

Maria Harris

Objective

To have a clear sense of the main arguments and metaphors Harris uses in her book *Fashion Me a People*.

To prepare well for our class discussion.

Reading questions

1. Maria Harris argues that curriculum is about (choose all that are correct):
 - (a) how to survey, select, order and distribute appropriate content in a learning setting
 - (b) standards and accountability in teaching settings
 - (c) mobilizing creative, educative powers to form and re-form the course of an organization
 - (d) practices rather than objects or content
2. Alasdair MacIntyre defines “practice” as “any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which good internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.” Pick one phrase from this definition and explain how it is connected to Maria Harris’ definition of curriculum.
3. What biblical images/metaphors underlie Harris’ notion of religious education as “fashioning a people”?
4. Harris identifies three tensions whose creative interaction need to be constructively maintained in religious education. They are:
 - (a) that between the personal and the communal
 - (b) that between the theological and the educational
 - (c) that between the religious and the spiritual
 - (d) that between the local and the global
 - (e) that between the clergy and the laity
5. Harris writes: “as every artist knows form is the actual shape of content. Form is a marshaling of materials in relation to one another. It is a setting of boundaries and limits. It is a discipline, an ordering and a fashioning according to need. ... Education means taking those forms which ecclesial life presents to us, places in our hands, as clay to be molded.” In what ways does this definition of education resonate with Parker Palmer’s, and in what ways does it differ?

6. Which of the following principles of curriculum design does Maria Harris articulate?
- (a) as church people we must consistently distinguish between the curriculum of education and the curriculum of schooling
 - (b) subject matter has many layers
 - (c) a curriculum must take into account the explicit, the implicit and the null elements of curricula
 - (d) the content of a curriculum matters more than the process by which it is practiced
 - (e) the curriculum of educational ministry is multiple
 - (f) a curriculum be at once priestly, prophetic, and political
7. Match the following terms to a rough synonym:

koinonia	witness
leiturgia	teaching
didache	community
kerygma	service
diakonia	proclamation
martyria	prayer

8. Harris suggests that curriculum planning processes have much in common with artistic processes, and she proposes the following steps in planning: contemplation, engagement, formgiving, emergence, release. Which of these is the step you enjoy the most, and why? Which of these is the step you find most distancing, and why?