

The SENT Seminar and The Emerging Church

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To put it simply, the SENT Seminar gave me **hope**.

I arrived exhausted and burnt out. Suffering from, as it is called today, compassion fatigue. As the newly hired Executive Director of the [Arizona Faith Network](#) I spent the first few months of 2019 engaging with diverse religious communities. I heard their stories of joy and stories of struggle. Stories of achievement and stories of failure. Stories of fear of growing religious intolerance. Stories of sorrow at having to hire armed security to protect houses of worship. Stories about organizing prayer vigil after prayer vigil, only to have violence happen again.

I spent days in my new role learning the faith community of Arizona was simply exhausted.

Exhausted and longing for connection. Longing for hope. That is why I am working in my role with the Arizona Faith Network (AFN) to launch the Know Your Neighbor program. The goal of this statewide program is to promote peace, understanding, and education of diverse religious identities found throughout the state. This program will equip community leaders of various faiths to build relationships based on civil dialogue, diversity education, and community issues. This will occur through the establishment of neighborhood interfaith dialogue groups throughout the state. Operated in small group discussion models, these groups will explore how faith impacts the daily lives of the community members and how education about and to and appreciation for diversity strengthens the community. The Know Your Neighbor program is my dream for Arizona communities.

I came to the SENT Seminar able to see that dream clearly, but not sure of how to birth it into being. I was anxious about how to raise the money, how to navigate the diverse communities, how to ensure I had the proper legal support. After a long few months, I arrived tired, anxious and frustrated. But, from the moment I walked into the SENT seminar, I instantly changed. The room was filled with passionate leaders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who, though many were also tired, were dreaming dreams of a new church. These leaders were engaged in the real impactful work of social services. They were engaged directly in their local communities. They were engaged in changing the systemic systems of injustice. They were engaged – and hopeful – about what new ministries the church could birth into being in this world.



Not only were there powerful and impactful leaders involved in the SENT Seminar but there were also powerful and impactful presenters. The leadership of the NBA brought in the best of the best to help train us. They taught us how to navigate our anxieties of starting up a nonprofit or a new ministry. They helped us begin developing a financial plan. They explained legal terms and trained us on getting to know our local communities. After just a few days together I suddenly felt that my dream of changing Arizona was really possible, and I knew how to start bringing it to life.

The SENT Seminar truly equips the leaders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to be sent into the communities of this world. The Seminar equips the leaders to enact the callings the Creator has laid on their hearts. The SENT Seminar equips us to understand that the church is still emerging, and it is time we start doing ministry creatively and differently. I am so grateful that the NBA understands and equips us for changing ministry in this changing world. I highly recommend this program to anyone who has a dream of how God can change this world through the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

I may have arrived in despair, but I left with great hope.

As the health and social services general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the National Benevolent Association partners with congregations, regions, general ministries, and a variety of Disciples-related health and social service providers to create communities of compassion and care. Founded in 1887 by six women responding to the needs of the day and on their doorsteps, for more than 130 years the NBA has continued to serve "the least of these." Learn more at www.nbacares.org.