

Ministry Education in Context



The Newsletter of the Contextual Leadership Initiative of the Western Mission Cluster
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Update on the Western Mission Network (WMN) and Western Mission Cluster (WMC)

by Judy Larsen, WMC Taskforce Chair

The Western Mission Network and Western Mission Cluster met in mid-January for a joint consultation at Spirit of the Desert Retreat Center. The theme for the consultation was “Ripples of the Baptized: Proclaiming the Reign of God in Daily Life.” The ripples at this consultation extended across educational organizations throughout the West.

These two organizations – Western Mission Network and Western Mission Cluster -- sound almost the same and in fact they are. The Western Mission Network (WMN) is the larger, more comprehensive group of organizations that deliver theological education in the West. It includes colleges, seminaries, lifelong learning centers, congregations, and others. By contrast, the Western Mission Cluster (WMC) in this context includes only the two ELCA seminaries in the West – PLTS and Luther.

The main outcome from the meeting can be summed up in one word: intersections. Intersections between colleges and universities, Lutheran campus ministries, seminaries, continuing education programs, synods, congregational ministries. Perhaps in no other setting is there such a cross-section of people from different institutional settings, all looking for ways to work together in providing educational opportunities.

Just as the idea of intersections, or collaborative programs, is somewhat different from the usual meeting agenda, so the role of the seminaries is also somewhat different. At this meeting the discussion was not about the seminary’s traditional educational model; instead, the conversation centered on collaboration, a role seminaries increasingly play. How do our seminaries work seamlessly with one another and as important, how do the seminaries interface with other educational programs and organizations. The best example of a functioning collaborative program between seminaries is CLI, the program that this newsletter represents. However, it is clear that new collaborative programs are in the process of forming, programs that intersect the seminaries with other teaching organizations in the network.

The consultation also focused on theological education for a range of different students. Again, the conversation was not limited to education of church professionals. Indeed, several spoke persuasively to the greater importance of leadership development for the whole people of God. The emphasis in such discussions was on leadership opportunities as well as service opportunities, that learning and preparation for both is required.

In this context, seminaries are on a steep learning curve. Seminaries must very quickly determine how to teach in a world of many cultures and religions and yet not get lost in the minutia of such deliberations. Like the whole people of God, a goal for



Judy Larsen, Western Mission Cluster

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seminaries is service. Seminaries and other organizations are looking for concrete ways of doing theological education for people where they are in their lives.

Folks attending the Western Mission Network consultation made the most of their time together to meet with one another, find out what's going on elsewhere, and talk about opportunities for collaboration or partnering. The Network is committed to providing leadership education for both lay persons and church professionals. Watch to see what further developments will emerge as a result of this commitment.

Mid-year Report on the Contextual Leadership Initiative (CLI)

by Randy Nelson, CLI Director

The most obvious and tangible dimensions of the Contextual Leadership Initiative (CLI) are in evidence during the months of March and this pre-Easter season. The internship placement process for the internship class of 2004-05 is in full swing. By the end of the first week in April we hope to have placed most of the 100 plus eligible internship candidates from Luther and PLTS.

Most of that process occurs on line with the overwhelming majority of the applications from both students and supervisors/congregations having been submitted electronically. Internship candidates have reviewed site applications, indicated preferences, and wait decisions that are being made by the CLI staff.

The decision-making process occurs the last week in March as part of the work that takes place when Alicia Vargas (PLTS) visits the Luther campus for three days of decision-making, planning, and consultation. This collaboration of Luther and PLTS in internship placement works and it illustrates the kind of partnership in the work of theological education that we expect to put into practice in other areas of the CLI.

For example, for the first time this spring there will be team-building workshops at both schools as the majority of interns and supervisors will gather in May to begin the process of relationship building.

Searches have been started for part-time deployed persons to participate in the work: one each in Regions 1, 2 and 3. The goal is to have the first deployed person on staff in Region 2 by the beginning of the summer.

Several other dimensions of our work are on the agenda during Alicia's visit to Luther for some preliminary discussion. The first is a beginning look at the initial programs at both schools: The Teaching Parish program at PLTS and the Contextual Leadership program at Luther. The second is a preliminary discussion of the possible role that Distant Sites/Distributive Learning programs can play in the CLI.

Representatives from the WMC Task Force will meet in Berkeley in May to continue these conversations and to explore other dimensions of our collaborations as well.

These are important times for the CLI and what we are involved in is important work. Those of you in the internship program this year are the first persons to experience some of what is involved. It will be important to those of us with responsibility for the Initiative to hear from you and you can expect to be asked for your observations and reflections in a more formal way before the year is over.

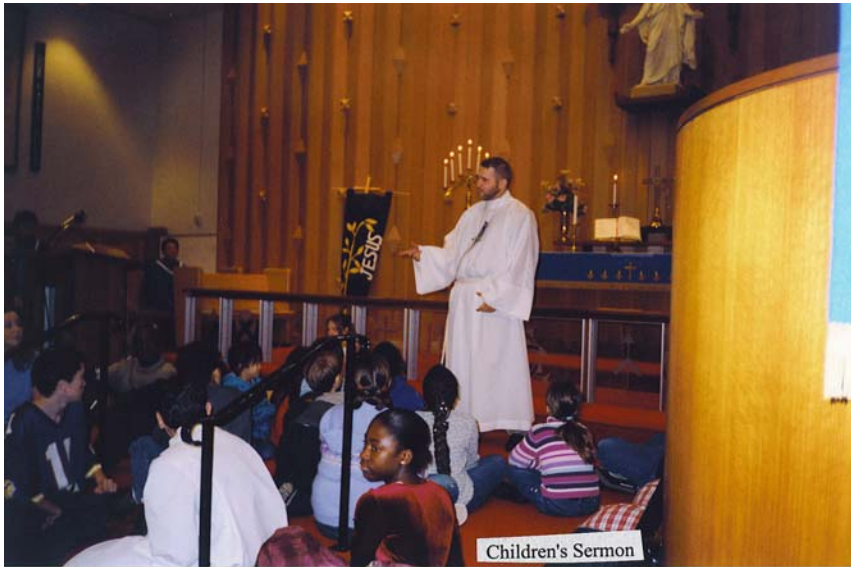
In the meantime, as the Lenten journey moves toward Holy Week, Good Friday, and Easter, may you be sustained and nourished in your ministry by our work together and the presence of the Holy Spirit.



Randy Nelson, Contextual Leadership Initiative

A note on Mid-year and Final evaluations

Thanks to the many of you who have turned in your mid-year evaluations! Keep them coming! A note on the final evaluations: Make sure you download the newest revision(3/22/04) off of the website as the first page has been modified a bit. Final evaluations can be found at http://plts.luthersem.edu/cli/internship/eval_forms.asp. If you need help with the necessary software (Formatta), please call the CLI office and talk to Laure Schwartz. Her number is 651/641-3266.



Children's Sermon

April Issue Topics

- Time management from the perspective of pastor and intern



Horizon Intern Justin Grimm

We are requesting pictures from the internship site where YOU are! This is Justin Grimm, Intern at Salem Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. Feel free to send either digital or hard copies to share with everyone through the newsletter.

Wishing you a blessed Easter and renewing Spring,
Contextual Leadership Initiative faculty and staff...

Laure Schwartz

Alicia Vargas

Rod Maeker

Randy Nelson

Mary Beth Weaver

Troy Stack-Nelson

Dennis Everson

Danna Lee Ommen

Julé Ballinger