

October 2008

**A Final Report to the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church
for a Constable Grant concerning the Work of PEALL
(Proclaiming Education for All)**

Summary

The following report to Executive Council traces the history of PEALL, an advocacy and strategic planning task force for education in TEC. During the almost five years of its existence, the journey of PEALL has been a microcosm of what we believe to be a productive path for the church's future: the development of a community of learning that values education *writ large* and has found important new ways to collaborate. At a time when one of the most important priorities for mission, program, and finance is "claiming our identity," the learning and recommendations of PEALL for the future will hopefully be of value to TEC.

Though the crafters of the General Convention (2003) resolutions that created PEALL had some grand strategic hopes in mind, our goals were initially more modest: (1) to develop common educational language to communicate with each other and our constituencies; and (2) to share the "connections" each member of the task force had with other educational and formational institutions and programs. To accomplish these goals we developed glossaries of our respective languages, wrote a history of education *writ large* in the church since the 1960's, and engaged in a number of specific projects (building networks, participating in conferences, crafting new educational documents for the church, et al.). For all of this to happen, the following ingredients were necessary: a spirit of hope and respect; some humility and humor; a willingness to work at building relationships with one another; an affirmation of the gifts each member of the task force brought to the endeavor; and last, but far from least, longevity—having enough time (more than a triennium) to accomplish the work we were given to do. We are also deeply grateful for the rich gift of human resources provided by the national staff of the church, without which our work could not have been done.

The report concludes with a number of suggestions and resolutions for Executive Council (sometimes in conjunction with standing commissions of General Convention and always in cooperation and collaboration with the staff of the national church) to consider. Some of these suggestions have financial implications, some do not. All, however, aim at helping TEC commit itself more fully and effectively to "claiming its identity" through a variety of strategic actions dealing with education and formation.

Finally, all members of PEALL wish to thank Executive Council for its bold generosity and vision in creating this task force. We do not believe your commitment was in vain, and hope you will find ways to support similar efforts to strengthen education in TEC in the future.

A Tale of Two Resolutions

Introduction: *Oil and Water or A Stroke of Genius?*

In 2004 the Executive Council took a bold step, investing heavily in education *writ large* in the Episcopal Church. It did this through a Constable Fund grant. The purpose of this report, together with many pertinent appendices, is:

- To trace the work of the strategy team, PEALL, created by this grant
- To evaluate how well the outcomes proposed in the grant proposal were achieved
- To describe some of the surprises and unexpected outcomes experienced and achieved along the way by PEALL and other activities and groups associated with its work
- To make some strategic recommendations for the future concerning education and formation in the Episcopal Church

It is the considered if biased opinion of all members of PEALL as well as many educators throughout the church that the work enabled by the Executive Council has been significant, coming from and contributing to a continuing upsurge of interest and commitment to education in parishes, dioceses, seminaries, and in the national church. We are grateful for the step of faith represented by this grant and believe the work completed has and will make a difference.

Prehistory General Convention 2003 was a time of lots of visioning for folks involved in education. The story of this Constable Fund grant begins with two very different educational constituencies trying to get approval for thinking on the long-term future of their respective areas and concerns. On the one hand, the Standing Commission for Ministry Development, working closely with the Episcopal seminaries wanted to

explore again the future of theological education, much like the Pusey Report had done forty years ago (Resolution A120). Now, however, theological education included not only seminaries, but other institutions involved in preparing folks for lay, and especially ordained, ministries. On the other hand, a group of educators from diocesan and provincial networks as well as those involved in youth and young adult ministries wanted to lift up lifelong Christian education and formation, looking at education and formation in all areas of the church and in all ages and developing comprehensive and strategic visions. Though very different in their educational foci, these two resolutions, passed by General Convention, did share one thing: they were both unfunded!

