiveness from all who seek to be recognized as members of the people of God but who have been marginalized or rejected and hurt by our doctrines or practices; and (3) working actively for ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue, collaboration and friendship. Much of this is summed up in the Council 50 declaration which has already been submitted to Pope Francis:

(<http://www.council50.org/c55/declaration-2015>)

### [Small Christian Communities](http://smallchristiancommunities.org/) (<http://smallchristiancommunities.org/>)

Driven by a shortage of priests and a Eucharistic famine, the SCC's provide Christians a place and a means for living the Gospel and becoming a follower of Jesus. They offer a structure already in place with 180,000 small groups established predominantly in Africa but spread all around the world. They describe themselves as a work in progress where those gathered share the gospel, share about their lives, and help the needy amongst them. Alloys Nyakundi, the person Fr. Joe has assigned as our contact, suggested this: "SCCs can be used to conduct the research about the reforms the Christians need in our Church because it's very easy to reach the Christians at the SCCS level." These could well serve to gain a true *sensus fidelium*.

**Catholic Church Reform International:** [www.CatholicChurchReformIntl.org](http://www.CatholicChurchReformIntl.org) Structured as a global network of committed Catholic and Christian organizations and individuals, CCRI seeks a deeply-rooted reform of our Church through a united voice and collaborative action. We embrace Vatican II for its vision for a Church of love rather than a Church of laws. We began in 2013 when a new pope was elected, imbued with the spirit of the Council, who could remind us that we are the Church – all of us, not just the pope and the bishops, but all of us. We set to work immediately in cyberspace, giving the people of God a space where they could speak frankly about anything and everything that affects the common good. When Pope Francis said he wanted all of us to help rebuild the Church, we found further encouragement to exercise our right and our duty to help govern our Church. We encourage our bishops to walk with us, and listen to us, as servant bishops, not lords. To create a just, welcoming, inclusive community, we are currently promoting local gatherings in cities around the world. We are in process of reconstructing our current website <http://www.catholicchurchreform.org/216/index.php/gathering-report-form-to-share-the-results-of-the-meeting/> that (1) offers a place to report the outcomes reached at the meetings, and (2) for those just beginning to establish local gatherings, a step by step guide of how to do so. The site under construction is being designed to eliminate any mention of CCRI so that all will feel welcomed to participate in the new site which will be called [www.ThePeopleSpeakOut.org](http://www.ThePeopleSpeakOut.org). To see and/or offer suggestions to the behind the scenes progress, go to (<http://www.tpso.catholicchurchreform.org/>).

A brief summary of our discussion yesterday: Following our opening prayer, Fr. Joe Healey shared a bit of African ecclesiology. He said that small assemblies of women are beginning to form who are struggling to make their voices heard. They are taking the lead to push for change, for the spirit of Vatican II. Rene shared this same spirit is moving in India through the Indian Women's Theological Forum. In many ways, what he calls the "Global South" is far more advanced in their ecclesiology than the Western world. For them, their Small Christian Communities truly are the Church – not just in words but they are living it. What drives them is the shortage of priests and their Eucharistic famine. Each SCC (180,000 in all) chooses a representative to serve on a larger parish council. As part of their contribution to work with us and with Council 50, many of these communities are going to discuss what could be improved in the church. If the Council 50 declaration can be translated into Swahili, it would be helpful. Their current practice is to share the outcome of their discussions on the SCC Facebook page. Our challenge is to find a way to transfer or redirect this information to the new under-construction site: [www.ThePeopleSpeakOut.org](http://www.ThePeopleSpeakOut.org) so that we can incorporate the information and the demographics into a report form. Why? This collective data is needed by Council 50 and any other reform group planning a national People's Synod to help gather the *sensus fidelium* and thereby formulate the agenda for upcoming Synods.

Ed Schreurs suggested that CCRI activate its network to get more support on issues of the Council 50 declaration (<http://www.council50.org/c55/declaration-2015>). If you haven't yet read this, please go there now and, if you agree, offer your support. Granted it is long and embodies many aspects of reform, but if you are comfortable with it, take the link and begin to spread the word. The more we can come together and support each other's causes, the more likely we are to see the beginning of actual renewal of our church.

Christina has offered to organize a People's Synod in New Zealand. She has asked for help from Council 50 to supply a proposed template of a synod. The one thing all agreed on: there will not be key note speakers but rather representatives of small local gatherings from around the world speaking up about the reforms that matter most to them (much like an assembly of the United Nations). Opening preliminary discussion has been suggested with the American Catholic Council and with CTA to explore hosting a People's Synod in the U.S. suggesting late 2017 or early 2018 so as to precede the international Synod in Brasilia in 2018.

