

EL3530: Education Two

Religious Education in Relation to Creation

Course Workbook

Mary Hess

Fall term 2004

Three weekends:

September 10-12

October 8-10

November 12-14

mhess@luthersem.edu

651-641-3232

www.luthersem.edu/mhess

GH107

Office hours by appointment

NW230 (except for the October weekend, which will meet at Shalom Hill Farm in southwestern Minnesota)

Old Celtic prayer

There is no plant in the ground
But tells of your beauty, O Christ.
There is no life in the sea
But proclaims your goodness.
There is no bird on the wing
There is no star in the sky
There is nothing beneath the sun
But is full of your blessing.
Lighten my understanding
of your presence all around, O Christ.
Kindle my will
to be caring for creation.

Welcome to Religious Education in relation to Creation! I hope that this class will be both a fruitful learning experience for you, and also a refreshing change from other courses you have encountered. Towards that end, I present this workbook. It contains most of the typical elements you'd find in any standard syllabus, but it also includes as much of my own thinking and design consideration for this course as I thought would be helpful.

If you are pursuing an MDiv degree, this course will most often occur at the end of your degree work. As such, it fulfills the Education Two requirement of helping you to integrate and summarize your work in educational leadership. If you are pursuing an MA in leadership, then this course will provide a framework for you to concentrate on specific elements of the necessary learning competencies. A central element of this course – no matter your degree goal -- will involve analysis and synthesis of your learning processes to date, and planning for your future learning once you've graduated. At the same time, we will also be exploring what we, as religious educators, can learn from the experiences and insights of environmental educators.

This course assumes that you have already completed either Education One or Foundations of Educational Leadership. Given the wide variety of ways in which those courses are taught at Luther, you may need to do some review. I have provided a section of this workbook to support you in that endeavor.

Three weekends are a rich and intensive period of time in which to work together – and they will pass so rapidly you will feel your head spinning.

Let me introduce this workbook to you.

In the pages that follow you will find the typical elements of a syllabus – a list of required reading, a set of assignments designed to engage ideas and practice skills, a calendar mapping out your responsibilities throughout the three weekends, and my rubric for grading.

You will also find a number of handouts that will be useful at various points during the term, and supplementary information on a variety of the assignments. In particular, I have included the emerging set of learning competencies that the Leadership Division is developing within the arena of educational leadership. These goals will eventually govern all that is done within this area of the curriculum, but at the moment

they are still in the formative stages. We will use this list of learning competencies to structure our work together in this class. In doing so, I hope to work with you to evaluate both the list's utility and its substance.

The pages of this workbook are intended to be put in a three-ring binder, which will then become a gathering place for your ideas and assignments during the term. Like all of my courses, this one is "in process." I deeply appreciate feedback along the way of what is working for you – and perhaps more importantly, what is not.

What this class is about

If you have read Luther's catalog, you will recognize the following statement:

" A study of the educational issues raised by emerging environmental awareness, particularly in relation to questions of stewardship and justice. This course focuses on two primary contexts, the rural and the urban, considering specific examples of ways in which Christian educators can support congregational learning and ministry that embraces ecological literacy."

This class is also shaped to fulfill the EdTwo requirement in the MDiv curriculum, and to allow MA concentrators to pursue specific competencies. As such, the class assumes a basic set of core convictions that are common to the area of educational leadership at Luther Seminary. These are usually stated in this way:

"Christian leaders and communities are called and shaped by a living God who initiates relationships with people of all ages in a world of many cultures. Christian education is not about "giving" faith to people, but rather about helping people to explore their relationship with this God. Towards that end educational leaders support communities in tending to the narratives of God's relationality and action, learning the stories of God's people over time, nurturing the faith of persons and communities across ages and contexts, and discerning God's call to personal and communal vocation and mission."

Working from these convictions we have sought to design a curriculum that develops and nurtures educational leaders. In particular we have identified the following core competencies in educational leadership we believe students should be able to demonstrate in order to complete an MDiv degree. Divided into three categories (knowledge, attitude and skills), they are as follows:

Knowledge competencies

- 1a able to articulate a clear statement of their vision for providing leadership in supporting faith nurture across the lifespan
- 1b familiar with basic faith nurture and learning theories: faith development over the life cycle, multiple intelligences, constructivist learning design, developmental learning principles, cross cultural learning, etc.
- 1c familiar with the integration of biblical narrative, theological inquiry and ritual practice within religious education
- 1d familiar with the history and trajectories of faith nurture, particularly in the student's primary denominational/faith community context, so as to be able to assess a specific context and develop learning strategies within it
- 1e familiar with a variety of ways of supporting, structuring, facilitating and trouble-shooting learning communities
- 1f familiar with multiple models of faith nurture

Attitude competencies

- 2a inquires easily into, and responds openly to others' ideas
- 2b easily and constructively surfaces and questions assumptions underlying ideas, feelings, and actions
- 2c comfortably uses their own experience to critique expert opinion AND uses expert opinion to critique their own experience
- 2d nourishes personal curiosity about God's activities in the world, and is able to wonder with awe at God's activities
- 2e comfortably engages diversity with personal integrity
- 2f is deeply engaged in lifelong learning

Skill competencies

- 3a capable of adequately developing, critiquing, and tailoring curriculum materials for use in a specific context (this includes denominational issues)
- 3b capable of supporting theological and biblical reflection in a variety of contexts, and with a variety of people involved
- 3c capable of supporting cross cultural engagement in at least one specific cultural context
- 3d capable of supporting intergenerational learning
- 3e capable of engaging at least one pressing contemporary learning challenge from within a faith community framework (denominational pluralism, interfaith dialogue, media culture, environmental pressures, socio-political unrest, peace and justice issues, race and class issues, gender, disability, etc.)
- 3f capable of recruiting, training, supporting, supervising, evaluating and affirming volunteers in the shared ministry of Christian faith nurture

How I hope to help you get there

By the time you complete your degree you should be able to demonstrate almost all of these competencies, and have a clear idea of how you will continue your learning to meet the rest.

Although we have been working toward this process for a while at Luther, the competency list is still in development and there is, as yet, no formal requirement in place in relation to it. That gives us a lot of flexibility! It is my intention to use the list as a guide for our work together, and as a prompt for your personal reflection. It is woven throughout the assignments in this class, and will be part of our final assessment.

Many of these competencies you may already have been capable of demonstrating before you ever arrived at Luther. Students come from a variety of places and with a rich assortment of previous experience. It has always been our goal to help you identify the areas in which you

need to grow, and to challenge you to stretch further in those places where you already have gifts. This list is our most comprehensive attempt to do so within the arena of educational leadership, to date. I hope that our learning together this term will further refine the list, and make it that much more applicable.

Accountability

This course is offered as part of specific degree programs at an accredited institution of higher education. As such, it carries with it certain expectations for achievement. I hope to help you meet those expectations by being as clear about them as I can be. The primary method I've chosen to use to support you in this endeavor is that of a learning portfolio. All of the reading, writing, and "habit" exercises assigned in this course provide materials for you to draw upon in developing your learning portfolio.

At the end of our time together you will turn in this portfolio, and I will assess it using the rubric you can find at the end of this workbook. The portfolio instructions are clear about the basic materials you should include, but a portfolio process can be useful across your various learning contexts and you should feel invited to include other materials that you find pertinent. It is my hope that by exploring such a process in one class you may find it useful in others.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are five course requirements, in addition to the basic one of showing up and participating each weekend. They include reading a selection of texts, attempting to establish a new environmental habit, keeping a consistent practice of integration (writing in a learning journal, for instance), developing and critiquing a learning unit, and preparing a learning portfolio.

Reading assignments:

1. Sandra Steingraber, *Living Downstream*
2. David Orr, *Earth in Mind*
3. Michael Shut, ed. *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective*
4. A choice of one of the following:
 - Hessel, et. al. *Earth Habitat: Eco-Injustice and the Church's Response*
 - Sally McFague, *Super, Natural Christians*
 - Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women Healing Earth: Third World Women on Ecology, Feminism, Religion*
 - Joseph Sittler, *Evocations of Grace*
5. Choose at least two statements on caring for creation from your specific denomination (one from the US and one from your denomination in some other part of the world), and one from another denomination or faith. One of the easiest ways to find such statements is to go to a denominational website and run a search on terms such as "environment" or "creation." Here is an assortment of such sites in the US from which to begin.
 - ELCA Lutheran
<http://www.elca.org/>
(the primary statement is also included in the handouts for weekend one)
 - US Roman Catholic
<http://www.usccb.org/>

Episcopal Church USA
<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/>

United Methodist Church
<http://www.umc.org/>

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
<http://www.goarch.org/>

Mennonite Church USA
<http://www.mennoniteusa.org/>

Baptist General Convention of Texas
<http://www.bgct.org/>

Religious Society of Friends
<http://www.quaker.org/>

Unitarian Universalist Association
<http://www.uua.org/>

Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education
<http://www.caje.org/>

Islam and the Environment
http://www.earthisland.org/eijournal/new_articles.cfm?articleID=578&journalID=64

Finally, I would like to point to two other online resources that are particularly important in the context of this class:

Web of Creation: Transforming Faith-Based Communities for a Sustainable World (<http://www.webofcreation.org/index.html>)

Minnesota Interactive Directory of Environmental Education Resources (<http://www.seek.state.mn.us/>).