Working with and through staff members at the national church office, and eventually members of the Executive Council, several realities quickly became clear. First, there were very few places where funds to implement either of these resolutions might be found. Second, there were probably not enough funds to finance the rather grand schemes and hopes of both resolutions (many meetings, many members of new strategy teams, et al.). Finally, it was suggested by Executive Council that these two resolutions be combined, looking at many different facets of education in the church in a holistic and strategic manner. The prospect of such a large project was as daunting as it was appealing—for those educators at seminaries, diocesan and provincial offices, local ministry development parishes and missions, to name but a few, spoke different educational languages, had different goals and models for ministry, and were often distrustful of one another. Believing, however, that the overall goals of lifting up education and thinking about it strategically was critical to the future of the whole church, a group of educators met in New York in the summer of 2004 to talk about how

the goals of these two resolutions might be combined into one project. The result, described in some detail in the Constable Grant proposal (cf. Appendices), called for a smaller, leaner strategy team of educators from all parts of the church. Besides openness to all kinds of education, the only thing each one of these folks needed to have was a “connectedness” to different networks where education and formation was occurring. It was through those connections that the strategy team would accomplish its broad and comprehensive goals.

The work of what would eventually be called PEALL began, then, with several different premises. First, no one person’s or institution’s vision of education, whether parish or diocese or seminary or national church office, would be primary and normative for the whole group—all would be welcome and honored. Second, because of economic and logistical realities, the strategy team would have to use the connections already possessed by its members, as well as its ability to create still more, to accomplish its tasks of looking at education in a comprehensive manner. Third, if this rather bold and inclusive vision of a strategy team for education *writ large* in the Episcopal Church was to be effective and successful, we would need the experience and expertise of a facilitator and others “outside” the educational networks of the Episcopal Church.

With the help of Executive Council and the hard work of many national church staff members (especially Bud Holland!), the new strategy team met for the first time in Chicago. There was enthusiasm and hope and excitement as a wide variety of educators from all over the church came together. No one knew everyone, so a lot of introductions were necessary, as well as trying to get one’s head around the vision of education presupposed by the grant proposal, which only a few of the strategy team’s members had

had any role in crafting. Despite all the planning and good intentions, despite all the good will and excitement about doing something new together, by the end of that first meeting the scene resembled a Pentecost experience gone awry, with all kinds of different voices and languages and visions, but little comprehension about either the vocabulary or the goals of education or formation or nurture espoused by the group's members. It was an auspicious, and sobering, beginning! The story of how this initial Pentecost experience of chaos moved toward something very different, something compatible with the overall goals of the Constable Grant, but in some ways even transcending them, is contained in the remainder of this report.

The Work of PEALL: *From Oil and Water to a Community of Learning*

Membership: *The Players*. The grant proposal estimated there would be 12 members of the strategy team. In trying to be representative of the resolutions' constituencies as well as touching as many educational networks as possible, membership was expanded to twenty, although one member never attended meetings and eventually resigned. We were able to stay within our budget by careful choices of sites for our meetings. At the end we numbered seventeen, due to one more resignation and the untimely death of Bishop James Kelsey. This number does not include staff and Wally Fletcher, our facilitator. Good choices were made for the membership of PEALL (cf. Appendices). The seminaries were well represented as were diocesan educators. There was a good balance between men and women and several members were deeply involved in ethnic ministries and education. We had a regular Lutheran presence in Mark Wilhelm, an education officer at their national office. Wally Fletcher was a wonderful

facilitator, keeping the group aware of its responsibilities and schedule, on the one hand, and helpfully asking us to be as articulate and clear about our many educational thoughts and passions, on the other. Wally was a refreshing and motivating presence and appreciated by all.

There were only two downsides to the membership of PEALL. At times it felt like we were on a staff merry-go-round, with several changes during the overall life cycle of PEALL. This was due to triennial changes (including the election of the new presiding bishop) as well as some unforeseen vocational changes as well. More important, however, was the fact that we only had one bishop on the strategy team and, since June of 2007, no bishop. PEALL and Executive Council need to give special attention to the political issues raised by the absence of an episcopal presence on this strategy team.

Regular Meetings. There have been eight meetings of the whole PEALL strategy team since April 2005. Three of them have been at seminaries (two at VTS and one at CDSP); two of them at the Lutheran national center in Chicago; two of them in mainland dioceses (Atlanta and Northern Michigan); and one of them in Province IX (Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic). Much learning for all the members of PEALL occurred at each and every one of these meetings. Our initial three meetings had a clear focus on what we needed to learn from each other (different language, pedagogies, conceptions and settings for education, constituencies, et al.). Our next three meetings had an additional focus on education in the particular setting where we met (a seminary, a diocese committed to local ministry development, and a non-United States diocese). Our last two meetings entailed learning about the final work of PEALL subgroups as well as a bit of national church politics and process as we prepared to report our findings to

Executive Council, two different standing commissions, and General Convention, as well as the various networks (e.g. NAECED, the Council of Episcopal Deans, NAAD, etc.).

