

Building Transformational MDG Mission in Your Congregation – First Steps

1. **Ask a simple question: Why?** – Next to prayer, no step is more critical – and no step is more often skipped. Why do you want to do this? If you have a team, ask it of each other and of yourselves as a group. If it's just you, make sure you can answer it. Commit the question to prayer. Reach for the answer that is beyond a "should." Reach for the answer that is about it connecting with your own needs and desires and dreams. Being clear about the purpose of any activity will help you at every level ... especially communicating and motivating.

Once you have your purpose defined, commit to regular prayer not for a specific outcome of a project, but that God's will be done and this purpose be fulfilled.

Good Resource: Getting Things Done by David Allen – particularly Chapter 2 (The Five Phases of Planning)

2. **Learn to tell your story** – Storytelling is at the heart of our faith – and no one used storytelling better to build a movement than Jesus. Your story will help you gather partners in this mission. What is it that makes you passionate about this mission? What is the story of your life and the good news of the MDGs intersecting it that changed you so much that you want to share it with others? What story can you tell ... and at the end ask "will you work with me on this?" ... that will make people want to jump on board because they'll connect with it. Two other things:
 - a. Learn to tell it in 3 minutes or less. That will not only focus on where your passion is it will fit most people's attention spans.
 - b. This is a skill that takes practice. Find a friend who can help you practice crafting and telling your story and hone this skill.

Good Resource: For this and ALL the steps on storytelling, the best resource around is the work of the Public Narrative Project spearheaded by the Rev. Devon Anderson in the Diocese of Minnesota. The PNP is based on the work of Dr. Marshall Ganz from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard – work that was also the basis of the Obama grassroots campaign for president in 2008. For more information, you can contact Devon at devonanderson1@gmail.com or go to <http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~mganz/practice.htm>

3. **Gather your team** – Seek out people whom you think might share your passion for this mission. Tell them your story. Invite them to share their stories. Practice with each other telling and honing your stories. When you're done with this you'll have a team of people who:
 - a. Is not only committed to MDG ministry in your congregation but knows why they are.
 - b. Can share a powerful personal story of why this is transformative for them as a way of inviting others into that transformation.

Once you have your team, commit to a prayer discipline together, again not for a specific outcome of a project, but that God's will be done and this purpose be fulfilled.

4. **Learn to tell your community's story** – Now that you know where this mission connects with your passions and values, you need to connect it with your community's? Bono said the best advice he ever got about engaging Americans in global poverty work came from Warren Buffet, who told him 'Don't appeal to the conscience of America. Appeal to the greatness of America and you'll get the job done.' Where has your congregation done great things? Where has your congregation been a people of compassion? Where in your founding documents and values (Baptismal Covenant, Gospels, mission statement, etc.) does it say that you are about being the kind of people who reach for this kind of greatness through compassion?

Again, don't tell it in terms of "should" ... tell it in terms of "can" and "get to!" This will also need to be practiced and honed ... and you should be able to tell it AND your personal story together in 3 minutes or less.

5. **Decide on your ask ... then ask it** – Movements have to have actions that act as entry points. They have to be accessible enough that anyone can do them and yet sacrificial enough that people know they have actually done something and are open to transformation. Think of your answer to the "Why?" question. What action can you invite people to take that will put people on the road toward achieving your purpose? What is the action that is both accessible and sacrificial? Is it giving 0.7% of their income to the MDGs? Is it writing a letter a month to each of your elected officials in Washington about the MDGs? What is the urgency of the present moment ... and what action are you calling people to take to respond to that urgency in an accessible yet sacrificial way.

Once you've decided on the ask Connect it to your story and the story of the community. Practice it with each other. Oh ... and make sure the whole thing can be done in three minutes or less.

Now you're on your way! If you use these steps you can go from one person who has an idea of doing something about the MDGs to a whole team that is committed to the MDGs, can share powerful stories of why they're committed to the MDGs, can connect that commitment to the life and history of the congregation and the wider Body of Christ, and can invite everyone in the congregation into a specific accessible yet sacrificial action to begin to achieve the purpose you've set for this mission. That's powerful stuff!

Good Resource: We said this already, but even though you can do this by yourself, the trainers who work with Devon Anderson and the Public Narrative Project are outstanding at helping groups learn how to do this. Consider asking them to host a training in your diocese. The skills learned will go far beyond just working on the MDGs to stewardship, evangelism and much, much more.

***This resource was prepared by
Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation (www.e4gr.org)
and draws heavily from the work of
Dr. Marshall Ganz (who was a consultant at the founding of EGR)
and the Rev. Devon Anderson, EGR board member.***