Additional required assignments

Integrative writing

Choose a form of regular reflection on your personal learning journey in this class. Such reflection can take the shape of a learning journal, several short response papers that you email to me for regular feedback, or a weblog. You will need to reflect on the work we do in class, your reading for the course, your experiences with picking up a new habit, your work with the learning competencies list. The text that is edited by Michael Schut (*Simpler Living, Compassionate Life*) is one that we will engage primarily in this way. My hope is that Schut's book will help you to "crack open" your own experiences on these issues, and be a catalyst for your reflection. At the end of the course you will summarize your work with integrative writing in the portfolio, but you need *not* hand the entire journal in to me.

Practice of earth care

One of the primary elements that both environmental education and religious education have in common is their goal of inviting people into beliefs and practices that are not supported in the larger culture – indeed, in some instance they are actively counter cultural. During the fall term I am asking that you choose a practice of earth care that is new to you and attempt to make it a habit (it usually takes three months to establish new habits). The list of possibilities is potentially endless, but there are several that have been identified by national organizations as helping to reduce your ecological footprint. You can visit the Center for a New American Dream (<http://newdream.org/>) for one such list, but there are many others available on the web. The *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life* text is also chock full of ideas. Please discuss with me in our September meeting your choice of practice.

My goal in this assignment is to provide an experience of embodied learning that is connected to the ideas of the course. Please be assured: I am not in this way implying that faith *requires* particular practices. Rather, I am suggesting that faith *invites* response, and that that response is always embodied, always by Christian definitions *incarnational*. Religious educators need to know how to support such responses, and how to do so in sustainable ways. We can learn a lot from our environmental educator colleagues about how to support and nurture responsive practice.

Learning unit development

Choose a specific context and develop a learning unit that is appropriately matched to the needs of that learning community. You should choose a context and goals for the unit based on the learning YOU need to do in relation to the competencies list. In other words, first determine which of the learning competencies from the educational leadership list you'd most like to work on (and most need to work on), and then develop this assignment from there.

This unit does not have to be a long one, but it DOES need to utilize a variety of intelligences (think "multiple intelligences" theory) and it should conform to good practice in teaching (which we will talk about as we go along).

Here is an example. Suppose you have very little experience with "supporting intergenerational learning" and with "engaging at least one pressing contemporary learning challenge from within a faith community framework." Using the ideas we're working with in this class, you could plan a learning event for a local context that brings together an intergenerational group of people, and that focuses on a pressing environmental issue.

One key element of this requirement is that your learning unit be made public for your colleagues by November 8th. The easiest way to do this is to publish it online by sending it to me prior to that date electronically. I'll turn it into a "pdf" file and post it on my students' project website.

Portfolio

The final assignment for this class involves preparing a learning portfolio. The purpose of this portfolio is to showcase your accomplishments with the various elements of the learning competencies identified earlier in this workbook. You may draw upon all of your previous experience (including projects you've completed in contextual education or on internship, essays you've written in the candidacy process, reflections you did during CPE, etc.) as you work through the list of competencies. We'll talk about this more in our first class session, but you should look at the list as soon as you can and begin to identify both those elements for which you can easily

demonstrate achievement, and any elements you still need to work on. Use the required assignments of this class to develop those “growing edge” elements, and to create evidence of your achievement of them.

During September I will sit down with each of you, and discuss where you think you are with the learning competencies. We will map out what is reasonable for you to work on, and identify specific learning goals. There should be at least one learning competency from the list that you have not yet mastered (if there is not, there is little reason for you to take this class!), and you will use ideas and elements from this course to help you practice and achieve that goal.

Your final learning portfolio should include all of the sections identified in Appendix 1, and is due on or before December 6th.

COURSE CALENDAR

Weekend One / September 10-12

Required reading:

The course workbook!
Sandra Steingraber, *Living Downstream*

Goals for this weekend:

Orientation to the course
Working with a learning portfolio
Developing a habit of earth care
Environmental education and religious education: what do they share?
How are they different?

On Saturday morning we will be joined by Pastor Dennis Ormseth of Lutheran Church of the Reformation in St. Louis Park (<http://www.reformationslp.org/>) for a discussion of the New Earth Partnership, and on Sunday morning we will join that congregation for their 10 am worship and brunch.

Directions to *Lutheran Church of the Reformation* in St. Louis Park:

280 South to 94 West to 394 West to 100 South, take the Stephens Drive and Cedar Lake Rd. Exit (the first exit you come to) and follow the Stephens Drive option. The ramp empties out on the west service road for Highway 100. We are at 2544 Highway 100 South, a couple of blocks south of the exit, on the right hand side.

Further information: <http://www.reformationslp.org/>

Weekend Two / October 8-10

This is the weekend we will retreat to Shalom Hill Farm and explore ministry in southwestern Minnesota. We will meet on Friday at 3 pm to carpool to Shalom Hill Farm.

Required reading:

David Orr, *Earth in Mind*

Goals for the weekend:

Immerse yourself in a rural ministry context

Explore differing approaches to living with creation in southwestern Minnesota

Meet with local environmental advocates working on environmental issues

Experience worship in a small rural congregation

Directions to Shalom Hill Farm:

From Minneapolis/St. Paul--Take Hwy 169 from the Cities to Mankato. At Mankato, 169 runs together with Hwy 60 for a time. Stay on 60 through Lake Crystal. Just before Madelia, take the Hwy 15 exit toward New Ulm. Go @1 mile and turn left (west) onto Cty. Rd. 3 toward LaSalle. Approx. 1 mile past LaSalle turn right (west) toward Darfur. Stay on this road until you cross Hwy 71 and come to Jeffers (4 miles west of 71). At Jeffers turn left (south) on Cty road 52. Go 4 miles on this road (the last mile is gravel) and turn right (west) on Cty 3. One of our signs marks this turn. Go @1.5 miles and we are on the right side of the road.

Further information: <http://www.shalomhillfarm.org/>

Weekend Three / November 12-14

This is the weekend we will work with the learning units you've developed, and in the process also touch on various issues that arise in suburban and urban contexts.

Please read one of the following:

Hessel, et. al. *Earth Habitat: Eco-Injustice and the Church's Response*
Sally McFague, *Super, Natural Christians*
Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women Healing Earth: Third World Women on Ecology, Feminism, Religion*
Joseph Sittler, *Evocations of Grace*

Goals for the weekend:

Collaborate with your colleagues on exploring the design of learning units
Explore environmental issues that arise in urban contexts

BRIEF CALENDAR SUMMARY

Sometimes it can be daunting to keep track of which assignment occurs where in the course. Here is a brief summary of the previous calendar. Keep in mind that your integrative writing, your earth care, and your learning unit assignments stretch throughout the term. Assignments listed should be complete by the date noted.

Date	Reading	Other "to do's"
Throughout the term	Schut Denominational statements on the environment	
Throughout the term		Integrative writing
Throughout the term		Habit of earth care
Throughout the term		Develop a learning unit and explore your achievement of the competencies
September 10	Steingraber	
September 10-12		First weekend meeting
October 1		Meet with Prof. Hess
October 8	Orr	Bring rough draft of portfolio to the Shalom Hill farm retreat
October 8-10		Second weekend meeting (Shalom Hill Farm retreat)

November 8		Learning unit made available publicly
November 12	Choice of: Hessel McFague Sittler Ruether	
November 12-14		Final weekend meeting
December 6		Final portfolio due

RELEVANT BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Listed below, as yet another prompt, are biblical references I frequently turn to when thinking about teaching and learning. There are also some citations that figure prominently in the ideas of this course. I hope that they spark your imagination, and that you will use this page to add others that emerge for you throughout our time together.