Clyde has shared these thoughts both by email and on the call: "We are, indeed, making progress, even if the direction does not always seem clear. Trust in the Spirit, who is our direction even if seen 'through a glass, darkly.' It is not so much about our being heard but about others -- who are listening to the same Spirit -- being heard. It is the Spirit which is the source of our united voice. In my view, the main obstacle to reform is a grass roots sense that reform can't happen from the grass roots." All agreed that it is our collective goal to help the People begin to realize reform can only come through us. We cannot look to the hierarchy for leadership in the regard.

It was agreed to continue this discussion on next week's call. If any advisor – whether you've been active with us or not – would like to become more involved in planning local gatherings and/or a national People's Synods, let me know and we can invite you to join us on next week's call. It would be good if Australian's would join with the 2017 New Zealand Synod but if you'd prefer to have your own, let us know. Ideally, we'd also like to see one in India and in Europe. It's time to take action. We need you to begin setting up local gatherings in your city. Council 50 needs our support if an International People's Synod in Brazil is to be successful. The only way that reform in our Church will ever come about is if the voice of the People grows loud enough to be heard around the world. Are you willing to commit to this effort?

Looking forward to hearing back from you. Be honest: do you see all of this as a pipe dream or can you begin to envision these things actually coming to pass?

Grateful to all,

Rene

## Clyde Christofferson

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**Subject:** American Catholic Council, Detroit 2011

**From:** JMWHauter  
**Sent:** Friday, August 12, 2016 11:45 AM  
**To:** Clyde Christofferson  
**Subject:** Fwd: Hello John! I have a request...

Here you are, Clyde.

**From:** John Hushon  
**Date:** February 22, 2016 at 8:31:18 AM CST  
**To:** [jmwhauter](#)  
**Subject: Re: Hello John! I have a request...**

I have combed through over a thousand e-documents and I can't find anything that is directly relevant.

However, I do have the attachment to the 990 we filed right after the event--I think this probably represents about 90% of what the event cost.

However, remember that COBO was given without rent--costs are security, set up etc. Also, Marriott required a \$25,000 deposit, which we got back when we reached the guaranteed minimum of rooms. They gave us about 40 room nights (a percentage of the total room nights that were booked) that we used for speakers and some committee members. I think we (as committee members) spent over \$20,000 each year before for planning travel.

I paid for the Kung video and travel for me and Anthony to have it made--about \$15,000. ACC got the income from the sales of the DVD.

About one month before the event, I had lent ACC about \$100,000 for deposits etc. Except for a contribution, this was repaid to me out of conference income.

When all was done, I think we had around \$20,000 left for post-council activities.

As I indicated previously, I think you will find that you will need \$100,000 plus whatever the convention center charges for a reservation "at risk"--but most of it should come back from conference registrations.

I would guess that CTA has much better experience and data on this.

John Hushon

-----Original Message-----

From: Janet Hauter  
To: johnhushon  
Sent: Sat, Feb 20, 2016 8:26 pm  
Subject: Hello John! I have a request...

Do you by chance have an itemized "budget" or list of expenses for our inaugural event?

Even line item estimates would be helpful. Thanks in advance.

Janet W. Hauter  
*Changing ourselves to change the Church*

Attachment to IRS Form 990, Year Ended Dec 31, 2011

**American Catholic Council**

EIN: 26-4156685

**AMERICAN CATHOLIC COUNCIL - Financial Report (2011)**

<b>Beginning Balance (Jan. 1, 2011)</b>		35636	Includes IL acct and deposit for NF ACC
<b>Income:</b>			
Council Registrations	177364.75		Net of refunds
Contributions	17978.49		Includes Contrib to IL office
<b>Other Income:</b>			
Exhibit fees	8981.00		
Sale of DVD's	8171.03		
Program Ads	2600.00		
<b>Total Income:</b>		215095	
<b>Total Cash on Hand</b>		250731	Includes IL acct and deposit for NF ACC
<b>Use of Funds:</b>			
Conf Dir Conference Mgr	21483.48		
TME--Registration Mgr.	14456.79		
Cobo Center	13050.50		
Audio Visual	79845.75		
Speakers	22897.53		
Volunteer Expenses	1649.65		
Printing	33115.19		
Website	5235.71		
Liturgy, Music	17280.76		
Buses at Council	2832.00		
Publicity	1993.67		
NF ACC	425.00		From fees paid in 2010.
Gifts	4000.00		For Detroit parish social outreach
Misc.	7115.72		
<b>Total Uses of Funds</b>		225381	
<b>Closing Balance (Dec. 31, 2011)</b>		25350	IL acct transf to FL;

## Notes:

1. All ACC Planners paid their own transportation and other costs of participation without reimbursement.
2. Many administrative costs of ACC (filing fees, website maintenance) paid directly by ACC Planners.
3. Some expenses of Council and some registration income received in previous calendar year.