

Ministry Education in Context

The Newsletter of the Contextual Leadership Initiative
of the Western Mission Cluster
September 2003
Volume 1, Issue 1



Contextual Leadership Initiative

Accompanying this newsletter is the recent announcement from the Task Force of the Western Mission Cluster in which it identifies the close collaboration between PLTS and Luther Seminary that is underway or envisioned. One of the initiatives already underway is the Contextual Leadership Initiative which brings together common work of the two seminaries in contextual and cross-cultural education, but also sets that work on a new course.

The Contextual Leadership Initiative (CLI) is intended to maintain the commitment of both schools to congregations, lay leaders, and pastors as essential partners in the provision of quality theological education. The CLI will demand imagination and creativity, but the importance of local contexts for learning and service will be continued and enhanced.

There is change, however, associated with the CLI, as well as continuity and that is especially evident in the area of personnel. Sue Schultz, associated with Contextual Education at

PLTS for a number of years, began a new ministry in June as a part of the office staff at the Sierra Pacific Synod Office. Susan Granata, Director of Contextual Education at PLTS received a call to become the pastor at Christ Lutheran Church in Fairbanks, Alaska and began her ministry there on September 1.

Sharon Kelly, Associate Director of Contextual Education at Luther Seminary, completed her work on July 1 of this year and is currently serving as interim pastor at Peace Lutheran Church in Lauderdale, MN. All three women worked effectively and faithfully in their respective positions for a number of years. Their skills, wisdom and compassion served students, pastors and congregations, the seminaries, and the larger church very well. We are in their debt.

Called to provide leadership for the CLI by PLTS is Dr. Alicia Vargas. She has been responsible for the dimension of cross-cultural education at PLTS for several years on a part time

basis before accepting the call to full time ministry with CLI. She joins Rod Maeker, Laure Schwartz and myself on the CLI staff. Denny Everson continues this year as an Associate Director of Contextual Education at Luther.

In a number of respects this year will be a transition year for us. Envisioned by next summer is the use of several deployed persons to do some of what will be done by residential staff this year. Communication will be strengthened through greater and more effective use of technology. The development of cohort groups to enrich peer learning will also be explored.

Your comments and reflection as we move through this year are invited and will be greatly appreciated.

Randy A. Nelson, Director
Contextual Leadership
Initiative

Inside this issue:

Sending the Newsletter	2
Pretty Good Handbook	2
Contacting Us	2

Special points of interest:

- Announcement from Task Force of the Western Mission Cluster
- New web site: www.plts.luthersem/cli

Sending the Newsletter

Our intention is to produce a monthly newsletter similar to this issue. It will include information about what is happening at PLTS and Luther, news and notes about internship, reminders of dates to keep in mind, and contributions from those of you serving on internship throughout the country and around the world. It will appear on or about the 15th of each month. Submissions for inclusion are welcome from any of you and should be sent to Laure Schwartz at lschwartz@luthersem.edu.

Ideally, we would like to send this to everyone by e-mail. However, there may be some among you who do not have regular access to e-mail and we will be happy to continue to send you hard copies. It would help us, however, if you could let Laure know if you prefer to receive future issues through the U.S. mail. Call her at 651/641-3266 with that information.

Pretty Good Handbook

by Laure Schwartz, Coordinator CLI

Hey, that Internship Handbook is pretty good! We revise the handbook every year and each year I work with it something jumps out at me. I thought I would share with you what stood out to me this time.

In the section on **Dimensions or Stages of Internship** (found on page 15 in the Luther handbook and page 22 in the PLTS handbook) there is a wonderful description of the “stages” of internship. You have already gone through a few of them - pre-internship, arrival, setting goals or just getting the initial paperwork in, etc. There are some stages coming up that may take an intern by surprise. If you are like me, anticipating change helps. -- “Oh, I knew this might come up. I think I’m ready for it.”

The **pivotal or critical stage**. The newness and initial energy can wear off. You are settled in and the expectations seem to differ, either the expectations of others or yourself or both. Maybe instead of more direction, it seems like you are getting less. What a great time to communicate with your supervisor, committee, and peers. You might be asking, “How do I do ministry according to the gifts I have identified for myself? Or maybe I have gifts I didn’t know of before.” Leading to the next stage, **effective ministry** - you may be asking “Who am I in this particular ministry context?” I don’t think these stages happen at the same time for every intern. You could be there right now or maybe not for a couple more months.

“Who am I in this particular ministry context?”

If you find yourself asking these questions, please know that there are people who care about this stage for you - your supervisor, your internship committee, your faculty contact person at the seminary, your friends, relatives, and your peers also on internship. You will not be alone when you hit this stage. What I’ve noticed through the years is that when interns try to sift through this alone, they start feeling isolated. Try not to let that happen. And if you can find it, the handbook can be of some help too. Does anyone need another copy? I would be glad to send one out!

Contact Information: check out www.plts.luthersem.edu/cli

Randy A. Nelson, Director
Contextual Leadership Initiative
rmelson@luthersem.edu
651/641-3259

Rod Maeker, CLI faculty
rmaeker@luthersem.edu
651/641-3223

Laure Schwartz, Coordinator CLI
lschwartz@luthersem.edu
cli@plts.luthersem.edu
651/641-3266

Alicia Vargas, CLI faculty
dravargas@aol.com
510/559-2713

Dennis Everson, Associate Director
Contextual Education
deverson@luthersem.edu
651/641-3474

DanaLee Ommen, Assistant CLI
conedsw@luthersem.edu
651/641-3470