Teaching and learning:

Deuteronomy 6:4-10

Jeremiah 31:33-34

Luke 24:13-35

Matthew 15:21-28/Mark 7:24-40

I Corinthians 12:13/Romans 12:4

Any and all of Jesus' parables

Care for Creation:

Genesis

The psalms, but particularly 8, 24:1, 104

Leviticus 25:23

Deuteronomy 20:19, 22:6

COURSE HANDOUTS

Elements for review (from EdOne)

- Glossary list from EdOne
- Trio of triads
- Developmental intentions chart
- Rubric for six facets of understanding
- Discernment
- The grace of great things
- Parker Palmer's paradoxes
- Parker Palmer's diagrams
- Boys grid questions
- Bloom's table of verbs
- Multiple intelligence verbs
- Vella's principles
- Dykstra on evaluation
- Faith fair engagement form
- Responsible imagination

Weekend One

- Embodying learning
- ELCA "Caring for Creation"

Weekend Two

- Creation and Community handout
- Notes on Orr

Weekend Three

Elements for review (from EdOne and Foundations)

Glossary list
Trio of triads
Developmental intentions chart
Rubric for six facets of understanding
Discernment
The grace of great things
Parker Palmer's paradoxes
Parker Palmer's diagrams
Boys grid questions
Bloom's table of verbs
Multiple intelligence verbs
Vella's principles
Dykstra on evaluation
Faith fair engagement form
Responsible imagination

COURSE GLOSSARY

The following section is provided as a prompt for your use during the course. Many of the terms listed below appear in texts that we will study, and several have multiple definitions. In the past students have found it helpful to keep track of their preferred definitions, along with specific citations that support such.

Accountability

Affective

Christian education

Cognitive

Confirmation

Constructivist learning design

Continuity

Contradiction

Conversion

Critical thinking

Cross cultural learning

Curriculum

Developmental psychology (stages of faith)

Dialogical

Diakonia

Didache

Discernment

Discipleship

Ecumenical

Education

Engagement

Epistemology

Evangelism

Explicit

Faith and belief

Faith nurture

Immediacy

Implicit

Instruction

Integrative

Interfaith

Intergenerational

Kerygma

Koinonia

Leiturgia

Lifelong learning

Media culture

Mission

Multiple intelligences

Mythic

Needs assessment

Null

Objectivist

Parabolic

Pluralism

Postmodern

Praxis

Psychomotor

Relational

Religious education

Revelation

Rubric

Sequence and reinforcement

Spirituality

Theology

Training

Understanding

Vocation

A trio of triads

Where I begin:

people
purpose
context

From the educational literature in general:

cognitive	ideas	beliefs	knowledge
affective	feelings	values	attitudes
psychomotor	actions	commitments	skills

From Elliott Eisner's work (*On the Educational Imagination*)

explicit curriculum	intentional curriculum
implicit curriculum	incidental curriculum
null curriculum	unacknowledged curriculum

And one more

From Robert Kegan (*The Evolving Self*)

Confirmation, contradiction, continuity

Exhibit 3. 1 Developmental Intentions Chart

(taken from *Developing Adult Learners*, Taylor, Marienau, and Fiddler; San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000, pp. 32-33)

Development is marked by movement along five dimensions

I. Toward knowing as a dialogical process

1. Inquiring into and responding openly to others' ideas
2. Surfacing and questioning assumptions underlying beliefs, ideas, actions, and positions
3. Reframing ideas or values that seem contradictory, embracing their differences, and arriving at new meanings
4. Using one's experience to critique expert opinion and expert opinion to critique one's experience
5. Moving between separate and connected, independent and interdependent ways of knowing
6. Paying attention to wholes as well as the parts that comprise them
7. Associating truth not with static fact but with contexts and relationships
8. Pursuing the possibility of objective truth
9. Perceiving and constructing one's reality by observing and participating
10. Tapping into and drawing on tacit knowledge

II. Toward a dialogical relationship to oneself

1. Addressing fears of losing what is familiar and safe
2. Engaging the disequilibrium when one's ideas and beliefs are challenged
3. Exploring life's experiences through some framework(s) of analysis
4. Questioning critically the validity or worth of one's pursuits
5. Exploring and making meaning of one's life stories within contexts (for example, societal, familial, universal)

III. Toward being a continuous learner

1. Reflecting on one's own and others' experiences as a guide to future behavior
2. Challenging oneself to learn in new realms; taking risks

3. Recognizing and revealing one's strengths and weaknesses as a learner and a knower
4. Anticipating learning needed to prevent and solve problems
5. Posing and pursuing questions out of wonderment
6. Accepting internal dissonance as part of the learning process
7. Setting one's own learning goals, being goal-directed, and being habitual in learning
8. Seeking authentic feedback from others
9. Drawing on multiple capacities for effective learning

IV. Toward self-agency and self-authorship

1. Constructing a values system that informs one's behavior
2. Accepting responsibility for choices one has made and will make
3. Risking action on behalf of one's beliefs and commitments
4. Taking action toward one's potential while acknowledging one's limitations
5. Revising aspects of oneself while maintaining continuity of other aspects
6. Distinguishing what one has created for oneself from what is imposed by social, cultural, and other forces
7. "Naming and claiming" what one has experienced and knows

V. Toward connection with others

1. Mediating boundaries between one's connection to others and one's individuality
2. Experiencing oneself as part of something larger
3. Engaging the affective dimension when confronting differences
4. Contributing one's voice to a collective endeavor
5. Recognizing that collective awareness and thinking transform the sum of their parts

Rubric for the six facets of understanding

Discernment

Authenticity, authority, agency

Frank Rogers

From chapter eight "Discernment" in *Practicing Our Faith*, edited by Dorothy Bass, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

"the history of the church is littered with the stories of people who have claimed guidance from the Spirit when the prejudices of self-deception reigned instead. From the earliest days of Judaism and Christianity, awareness of this danger has prompted faithful people to articulate criteria by which to judge the authenticity of claims regarding the Spirit...

- fidelity to Scripture and the tradition
- fruit of the Spirit
- inner authority and peace
- communal harmony
- enhancement rather than extinction of life
- integrity in the process of discernment"

(pp. 114-116)

The grace of great things

We invite *diversity* into our community not because it is politically correct but because diverse viewpoints are demanded by the manifold mysteries of great things.

We embrace *ambiguity* not because we are confused or indecisive but because we understand the inadequacy of our concepts to embrace the vastness of great things.

We welcome *creative conflict* not because we are angry or hostile but because conflict is required to correct our biases and prejudices about the nature of great things.

We practice *honesty* not only because we owe it to one another but because to lie about what we have seen would be to betray the truth of great things.

We experience *humility* not because we have fought and lost but because humility is the only lens through which great things can be seen – and once we have seen them, humility is the only posture possible.

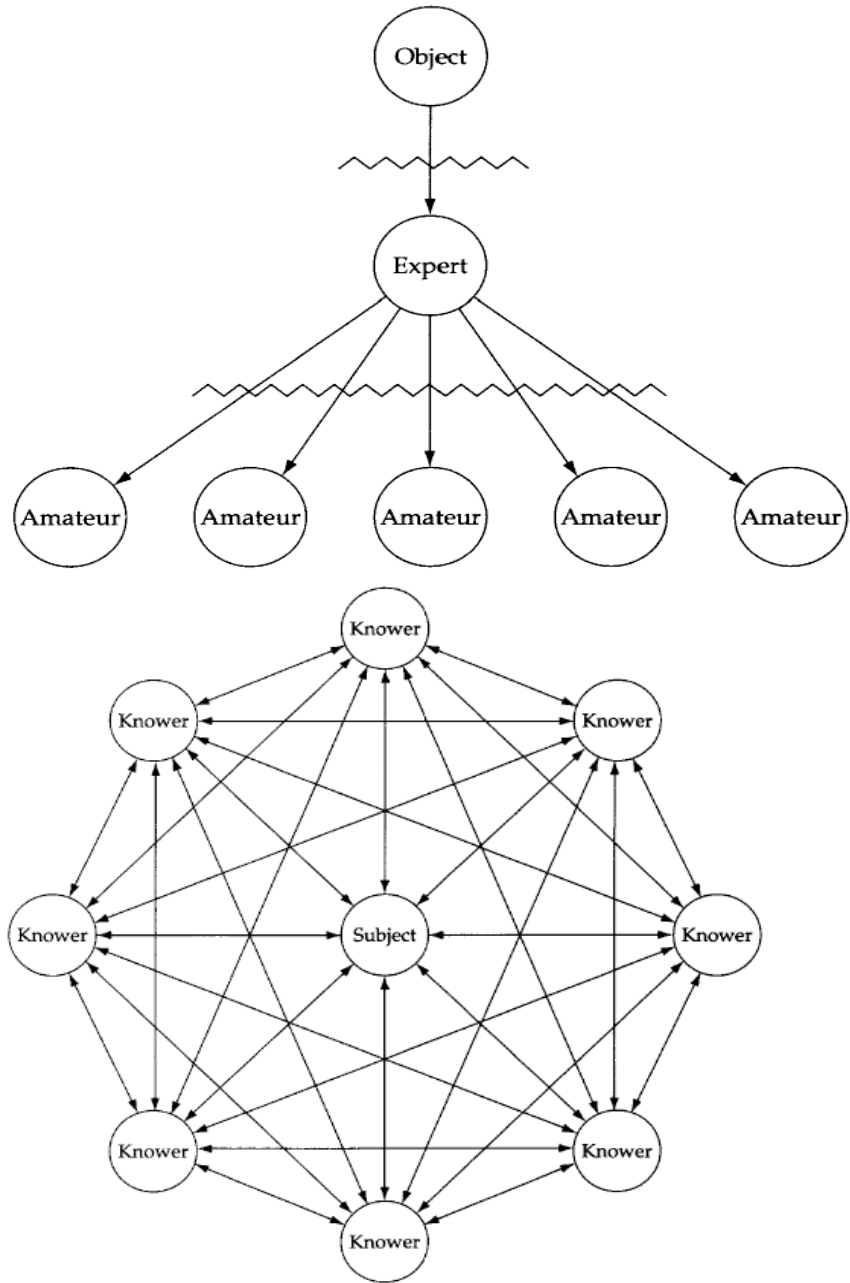
We become *free men and women* through education not because we have privileged information but because tyranny in any form can only be overcome by invoking the grace of great things.