Special Interest Groups. On the basis of the experience and expertise of its members and trying to be as comprehensive (and realistic!) as possible, the larger group broke into smaller interest groups at its initial meeting. These groups were: Youth, Young Adults and Higher Education; Multicultural and Prophetic; Theological Education; and Life-long Formation and Community Development. These groups met initially to get to know each other's interests better and to think on possible ways of addressing the larger goals and hopes for PEALL (strategic visions for the future; better networks and communication; etc.). In addition to this small group work, the larger strategy team brainstormed the many different networks and institutions in the Episcopal Church that might want or need to be aware of our existence and from whom we might learn. That list, and the idea that we might actually try and touch all these folks, together with the very different languages being used to talk with and "at" each other, contributed to the overwhelming chaos of our first meeting.

Our second meeting set a tone for all subsequent meetings, a much better tone! We started, first in our small groups and then in the larger strategy team, to identify the special language we each used in our respective educational contexts and to define some key terms. We also named the values that drove our educational visions and missions. We shared all of this with one another and started, slowly, to understand one another, noting both differences and common concerns. Though individual members of PEALL continued to be advocates for the constituencies and stakeholders they represented (e.g. seminaries, dioceses, parishes, etc.), from this second meeting on we understood the

terminology we used to speak of a larger educational and formational entity, to which we all belonged, grounded in a baptismal ecclesiology. We started to see some possibilities and connections, recognizing (very slowly at first) that we were simply not going to be able to deal with all of the education going on in the church. Finally, we focused on a common task and goal actually given to us by others: going to an upcoming conference on education entitled “Wrestling with the Big Questions,” sponsored by constituencies very much like those represented by the members of PEALL (SCMD, the Office for Ministry Development, and Ministries with Young People’s Cluster). This conference, held in Indianapolis in January 2006, brought together educators from all over the Episcopal Church and provided us with an opportunity to learn from others about the many challenges and opportunities facing us all. PEALL’s work, still in its early stages, was highlighted.

Out of the work of the special interest groups and general discussion came a number of projects.

- It was quickly realized by all that much had happened in education and the church since the Pusey Report. Soon thereafter a group was formed to write a brief comprehensive history of the changes in ministry, mission, and education in order to understand what is going on today and what might be needed for the future.
- Another special interest, which also grew into a project, was the relationship between the residentially based education of the seminaries and the contextual education of local ministry development found in many dioceses of the church. How these very different educational settings and agendas might be brought together for mutual enlightenment and possible collaboration in the future was

explored. An initial meeting between seminaries and dioceses was held in Chicago in October 2007 under the auspices of PEALL. (Cf. Appendices).

- Interests in multicultural and ethnic ministry soon led to special discussions about how to learn from those involved in such ministry and to communicate that learning to others exploring such possibilities.
- Those interested in diocesan Christian education plotted, successfully, how to bring diocesan Christian educators together to learn from and support one another.
- Christian educators in PEALL were also central players in the plans to write a Charter for Christian Formation, something to be shared, hopefully, with the whole church in the future.
- Survey work in the areas of: Youth and Young Adults (diocesan and congregational); Deacons (through NAAD); and NAECED—all of these coordinated with the help of the national church office and staff (cf. Appendices).

In addition to these projects, which grew out of and eventually came to replace the special interest groups as the main small group work of PEALL, there were many other discussions and study done of particular educational endeavors in the church.

Among these were:

- Theological Education in the Anglican Communion (TEAC). One of PEALL's members, Susanne Watson Epting, was also the representative from the Episcopal Church on this Anglican strategy team set up to study theological education in the whole communion. We benefited greatly from the materials provided and the discussions that ensued.

