

Centre for Liberation Theologies
Methodology for its 25th Anniversary Seminar
Tuesday, December 10, 2013, 9:00am-5:00pm

“Geographies of Resistance: Local Communities or Sustainable Institutions?”

During this one day seminar we will use the process of Appreciative Inquiry in its four main steps of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Delivery, to discern together about the future of liberation theologies. We will attempt to answer the question “What is the best way forward for liberation theologies today?” We want to research into possible futures of liberation theology from the point of view of the tension between resistance from the perspective of local communities or from the perspective of the building of sustainable institutions.

I. In the Discovery part of the process, participants are asked their reasons for appreciating liberation theologies. They will share these with one another and we will attempt to draw a map of these “assets” of liberation theologies. Thoughts may go in the following directions:

- Examples of good practices, as well as theological convictions, of liberation theologies in which people have participated
- the liberating strategies of liberation theologians and the theologies they develop
- the ways in which liberation theologians organize and structure their work together (communities, networks, institutions...)
- Why is there still a need in the contemporary context for liberation theology?
- ...

II. In the Dream part of the process, participants formulate the opportunities they perceive for liberation theologies tomorrow or within a few years. Again we will share and attempt to map these “dreams” for liberation theologies. Here we imagine liberation theologies in the near future. Possible avenues of thought are:
• how we imagine our activities as liberation theologians (issues, forms of collaboration and insertion, ...)
• what kind of communities of concern and resistance do we need, what forms of collaboration will be adequate also to support and sustain processes of advocacy (issues, structuring such communities, ...)
• the impact of liberation theologies in society (structures and institutions of governance, advocacy for those who have no voices, ...)
• ...

III. In the Design part of the process, participants reflect from the dreams and try to imagine how concrete (material, theological, institutional) steps can be taken towards realizing the dreams. Here we could reach out to some precise decisions or suggestions for the future. Possible areas of reflection and sharing are:

• Steps to be taken to create an environment that enables our dreams about liberation theologies
• building alliances (communities, structures, institutions, networks, ...) that sustain our dreams
• levels in liberation theologies (field, pastoral organization, research, ...)
• ...

IV. In the Delivery part of the process, participants reflect to what empowers and enables them to take the concrete steps that appeared in the design phase. What are the conditions under which these steps can be taken. In combination with the design phase of the discernment process, this leads to a statement of intent on what we will do and what we need to be enabled to do so. Suggestions that may help this destiny phase:

• support that will enable us to build the designs that arose from our appreciation of liberation theologies and our dreams
• Communities, structures, institutions and networks that will provide us sustainable support
• ...

Practicalities:

• During each session, participants will first individually reflect (15 min), then share their thoughts and discuss within a group (30 minutes), which will remain together throughout the seminar. These groups will then present what has been said during a 30-minute plenary session.
• Groups will receive different short texts (2-3 pages) in order to stimulate discussion and facilitate the transgression of one’s own paradigm towards a common dialogue.
• Each group will choose a group leader as well as an observer. Observers will record the thought process of their group, as well as the plenaries, and will draft texts which will be circulated after the seminar to the participants, so as to come to a document that contains a statement of purpose.

Schedule:
9:00-9:30 Introductions and explanation
9:30-10:15 Session I
10:15-10:45 Plenary I
10:45-11:00 Coffee break
11:00-11:45 Session II
11:45-12:15 Plenary II
12:15-12:30 Evaluation of the seminar dynamics so far

12:30-1:30 Lunch
1:30-2:15 Session III
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>2:15-2:45</td>
<td>Plenary III</td>
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<td>2:45-3:00</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<td>3:00-3:45</td>
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<td>3:45-4:15</td>
<td>Plenary IV</td>
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<td>4:15-5:00</td>
<td>Group discussion: recap and conclusion</td>
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