Taken from Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998) 107-108.

Six paradoxical tensions of pedagogical design

1. The space should be bounded and open.
2. The space should be hospitable and charged.
3. The space should invite the voice of the individual and the voice of the group.
4. The space should honor the “little” stories of the students and the “big” stories of the disciplines and the tradition.
5. The space should support solitude and surround it with the resources of community.
6. The space should welcome both silence and speech.

Taken from Parker Palmer’s *The Courage to Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998) 74.



Taken from Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998) 107-108.

Mary Boys Grid for Mapping Religious Education Over Time

What does it mean to be religious?

Revelation

How is God revealed? What is the significance of worship? How does this curriculum help teachers to reveal Jesus Christ to the learners engaged with it?

Conversion

What constitutes the experience of conversion in this curriculum? Does it intend directly to foster conversion, or does it attend to experiences of conversion through deepening spiritual practices?

Faith and belief

What is faith? How important is assent to a creed? What kinds of doctrinal issues are presented, if any? How is religious experience understood?

Theology

What is theology's significance in this curriculum? To what extent can you identify a particular theological commitment or perspective in the materials to be shared?

What does it mean to educate in faith?

Goal of education

Why educate in faith? What constitutes an educated person? What goals does this curriculum have? What kinds of action steps does it use in pursuit of those goals?

Knowledge

What does it mean to know? What is the relation between knowing and doing? Does this curriculum take seriously multiple intelligences, or diverse learning styles?

Social sciences

How formative a role should the social sciences play? Which ones are most influential in these materials (eg. psychology, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, ritual studies)?

Curriculum and teaching

What does the curriculum look like? How is teaching understood? What materials are provided to support teaching with this curriculum?

Education as a political term

Toward what view of society is this curriculum educating? Does it promote intentional action of any kind?

The preceding questions are taken from Mary Boys, *Educating in Faith: Maps and Visions* (Sheed & Ward, 1989). They can be a helpful lens through which to consider curricular materials, and the questions listed above are meant to be a spur for your imagination in that direction.

Benjamin Bloom's table of verbs

(cited in Vella, *Taking Learning to Task*, Jossey-Bass, 2000)

Cognitive	Affective	Psychomotor
select	revise	design
define	edit	operate
identify	share	set up
list	respond to	practice
name	approve	organize
state	put in priority order	exhibit
compare	acclaim	review
distinguish	brag	recite
contrast	applaud	play
read	assist	diagram
demonstrate	protest	draw
relate	agree	compose
group	change	realign
estimate	debate	affix
reflect	support	put
solve	deny	take
employ	comply with	write
complete	control	prepare
classify	listen to	dramatize
apply	accept	build
illustrate	celebrate	choose
synthesize	reframe	manipulate
analyze	choose	redesign
design	value	rearrange
edit	prefer	employ
add	enjoy	
delete	rank	
examine	resist	
organize	evaluate	
change	notice	
develop	relate to	
review		
diagnose		

Multiple Intelligence Verbs

Vella's twelve principles

1. "Needs assessment": "Learners need to participate in naming what it is to be learned," (Vella, 1994, p. 3 and following).

How do you diagnose what your participants need to learn? To what extent do they participate in that process consciously and self-reflexively? How flexible is your community of faith's curriculum? What kinds of support are in place for people's whose needs are different from, or more extensive than, your expectations?

2. "Safety": People need safe environments in which to trust themselves to dialogue, particularly if that dialogue has transformation as any part of its intentionality.

What is your own definition of a "safe" environment? How might you figure out what that means for your participants? Consider some of the ways in which safety might not be possible for all of your participants (people who are marginalized, issues that are tension creating, physical environments that are hazardous, institutional/denominational pressures, etc.) What can you do when safety is not possible?

3. "Sound relationship": "Friendship, but not dependency, fun without trivialization of learning, dialogue between men and women who consider themselves peers" (1994, p. 65) is Vella's definition of "sound relationship."

What is your own definition of "sound relationship"? How do your theological commitments enter into that definition? How does that definition influence the teaching/learning environment in your context? What does "fun" look like in your teaching setting?

4. "Sequence and reinforcement": Vella writes that it's important to begin at the beginning, to "move from small to big, slow to fast, easy to hard" (1994, p. 80).

Where does a specific learning event fit into your community's curriculum? What elements of your topic do you need to explore first as preparation for later topics (eg. learning how to find passages in the Bible before working on specific texts)? Remember that sequence and reinforcement has implications for feelings and actions, too, not simply ideas. Learning tasks that are difficult on the feeling level may appropriately be designed more simply on the level of ideas, and so on. How do you communicate the scope and sequence of your learning design to your community?

5. "Action with reflection, or *praxis*": Within religious reflection this process has been described by Henriot and Holland (1983) as a "pastoral circle" of "insertion, social analysis, theological reflection, and pastoral planning." Vella uses the terms "description, analysis, application, implementation" (1994, p. 12), and says "this is what we mean by praxis. We begin with experience, analyze that experience, search for new information that can inform the experience, and then change our knowledge set or behavior to incorporate the new data" (1994, p. 101).

What kinds of action are possible in the setting of your community? Think beyond simply "doing, " to feeling, being, ways of interacting with multiple senses, and so on. What does "action" consist of in your denomination as well as your specific community of faith, what kinds of action are you interested in nurturing in your participants, or are they interested in nurturing in their homes or other contexts?

6. "Learners as subjects of their own learning": learners as decision makers in their own learning processes.

In what ways do your learning events allow people to make decisions about their own learning? Can you remember times when you felt "in control" of your own learning? How can you make similar experiences possible for your participants?

7. "Learning with ideas, feelings, and actions": This principle is particularly well facilitated by engagement with visual and aural arts.

What possibilities exist in your setting for exploring feelings? What kinds of action might be prompted by the topics you engage? What are the crucial concepts embedded in the content you are exploring with your participants?

8. "Immediacy": This principle has to do with learning and teaching what is "really useful" in a particular context.

How do you assess what is "really useful" from you the topic you're working with? How do you convey that to your participants? Is there room for them to contribute their own insights to that assessment? How easily can you make the connection between the learning tasks you're offering your students, and the tasks they will encounter after they leave your learning space?

9. "Clear roles"

What roles do you carry as you teach (pastor, fellow member, mentor, spiritual director, pastoral counselor, friend, etc.)? Which of these roles are clearly defined for you by the setting in which you teach and learn, and which come to you without asking through participant expectation? How can you signal the roles you carry appropriately and/or authentically, and those you refuse to accept?

10. "Teamwork"

What kinds of teamwork are appropriate in community of faith, in your denominational setting, in the various cultural spaces you and your participants inhabit? What are the concepts, attitudes and skills necessary for successful teamwork? What are the contextual factors that inhibit it?

11. "Engagement": This principle has to do with helping learners express their interest and investment in a learning event... "a principle that enables learners not only to take part in learning but also to practice learning as subjects of their own lives" (1994, p. 159).

In what ways can you identify your participants as being engaged with the learning experience? What clues do you have to your own engagement? How do you handle situations where you do not feel engaged with the teaching/learning experience? To what extent does high participant engagement impact your overall teaching/learning goals, or the *telos* of your community? To what extent might it be problematic? How do factors over which you have little control affect issues of engagement (eg. participant exhaustion from working full-time, parenting and also being involved in a community of faith)?

12. "Accountability": Vella's final principle in particular seeks to specify the goals of a process. As she writes: "what was proposed to be taught must be taught, what was meant to be learned must be learned, the skills intended to be gained must be manifest in all the learners" and so on (1994, p. 21).