- The distinctive needs of Diaconal Diaconal Formation and Development were discussed, which led to surveys and discussion in small and large group settings.
- The need for translation of many different educational resources into Spanish and other languages was noted and discussed many times.
- Learning of and from Lutheran experiences in seminaries, local ministry development programs, and other Christian education endeavors occurred on a regular basis.
- Special education programs in the diocese of Northern Michigan (e.g. *Life Cycles*), the Dominican Republic and all of Province IX, and the Church Divinity School of the Pacific (e.g. the Center for Anglican Learning and Leadership) were focal points when PEALL meetings were held in these settings.
- The importance of ministry in daily life and the relevance of theological education that informs our work.

Special Meetings In addition to regular meetings, email and phone conversations, there were many other occasions when smaller groups of PEALL members came together to work on projects or to spread the word about our project. A majority of the strategy team attended the “Wrestling with the Big Questions” conference, and a special team meeting was held at that time. The history writing team met several times. Members of PEALL helped host a special lunch at General Convention in Columbus. PEALL and the new Standing Commission for Lifelong Learning and Christian Formation met together in the Dominican Republic. In addition to these and other meetings noted above, PEALL

has been a regular topic of reporting and conversation at meetings of the Standing Commission of Ministry Development, Council of Episcopal Seminary Deans and many other places where education, ministry, and mission are on the agenda. PEALL has also been influential in creating connections between educational groups with differing agendas, as, for example, in its advocating that Episcopal seminary deans attend meetings of Living Stones, and in creating an opportunity for diocesan staff educators to meet, which will continue into the future. That effort has resulted in two more seminaries becoming members of Living Stones and a series of conversations about shared programming between seminaries and local ministry development oriented dioceses and a new Diocesan Christian Educators Network.

PEALL's mandate, at least as found in the two original resolutions, was always more than any single group could do. So, even as we got excited about one project or another we knew we were passing up opportunities somewhere else. Ministry in Higher Education (focused primarily on college and university chaplaincies) and Episcopal schools are but two examples of areas where we were not able to focus serious attention, but which are very much worthy of such. Hopefully these and other areas will be included in the implementation of strategic initiatives concerning education in the post-PEALL era.

Expected Outcomes: *Things Done and Things to be Continued*

The Constable Grant proposal had a plan of action and methodology that the strategic team followed as best it could. The proposal also looked forward to at least

fourteen explicit outcomes being achieved through the work of the project and strategy team.

1. Growing awareness by the whole Church of the “big picture” of theological education and lifelong faith formation. Through its work with the Council of Episcopal Deans, National Association of Episcopal Christian Education Directors (NAECED), Living Stones, SCMD, the new Standing Commission for Lifelong Learning and Christian Formation, General Convention 2006, and so much more (cf. this report and Appendices), we believe more of the church is aware of education and its import in these times of change and challenge. We have seen an increased interest in the importance of ministry in daily life and work and the relevance of theological education that informs our life and work and we have seen a shift in Christian education and formation methods with all ages, all of this contributing to an increased awareness of education *writ large* in the Church.
2. A comprehensive, strategic vision for theological education for the Church. Some elements of this vision are contained in this report and PEALL has worked closely with other groups (see, for example, outcome 1 above) that are also involved in this visioning process for the Church.
3. Specific recommendations for implementation of that strategy. These are also contained in this report and in the work of other groups, e.g. SCMD.
4. An improved system for delivering theological education through technology and different (new) pedagogies. While PEALL could never be the primary agent for creating such a system, we did hear from seminaries and dioceses who are

working hard on ways to make theological education more accessible.. We were also proactive in trying to put seminaries and dioceses into dialogue about the diocesan issues and needs which call for such new delivery systems.

5. Evolution of a creative curriculum for leadership in a multicultural context. We had several discussions and planning sessions around this and related topics, identifying a variety of new resources critical for accomplishing this work. Especially important here were PEALL's conversations with the curriculum writers of Province IX.
6. New partnerships and more effective participation in continuing education. Many new educational partnerships, e.g. between seminaries and dioceses, between diocesan Christian educators, have been created during the time of PEALL's existence, sometimes through our initiatives, sometimes not. Many creative and stimulating new offerings for continuing education are now available, but PEALL has not studied their effectiveness.
7. Integration of programs, networks, and resources of theological education to create efficiencies. PEALL has been involved, directly and indirectly, in helping all involved in theological education work better in cooperative and collaborative ways. The need for this work to occur, and soon, is high in the consciousness of all involved in theological education right now.
8. Gathering of the wisdom of other denominations. We have done this well with the Lutheran Church, but more explicit and intentional work with some of the groups who meet regularly in ecumenical and interfaith gatherings is called for in the future.