What kinds of accountability do you seek in your design of learning experiences? To whom are you accountable? How are your participants accountable to you? What structures of accountability are in place at your church, in your denominational context, in your theological understanding?

(expanded from *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach*, Jane Vella, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994; by Mary E. Hess, Luther Seminary, 2001)

Evaluation as Collaborative Inquiry

(http://www.christianleaders.org/articles_index.htm)

Craig Dykstra, Vice President for Religion

(This article comes from *Initiatives in Religion*, a publication of the Lilly Endowment, Inc. Each year the Endowment makes millions of dollars of grants to religion. In this article, the head of the Religion Division, Craig Dykstra, explains a more productive understanding of the notion of evaluation. He introduces the article with an explanation of his immediate interests and then proceeds to explain the idea that evaluation can be collaborative inquiry.)

Before any grant proposal is sent by Religion Division staff to the Officers and Board with a request for approval, potential grantees are asked the following question: "What are your plans for evaluation in this project?"

Usually, little advance thought has been given to this matter. Frequently, our question prompts only a cursory answer, such as: "The results of this research will be published as a book and be evaluated by the scholarly community through reviews," or "We will hand out questionnaires at the conclusion of the conference to solicit the reactions of participants." To be honest about the matter, we program officers too often let such answers slip by and do little more to encourage further thought about the evaluation issue. That's a mistake on our part, because we miss important opportunities. The more attention we can all pay to evaluation, and to planning for it at the outset, the more likely it is both that the various projects we fund will bear their potential good fruits, and that the various projects will be related to one another in mutually supportive and stimulating ways.

Grades and scores

The word "evaluation" has bad connotations. It is an anxiety-producing term that often lands us back in a geometry classroom or conjures up memories of the day we received our SAT results. "Evaluation" unavoidably connotes, at some primordial level, grades and scores. We are put on a scale and compared to others. And whether we received good grades or poor ones or somewhere in between, we all want to avoid as much of that kind of thing as we can. It is not just anxiety about how we measure up that makes us reluctant to pursue

evaluation, however. Also involved is something to do with the reduction of our sense of ourselves and the meaning of our efforts and productions that is intrinsic to measurement according to some scale. "C", or "B+" or even "A" simply cannot capture the significance of a paper I have invested myself in crafting. We all at least implicitly demand a fuller, more human response, even if we never ask for it out loud or cannot seem to get one when we do.

Why don't we ask? Perhaps because we know that the very idea of evaluation on a measured scale is done for other purposes than our own development. The purpose of that kind of evaluation is not deepening self-knowledge in the midst of one's activities.

Its purpose is classification, sorting. The agent of such evaluation is not the self, but others who will use the results for their own purposes. We don't ask for a full response, then, because we know that the kind of response we need and want is not available in such circumstances. We recognize that we are not (and are not supposed to be) active agents in this kind of evaluation, but rather only objects of it.

If this is what "evaluation" means to us (if this is the only kind of experience the word "evaluation" connotes for us), our resistance to it is no surprise. Nor is it any wonder that we would have difficulty answering the question, "What are your plans for evaluation in this project?" If we do not see ourselves as the responsible agents in the evaluation of our own work, but only objects of it, then planning such evaluation must be someone else's responsibility to do. (The foundation's, perhaps?)

Coaches and editors

I enjoy playing golf from time to time. A golfer-friend suggested I read *Harvey Penick's Little Red Book*. Subtitled "Lessons and Teachings from a Lifetime in Golf," the book is a published version of the little red notebook that one of the finest teachers of the game kept over the span of about 60 years. Its contents are time-tested hints about how to do things right on a golf course, how to practice the game so you can improve, and some observations on the joys and satisfactions of playing. It's a fine and enjoyable book. You can tell from reading it that Harvey Penick is a great teacher of golf. In fact, you can tell from reading it what great teaching consists of. And you can see why some of this era's best golfers (Tom Kite, Kathy Whitworth, Betsy Rawls, and Ben Crenshaw) would return to Austin, Texas to consult with Penick

over and over again whenever they wanted some really good evaluation of their games.

Superior athletes constantly evaluate their own performance and search for ways to improve it. That is why they easily recognize their need for good coaches/teachers/evaluators: other people who can help them see and feel what they are doing, people who can help them understand what's going on and figure out how to do it better. The interesting thing about the really good athletes is that they *regularly* seek such help. They go get it. They ask for it. They even pay for it. (No wonder! They can afford it, right? But the stakes are high for them, so they also know they cannot afford not to.)

Artists (musicians, writers, filmmakers, dancers) also seek such evaluation. Whether the evaluators are called teachers, editors, or coaches, they make it possible for artistic creators to pull out of themselves the highest craft and skill they can muster. Somehow, it seems, the art of evaluation is an essential ingredient in the human activity of creation.

Religion Division evaluation program

Maybe we at the Endowment would generate a better response if we would change our question about evaluation plans to something like, "What plans have you made for building in self-reflection on what you have learned and for getting good coaching as you conduct your project?"

Getting good coaching/evaluation has been important to the Endowment itself for a long time. D. Susan Wisely has ably directed the Endowment's evaluation efforts for 20 years. All that time, she has been helping the staff and many of our grantees to be active agents in garnering the best possible help they can find to reflect on their work, so as to improve its quality and impact. Three years ago, the Religion Division launched a still more systematic evaluation program through a grant to Christian Theological Seminary. The program's project director, Carol Johnston, an ordained Presbyterian minister and a theologian who did her doctoral work at Claremont is providing additional much-needed help to Religion Division staff and a wide variety of grantees as they plan and implement several kinds of evaluation.

Some evaluations currently underway are programmatic evaluations. In these, the Endowment supports the efforts of coordinated teams of thoughtful people who explore a cluster of grants within a program area; work with project directors of those grants to identify key learnings; relate them to one another; assess the cumulative whole in terms of its significance and impact; and ask what clues may be found in these projects (and in what's missing) that can prompt future work. Such evaluation teams are coaches primarily to the Religion Division. Their help is directed to assessing the Division's past and current grantmaking aims, policies and activities. Through such evaluations, we try to learn from what we and our grantees together have accomplished and to see better how to build on that through future funding

Other evaluations now going on have a more limited focus. Concerned with specific projects, many of these provide grantees with mid-course guidance. In most cases, such evaluations are planned from the beginning of a project. (It is usually too late to plan and implement concurrent—or formative—evaluations after a grant is made and a two- or three-year project is underway.) Grantees in most such cases request funds for evaluation as part of their proposals, identify evaluator/coaches early on, and build mutually agreed upon evaluation designs. From the beginning, they engage in systematic collection of data that evaluators need, so that at the appropriate times they are ready to engage in the evaluation activities they desire (observations, meetings, consultations, reports, etc.).

Still other evaluations are done at the conclusion of a specific project. In these cases, the grantee and/or the Endowment are eager to synthesize carefully what has been learned in a particular effort, so that the insights generated can be of benefit to work already going on elsewhere or that is being considered for the future. While such evaluation work is usually harder to do (because everything has to be done at once and some information that would have been helpful is by then irretrievable), it is sometimes worthwhile. Important questions emerge at the end of some projects that could not have been anticipated; evaluations designed to assess impact are in some cases best planned and carried out when a project is near completion or even later.

Evaluation as purposeful inquiry

As you can see from these examples, evaluation (to our way of thinking, in any case) has little to do with grading, scoring, and classifying and everything to do with gaining better insight into what one is doing and with finding ways to improve it or extend it in worthwhile directions. Each of us can (and should) do a lot of this sort of evaluation ourselves as a regular part of everyday self-critical reflection in our own work. Reflective practitioners of all kinds constantly build self-evaluation into the very warp and woof of their endeavors. But there are limits to what we by ourselves can see and figure out. Like the best athletes and artists, we all need coaches and teachers who give us honest assessments (including those that make us uncomfortable) and helpful suggestions.

The best way to get help of this kind is to take initiative in garnering it. To be active agents in (rather than passive objects of) evaluation involves

- (1) building into your work regularly-scheduled time for reflection on what you are learning;
- (2) discerning when you want and need the skillful help of others;
- (3) thinking through as best you can what kind of help you need;
- (4) finding people you trust to give you what you need in a way that you can use it; and
- (5) making yourself available and open to receive the help you've asked for.

Evaluation understood this way is a form of collaborative inquiry. It is purposeful inquiry into the structure, processes, and substance of one's own work. Real pleasures can be had in such inquiry. There is the pleasure that comes from more fully finding one's way. There is the pleasure that comes from discovering how to do things better. And there is the pleasure that comes from broadening the company of people who know and care about what you are doing. (Indeed, such inquiry often surfaces and generates new partners in the work you are doing.)

A responsible imagination...

Laurent Daloz, Cheryl Keen, James Keen, and Sharon Parks completed a study several years ago that sought to identify what if anything people who had lived long lives of commitment to the public good might share in common. Among other things, these scholars identified what they termed a “responsible imagination.”

The people we studied appear to compose reality in a manner that can take into account calls to help, catalyze, dream, work hard, think hard, and love well. They practice an imagination that resists prejudice and its distancing tendencies on the one hand, and avoids messianic aspirations and their engulfing tendencies on the other. Their imaginations are active and open, continually seeking more adequate understandings of the whole self and the whole commons and the language with which to express them.

Their practice of imagination is responsible in two particular ways. First, they try to respect the *process* of imagination in themselves and others. They pay attention to dissonance and contradiction, particularly those that reveal injustice and unrealized potential. They learn to pause, reflect, wonder, ask why, consider, wait... They also learn to work over their insights and those of others so that they “connect up” in truthful and useful ways. They seek out trustworthy communities of confirmation and contradiction.

Second, they seek out sources of worthy images. Most have discovered that finding and being found by fitting images is not only a matter of having access to them but requires discretion and responsible hospitality — not only to what is attractive but also to what may be unfamiliar and initially unsettling.....

Living with these images, the people in our study appear to know that two truths must be held together — that we have the power to destroy the Earth and the power to see it whole. But unlike many who seek escape from the potent tension this act of holding requires, these people live in a manner that conveys a third and essential power: the courage to turn and make promises, the power of a responsible imagination. (Daloz, et. al., 1996, 151-152).

The authors also had something to say about daily practice:

It is said that faith is "meant to be religious." Faith seeks language, a *shared* system of symbols with which to interpret the whole of life. If imagination is the process of "shaping into one," religion may be understood, in part, as the distillation of shared images, powerful enough to shape into one the chaos of our experience. In other words, stories, habits, and the rituals of everyday are the content of the imagination by which people know who they are and what they are to do in the world. It is the work of religion, in concert with the whole life of the commons, to do that well (Daloz, et. al., 1996, 142).

Taken from: *Common fire: Lives of commitment in a complex world.*

By Laurent A. Parks Daloz, Cheryl H. Keen, James P. Keen, and Sharon Daloz Parks. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.

Weekend One

Embodying learning
ELCA "Caring for Creation"

Embodying Learning/Leading and Caring for Self

Conversation Starters

In thinking about the quality of our living it is helpful to reflect on at least five different arenas of our being. While these overlap and are interconnected, they should not be collapsed into one another. Attending to our whole being requires critical and intentional engagement, a task made easier with conversation among family members, friends, colleagues, therapists/counselors and others.

Begin by reflecting on these five arenas. The questions are meant only to start your thinking or conversation, not to be a boundary to it. Be honest with yourself and, as much as possible, find someone else with whom you can be honest. Remember that it is all right both to ask questions and not to answer questions asked by others when you feel they are invasive. Respect the right for persons to be honest with you, as much as you respect the right for persons to disclose appropriately.

Note the arena in which you feel good about the quality of your living. This does not mean you are perfect; only that you have appreciation for the way in which you live your life in that arena. Make sure you can note at least one arena where you are doing all right.

In a similar way, take note of the arena where you feel the most challenged to grow. What do you need to take the next step in this area of your living? Who can assist you in the process? Who can keep you honest about the steps you are taking?

1) Physical caring and fun

What are you doing for fun?

What are your hobbies or ways that you stay physically healthy?

What do you do that energizes your physical life?

How do you make time for listening to the rhythm of your body?

What aches and pains does your body use to tell you that something is not right?

2) Professional growth and feeding our minds

What is the best book or film or piece of art or music that you have encountered in the last month?

What creative piece would you recommend your friends to engage?

What journals are the most helpful for you and when do you read them?

Who do you talk with on a regular basis about the latest conversations in your discipline?

Who do you talk with about issues in your own leading and learning?

3) Emotional balance

What are the signs you have come to know for telling you when you are the most balanced in terms of your emotions?

With whom do you process the feelings that arise out of the context of your work and your learning?

How do you recognize your anger, hurt, despair, loneliness, hopelessness?

What do you do with your disappointments about your learning, your service, your preaching/teaching, your relationship to religious bodies, or your life? With whom do you share the moments of joy, excitement, or exhilaration about your living?

4) Relational life – community

What groups of people do you gather with to enjoy life?

With whom do you worship?

What community offers you opportunities to reflect upon your living and your commitments?

Relational life – friends

Who are the friends who are most comforting to you?

Who are the friends who challenge you the most about your life?

Who are the friends with whom you can talk about your work, but also can talk about things other than your work?

Relational life – intimacy

When do you take time to be with those persons you identify as 'family' in ways that are whole and fulfilling?

How do you give as much quality in terms of time and energy to the most important persons in your life as you do to your job, position, or to others who call your name?

How do you know when you are bringing all of yourself to intimate relationships or when you are pre-occupied with other things?

How do you nurture and care for the physical, sexual and intimate relationships in your life?

5) Nurturing discipleship

Who are your worship and prayer partners?

How comfortable are you with the One who calls you by name?

When is God most present to you?

How do you nurture your vocation on a daily or weekly basis?

With whom do you talk about your spiritual life and who keeps you honest in this arena of your life?

What should have been asked about the quality of your living that does not appear in any of the above arenas?

What would you like to ask from others as you consider the quality of your living?

Adapted from "The Quality of Our Living" by Joretta Marshall, Iliff School of Theology

A Social Statement on Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice

This social statement on Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice was adopted by a more than two-thirds majority vote as a social statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America by the third Churchwide Assembly on August 28, 1993, at Kansas City, Missouri.

PROLOGUE

Christian concern for the environment is shaped by the Word of God spoken in creation, the Love of God hanging on a cross, the Breath of God daily renewing the face of the earth.

We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are deeply concerned about the environment, locally and globally, as members of this church and as members of society. Even as we join the political, economic, and scientific discussion, we know care for the earth to be a profoundly spiritual matter.

As Lutheran Christians, we confess that both our witness to God's goodness in creation and our acceptance of caregiving responsibility have often been weak and uncertain. This statement:

- * offers a vision of God's intention for creation and for humanity as creation's caregivers;
- * acknowledges humanity's separation from God and from the rest of creation as the central cause of the environmental crisis;
- * recognizes the severity of the crisis; and
- * expresses hope and heeds the call to justice and commitment.

This statement summons us, in particular, to a faithful return to the biblical vision.

I. THE CHURCH'S VISION OF CREATION

A. God, Earth and All Creatures

We see the despoiling of the environment as nothing less than the degradation of God's gracious gift of creation.

Scripture witnesses to God as creator of the earth and all that dwells therein (Pss 24:1). The creeds, which guide our reading of Scripture, proclaim God the Father of Jesus Christ as "maker of heaven and earth," Jesus Christ as the one "through [whom] all things were made," and the Holy Spirit as "the Lord, the giver of life" (Nicene Creed).

God blesses the world and sees it as "good," even before humankind comes on the scene. All creation, not just humankind, is viewed as "very good" in God's eyes (Gen 1:31). God continues to bless the world: "When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground" (Pss 104:30). By faith we understand God to be deeply, mysteriously, and unceasingly involved in what happens in all creation. God showers care upon sparrows and lilies (Mat 6:26-30), and brings "rain on a land where no one lives, on the desert, which is empty of human life" (Job 38:26).

Central to our vision of God's profound involvement with the world is the Incarnation. In Christ, the Word is made flesh, with saving significance for an entire creation that longs for fulfillment (Rom 8:18-25). The Word still comes to us in the waters of baptism, and in, with, and under the bread and wine, fruits of the earth and the work of human hands. God consistently meets us where we live, through earthy matter.

B. Our Place in Creation

Humanity is intimately related to the rest of creation. We, like other creatures, are formed from the earth (Gen 2:7, 9, 19). Scripture speaks of humanity's kinship with other creatures (Job 38-39; Pss 104). God cares faithfully for us, and together we join in singing the "hymn of all creation" (*Lutheran Book of Worship*, page 61; Pss 148). We look forward to a redemption that includes all creation (Eph 1:10).

Humans, in service to God, have special roles on behalf of the whole of creation. Made in the image of God, we are called to care for the earth as God cares for the earth. God's command to have dominion and subdue the earth is not a license to dominate and exploit. Human dominion (Gen 1:28; Pss 8), a special responsibility, should reflect God's way of ruling as a shepherd king who takes the form of a servant (Phil 2:7), wearing a crown of thorns.

According to Gen 2:15, our role within creation is to serve and to keep God's garden, the earth. "To serve," often translated "to till," invites us again to envision ourselves as servants, while "to keep" invites us to take care of the earth as God keeps and cares for us (Num 6:24-26).