9. Recommendations for effective financial support. This was discussed often and the work of SIM (the Fund for Future Leaders) and SCMD and others was noted and affirmed. The big work still remains: while the church is being made aware of the “big picture” of education more effectively, there still needs to be a change in priorities and values that will then lead to a change in the way our resources are allocated.
10. Exploration of new ways and avenues of learning. This was accomplished through learning of the work of TEAC, through our special visits to particular dioceses and seminaries, and through discussion with one another. Much is going on out there and PEALL has tried to be an agent of dissemination for some of it.
11. Linkages between diocesan schools and seminaries. We have tried to put these folks in touch with one another through meetings and email. The process has begun well and we have much hope for the future—though there is a long way to go.
12. An exploration and integration between education, mission and ministry. This is being accomplished in part by the strategic visioning done by PEALL and many other educational groups in the Church.
13. Bring to the attention of the church various networking possibilities for effective theological education. This will be an important part of a strategic vision and its implementation.
14. Develop and enhance the theological and scholarly base of the Church’s educational offerings. We hope this has happened, but are not sure how to measure this outcome.

The Learnings of PEALL: Surprises and the Unexpected

Most of the Constable Grant proposal and the largest part of this report have been work and outcome oriented, as they should be. But many things have happened because of and with PEALL over these past five years that were unplanned, unexpected, and filled with grace, for PEALL's membership, and, we believe, for others as well. Some of the following descriptions of how PEALL has functioned are congruent with initial expectations and hopes, and some are genuine surprises, for which we give thanks.

- PEALL as a Learner (from Province IX, from the diocese of Northern Michigan, from the Lutherans, from seminaries, from each other, etc.)
- PEALL as a Teacher (through the writing of a history of education in TEC since the Pusey Report, etc.)
- PEALL as a Builder and Sustainer of Networks (diocesan educators, seminaries and dioceses, etc.)
- PEALL as an Advocate (education in all places)
- PEALL as a Cattle Prod (motivating and encouraging the Council of Episcopal Seminary Deans, local ministry development dioceses, etc.)
- PEALL as a Catalyst (Wrestling with the Big Questions conference, etc.)
- PEALL as a Identifier of Priorities (for Executive Council, for General Convention standing commissions, etc.)
- PEALL as a Place for Communion and Fellowship (with each other, with diocesan staff, with seminary faculty and staff, with provincial staff)

- PEALL as a Visionary for Mission and Ministry (through the identification of strategic directions, etc.)
- PEALL as an Agent of Communication (through the TEforALL web portal, etc.)

The Future: Toward a Strategic Vision for Education in the Church

From the beginning the members of PEALL cared deeply about strategic planning for the education of the Episcopal Church. Some hoped for a carefully developed plan that would move us all forward in positive ways. Others were more modest in their hopes and expectations. By the time it was necessary for us to put some of our strategic visions down on paper, however, we knew a “comprehensive” vision that touched all facets of education was simply not possible. On the other hand, we have identified many facets of a strategic approach to education *writ large* that we believe can and should be accomplished in the foreseeable future. We are not arguing for “new” structures, though we rejoice in the creation of a new standing commission related in part to the constituencies of one of PEALL’s founding resolutions. We do believe, however, that changes must be made and commitments solidified with new resources. We are committed to going to the networks we know, and perhaps ones we don’t, as well as to General Convention and elsewhere “proclaiming” one or more of the following components of a strategic vision for education in the Episcopal Church.

- TEC must be a place filled with education for multicultural ministry.
- TEC must be a place where several different models of ministry, for lay and ordained, are operative, and where folks are fluent in the “language” of more than one form of ministry.

- TEC must be a place that knows its educational history—what has been done, what has not been done, what changes must be made.
- TEC must be a place filled with goodwill and trust if education is to be effective and comprehensive.
- TEC and its education must be filled with many languages and cultures.
- TEC must be self-aware of its breadth and its disparateness.
- TEC must create opportunities for educational conversations across “traditional” boundaries (seminary versus diocese, parish versus diocese, etc.)
- TEC must be a place filled with commitment to information sharing and communication (TEforALL website, etc.)
- TEC must be a place that develops more effective lines of accountability (e.g. Title III refinements, etc.)
- TEC must be a place filled with joint projects, encouraging collaboration and sharing of resources.

Affirmations and Suggested Strategic Directions and Actions

All of the following suggestions are compatible with and mandated by the “claiming our identity” priority of TEC. Given the many challenges and opportunities facing the church today, and given the large commitment of resources provided for the work of PEALL, we hope every effort will be made to lift up education and formation as critical components of a vision for mission and ministry in the future.

We begin by affirming TEC for its creating a position for a theological education and hope this will function, together with positions focusing on lay and ordained ministry

and others within the national infrastructure, to set forth an integrated and holistic approach to education in all parts of the church (see appendix for suggestions concerning this position). We also hope that the new Standing Commission on Life-Long Learning and Christian Formation will be provided with increased resources, as it becomes a major educational force in the General Convention structure of TEC.

We have six suggestions for future work in the area of education *writ large* in TEC.

1. Communication. In order to take full advantage of the many wonderful and rich educational activities in TEC, serious attention must be given to the development (or continuation, if the TEforALL website is considered the starting point, which we would highly recommend) of web resources for the purposes of facilitating communication among those already involved as well as making known opportunities and resources for those who are not. We know that IT resources are already a priority for TEC. We ask that educational communication be an important priority in determining the allocation of IT funds.
2. In the interests of bringing together educators from all over TEC on a regular basis, we propose that the Congregational Vitality and Leadership and the Evangelism and Mission program groups plan and implement another church-wide conference similar in scope to “Will Our Faith Have Children?” and “Wrestling With the Big Questions” in the next triennium.

The purpose of this conference would be to continue exploration and learning for the purposes of educational collaboration.

3. We strongly encourage the Executive Council to: (1) lift up the importance of diocesan structures and personnel for addressing and highlighting Christian formation; and (2) to help find the resources for dialogues between dioceses and the larger church concerning Christian formation (e.g., through NAECED, et al.).
4. We ask Executive Council to consider co-sponsoring, with the SCLL and SCMD, the new Charter for Life Long Learning.
5. PEALL supports the ongoing work of the Translation Task Force and urges increased support and resources for translations of education and formation materials. One way of supporting this work is to increase the dollar amount allocated within resource budgets within the Church Center program offices. PEALL applauds the wish of so many in TEC to provide good translations of resources to benefit mission and ministry. PEALL asks Executive Council to consider supporting resolutions and other actions pertaining to the creation and translation of these materials proposed by General Convention standing commissions.

6. Finally, we want Executive Council to know that the members of PEALL are ready and willing to help TEC live out its mission and ministry, especially as this pertains to formation and education *writ large*. This might include the following possibilities:
- Appointing former PEALL members to either the Standing Commission for Ministry Development or the Standing Commission for Lifelong Learning and Christian Formation
 - To encourage the program officers of the church center and others to use PEALL members for consultation and advice in determining future directions in specific areas of education and formation (perhaps through the creation of an Advisory Committee)

Though we are aware that the use of former PEALL members for advisory purposes may entail increased expenses, we believe continuing and expanding the learning begun in PEALL is important. Through the Constable granting process, the Church has made a significant investment over the last several years. In the interest of the many stakeholders, the lessons waiting to be implemented, and the ongoing stewardship of the wealth in the work of PEALL, the use of its former members can hopefully be helpful in the ways described above as well as others not yet voiced or imagined.

We also hope that the work of PEALL will continue to be important for TEC in the following ways:

- That the data accumulated and the yearnings articulated throughout the church will be communicated and implemented throughout the Church and expanded within both existing and emerging structures.
- That the model of PEALL's process in creating permeable boundaries between groups will serve as a bridge between the many offices at the Church Center which may have responsibility in carrying this work forward. This includes offices that support Ministry Development, Congregational Vitality, Education and Christian Formation, now lodged in numerous partnerships and geographical locations.
- That TEC will commit itself to communicating clearly that education is a necessary foundation for General Convention priorities, especially "claiming our identity."