We are called to name the animals (Gen 2:19-20). As God names Israel and all creation (Pss 147:4; Isa 40:26, 43:1) and as the shepherd calls by name each sheep (John 10:3), naming unites us in a caring relationship. Further, we are to live within the covenant God makes with every living thing (Gen 9:12-17; Hos 2:18), and even with the day and night (Jer 33:20). We are to love the earth as God loves us.

We are called to live according to God's wisdom in creation (Prov 8), which brings together God's truth and goodness. Wisdom, God's way of governing creation, is discerned in every culture and era in various ways. In our time, science and technology can help us to discover how to live according to God's creative wisdom.

Such caring, serving, keeping, loving, and living by wisdom sum up what is meant by acting as God's stewards of the earth. God's gift of responsibility for the earth dignifies humanity without debasing the rest of creation. We depend upon God, who places us in a web of life with one another and with all creation.

II. THE URGENCY

A. Sin and Captivity

Not content to be made in the image of God (Gen 3:5; Ezek 28:1-10), we have rebelled and disrupted creation. As did the people of ancient Israel, we experience nature as an instrument of God's judgment (cf., Deut 11:13-17; Jer 4:23-28). A disrupted nature is a judgment on our unfaithfulness as stewards.

Alienated from God and from creation, and driven to make a name for ourselves (Gen 11:4), we become captives to demonic powers and unjust institutions (Gal 4:9; Eph 6:12; Rev 13:1-4). In our captivity, we treat the earth as a boundless warehouse and allow the powerful to exploit its bounties to their own ends (Amos 5:6-15). Our sin and captivity lie at the roots of the current crisis.

B. The Current Crisis

The earth is a planet of beauty and abundance; the earth system is wonderfully intricate and incredibly complex. But today living creatures, and the air, soil, and water that support them, face unprecedented threats. Many threats are global; most stem directly from human activity. Our current practices may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner we know.

Twin problems--excessive consumption by industrialized nations, and relentless growth of human population worldwide--jeopardize efforts to achieve a sustainable future. These problems spring from and intensify

social injustices. Global population growth, for example, relates to the lack of access by women to family planning and health care, quality education, fulfilling employment, and equal rights.

Processes of environmental degradation feed on one another. Decisions affecting an immediate locale often affect the entire planet. The resulting damages to environmental systems are frightening:

- * depletion of non-renewable resources, especially oil;
- * loss of the variety of life through rapid destruction of habitats;
- * erosion of topsoil through unsustainable agriculture and forestry practices;
- * pollution of air by toxic emissions from industries and vehicles, and pollution of water by wastes;
- * increasing volumes of wastes; and
- * prevalence of acid rain, which damages forests, lakes, and streams.

Even more widespread and serious, according to the preponderance of evidence from scientists worldwide, are:

- * the depletion of the protective ozone layer, resulting from the use of volatile compounds containing chlorine and bromine; and
- * dangerous global warming, caused by the buildup of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide.

The idea of the earth as a boundless warehouse has proven both false and dangerous. Damage to the environment eventually will affect most people through increased conflict over scarce resources, decline in food security, and greater vulnerability to disease.

Indeed, our church already ministers with and to people:

- * who know firsthand the effects of environmental deterioration because they work for polluting industries or live near incinerators or waste dumps;
- * who make choices between preserving the environment and damaging it further in order to live wastefully or merely to survive; and
- * who can no longer make their living from forests, seas, or soils that are either depleted or protected by law.

In our ministry, we learn about the extent of the environmental crisis, its complexities, and the suffering it entails. Meeting the needs of today's generations for food, clothing, and shelter requires a sound environment. Action to counter degradation, especially within this decade, is essential to the future of our children and our children's children. Time is very short.

III. THE HOPE

A. The Gift of Hope

Sin and captivity, manifest in threats to the environment, are not the last word. God addresses our predicament with gifts of "forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation" (Luther, *Small Catechism*). By the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God frees us from our sin and captivity, and empowers us to be loving servants to creation.

Although we remain sinners, we are freed from our old captivity to sin. We are now driven to God's promise of blessings yet to come. Only by God's promise are we no longer captives of demonic powers or unjust institutions. We are captives of hope (Zech 9:11-12). Captured by hope, we proclaim that God has made peace with all things through the blood of the cross (Col 1:15-20), and that the Spirit of God, "the giver of life," renews the face of the earth.

Captured by hope, we dream dreams and look forward to a new creation. God does not just heal this creation wounded by human sin. God will one day consummate all things in "new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home" (2Pet 3:13). Creation--now in captivity to disruption and death--will know the freedom it awaits.

B. Hope in Action

We testify to the hope that inspires and encourages us. We announce this hope to every people, and witness to the renewing work of the Spirit of God. We are to be a herald here and now to the new creation yet to come, a living model.

Our tradition offers many glimpses of hope triumphant over despair. In ancient Israel, as Jerusalem was under siege and people were on the verge of exile, Jeremiah purchased a plot of land (Jer 32). When Martin Luther was asked what he would do if the world were to end tomorrow, he reportedly answered, "I would plant an apple tree today." When we face today's crisis, we do not despair. We act.

IV. THE CALL TO JUSTICE

Caring, serving, keeping, loving, and living by wisdom--these translate into justice in political, economic, social, and environmental relationships. Justice in these relationships means honoring the integrity of creation, and striving for fairness within the human family.

It is in hope of God's promised fulfillment that we hear the call to justice; it is in hope that we take action. When we act interdependently and in solidarity with creation, we do justice. We serve and keep the earth, trusting its bounty can be sufficient for all, and sustainable.

A. Justice Through Participation

We live within the covenant God makes with all living things, and are in relationship with them. *The principle of participation means they are entitled to be heard and to have their interests considered when decisions are made.*

Creation must be given voice, present generations and those to come. We must listen to the people who fish the sea, harvest the forest, till the soil, and mine the earth, as well as to those who advance the conservation, protection, and preservation of the environment.

We recognize numerous obstacles to participation. People often lack the political or economic power to participate fully. They are bombarded with manipulated information, and are prey to the pressures of special interests. The interests of the rest of creation are inadequately represented in human decisions.

We pray, therefore, that our church may be a place where differing groups can be brought together, tough issues considered, and a common good pursued.

B. Justice Through Solidarity

Creation depends on the Creator, and is interdependent within itself. *The principle of solidarity means that we stand together as God's creation.*

We are called to acknowledge this interdependence with other creatures and to act locally and globally on behalf of all creation. Furthermore, solidarity also asks us to stand with the victims of fire, floods, earthquakes, storms, and other natural disasters.

We recognize, however, the many ways we have broken ranks with creation. The land and its inhabitants are often disenfranchised by the rich and powerful. The degradation of the environment occurs where people have little or no voice in decisions -- because of racial, gender, or economic discrimination. This degradation aggravates their situation and swells the numbers of those trapped in urban or rural poverty.

We pray, therefore, for the humility and wisdom to stand with and for creation, and the fortitude to support advocates whose efforts are made at personal risk.

C. Justice Through Sufficiency

The earth and its fullness belong to the Lord. No person or group has absolute claim to the earth or its products. *The principle of sufficiency means meeting the basic needs of all humanity and all creation.*

In a world of finite resources, for all to have enough means that those with more than enough will have to change their patterns of acquisition and consumption. Sufficiency charges us to work with each other and the environment to meet needs without causing undue burdens elsewhere.

Sufficiency also urges us to care for arable land so that sufficient food and fiber continue to be available to meet human needs. We affirm, therefore, the many stewards of the land who have been and are conserving the good earth that the Lord has given us.

We recognize many forces that run counter to sufficiency. We often seek personal fulfillment in acquisition. We anchor our political and economic structures in greed and unequal distribution of goods and services. Predictably, many are left without resources for a decent and dignified life.

We pray, therefore, for the strength to change our personal and public lives, to the end that there may be enough.

D. Justice Through Sustainability

The sabbath and jubilee laws of the Hebrew tradition remind us that we may not press creation relentlessly in an effort to maximize productivity (Exod 20:8-11; Lev 25). *The principle of sustainability means providing an acceptable quality of life for present generations without compromising that of future generations.*

Protection of species and their habitats, preservation of clean land and water, reduction of wastes, care of the land--these are priorities. But production of basic goods and services, equitable distribution, accessible markets, stabilization of population, quality education, full employment--these are priorities as well.

We recognize the obstacles to sustainability. Neither economic growth that ignores environmental cost nor conservation of nature that ignores human cost is sustainable. Both will result in injustice and, eventually, environmental degradation. We know that a healthy economy can exist only within a healthy environment, but that it is difficult to promote both in our decisions.

The principle of sustainability summons our church, in its global work with poor people, to pursue sustainable development strategies. It summons our church to support U.S. farmers who are turning to sustainable methods, and to encourage industries to produce sustainably. It summons each of us, in every aspect of our lives, to behave in ways that are consistent with the long-term sustainability of our planet.

We pray, therefore, for the creativity and dedication to live more gently with the earth.

V. COMMITMENTS OF THIS CHURCH

We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America answer the call to justice and commit ourselves to its principles--participation, solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability. In applying the principles to specific situations, we face decisions made difficult by human limitation and sin. We act, not because we are certain of the outcome but because we are confident of our salvation in Christ.

Human behavior may change through economic incentive, guilt about the past, or fear about the future. But as people of biblical faith, who live together in trust and hope, our primary motivation is the call to be God's caregivers and to do justice.

We celebrate the vision of hope and justice for creation, and dedicate ourselves anew. We will act out of the conviction that, as the Holy Spirit renews our minds and hearts, we also must reform our habits and social structures.

A. As Individual Christians

As members of this church, we commit ourselves to personal life styles that contribute to the health of the environment. Many organizations provide materials to guide us in examining possibilities and making changes appropriate to our circumstances.

We challenge ourselves, particularly the economically secure, to tithe environmentally. Tithers would reduce their burden on the earth's bounty by producing ten percent less in waste, consuming ten percent less in non-renewable resources, and contributing the savings to earthcare efforts. Environmental tithing also entails giving time to learn about environmental problems and to work with others toward solutions.

B. As a Worshipping and Learning Community

1. The Congregation as a Creation Awareness Center

Each congregation should see itself as a center for exploring scriptural and theological foundations for caring for creation.

Awareness can be furthered by many already in our midst, for example: Native people, who often have a special understanding of human intimacy with the earth; scientists, engineers, and technicians, who help us to live by the wisdom of God in creation; experts in conservation and protection of the environment; and those who tend the land and sea. We also will learn from people suffering the severe impact of environmental degradation.

2. Creation Emphases in the Church Year

Congregations have various opportunities during the year to focus on creation. Among these are Thanksgiving, harvest festivals, and blessings of fields, waters, and plants and animals. Many congregations observe Earth Day or Soil and Water Stewardship Week. As a church body, we designate the Second Sunday after Pentecost as Stewardship of Creation Sunday, with appropriate readings (as a development of the traditional Rogationtide).

3. Education and Communication

This church will encourage those who develop liturgical, preaching, and educational materials that celebrate God's creation. Expanded curricula, for use in the many contexts of Christian education, will draw upon existing materials. We will promote reporting on the environment by church publications, and encourage coverage of this church's environmental concerns in public media.

4. Programs Throughout this Church

This church commends the environmental education taking place through synodical and regional efforts; camps and outdoor ministries; colleges, seminaries, and continuing education events; and the churchwide Hunger Program. We especially commend this church's Department for Environmental Stewardship in the Division for Church in Society, for its network of caregivers, its advice to church members and institutions on innovative caregiving, and its materials for use in environmental auditing.

C. As a Committed Community

As congregations and other expressions of this church, we will seek to incorporate the principles of sufficiency and sustainability in our life. We will advocate the environmental tithe, and we will take other measures that work to limit consumption and reduce wastes. We will, in our budgeting and investment of church funds, demonstrate our care for creation. We will undertake environmental audits and follow through with checkups to ensure our continued commitment.

D. As a Community of Moral Deliberation

As congregations and other expressions of this church, we will model the principle of participation. We will welcome the interaction of differing views and experiences in our discussion of environmental issues such as:

- * nuclear and toxic waste dumps;
- * logging in ancient growth forests;
- * personal habits in food consumption;
- * farming practices;
- * treatment of animals in livestock production, laboratory research, and hunting;
- * land-use planning; and
- * global food, development, and population questions.

We will examine how environmental damage is influenced by racism, sexism, and classism, and how the environmental crisis in turn exacerbates racial, gender, and class discrimination. We will include in our deliberation people who feel and suffer with issues, whose economic security is at stake, or who have expertise in the natural and social sciences.

We will play a role in bringing together parties in conflict, not only members of this church but also members of society at large. This church's widespread presence and credibility provide us a unique opportunity to mediate, to resolve conflict, and to move toward consensus.

E. As an Advocate

The principles of participation, solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability will shape our advocacy--in neighborhoods and regions, nationally and internationally. Our advocacy will continue in partnership, ecumenically and with others who share our concern for the environment.

Advocacy on behalf of creation is most compelling when done by informed individuals or local groups. We will encourage their communication with governments and private entities, attendance at public hearings, selective buying and investing, and voting.

We will support those designated by this church to advocate at state, national, and international levels. We will stand with those among us whose personal struggles for justice put them in lonely and vulnerable positions.

1. Private Sector

This church will engage in dialogue with corporations on how to promote justice for creation. We will converse with business leadership regarding the health of workers, consumers, and the environment. We will invite the insights and concerns of business leadership regarding responsible environmental actions. We will urge businesses to implement comprehensive environmental principles.

Government can use both regulations and market incentives to seek sustainability. We will foster genuine cooperation between the private and public sector in developing them.

2. Public Sector

This church will favor proposals and actions that address environmental issues in a manner consistent with the principles of participation, solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability.

These proposals and actions will address: excessive consumption and human population pressures; international development, trade, and debt; ozone depletion; and climate change. They will seek: to protect species and their habitats; to protect and assure proper use of marine species; and to protect portions of the planet that are held in common, including the oceans and the atmosphere.

This church will support proposals and actions to protect and restore, in the United States and Caribbean, the quality of:

- * natural and human habitats, including seas, wetlands, forests, wilderness, and urban areas;
- * air, with special concern for inhabitants of urban areas;
- * water, especially drinking water, groundwater, polluted runoff, and industrial and municipal waste; and
- * soil, with special attention to land use, toxic waste disposal, wind and water erosion, and preservation of farmland amid urban development.

This church will seek public policies that allow people to participate fully in decisions affecting their own health and livelihood. We will be in solidarity with people who directly face environmental hazards from toxic materials, whether in industry, agriculture, or the home. We will insist on an equitable sharing of the costs of maintaining a healthy environment.

This church will advance international acceptance of the principles of participation, solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability, and encourage the United Nations in its caregiving role. We will collaborate with partners in the global church community, and learn from them in our commitment to care for God's creation.

CLAIMING THE PROMISE

Given the power of sin and evil in this world, as well as the complexity of environmental problems, we know we can find no "quick fix"--whether technological, economic, or spiritual. A sustainable environment requires a sustained effort from everyone.

The prospect of doing too little too late leads many people to despair. But as people of faith, captives of hope, and vehicles of God's promise, we face the crisis.

We claim the promise of "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1), and join in the offertory prayer (*Lutheran Book of Worship*, page 109): "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Copyright (C) September 1993 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Produced by the Department for Studies, Division for Church in Society.

Permission is granted to reproduce this document as needed, providing each copy displays the copyright as printed above.

Weekend Two

Creation and Community handout

The following handout was originally developed by:

Dr. Alvin Luedke
Prof. of Rural Ministry, Luther Seminary

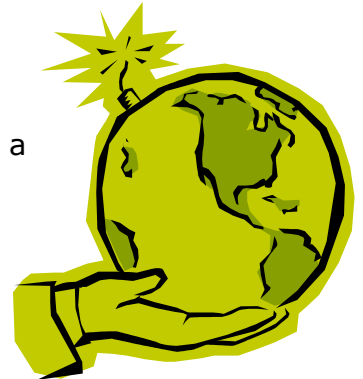
Rev. Mark Yackel-Juleen
Executive Director, Shalom Hill Farm

for use in CE3530: Christian Education in Relation to Creation

Issues of Creation and Community

- The availability and safety of food
- Environmental Concerns--the sustainability of soil and water, flora and fauna
- The consolidation and monopolistic control in the food system and the economic injustices that follow
- Genetics--cloning--genetic manipulation
- Land ownership and control--the displacement of farmers and communities

"In this time of ecological urgency, the considerable collection of biblical texts dealing with earth care ought not to be confined to consideration in academies or learned journals. These texts need to be studied, given a fresh hearing, and then set loose in the world. Rightly understood, they can light some fires, ignite some concern and indicate a direction for our communities, our churches, and our synagogues. "



James Limburg, "Down-To-Earth Theology: Psalm 104 and the Environment," in Currents in Theology and Mission, Volume 21, No. 5, (October 1994), 346.

"All human wealth depends ultimately on what God has entrusted to us in the immeasurable riches of the earth's crust....This is true, inasmuch as all that we can count as material goods originates from what grows on, feeds on, or is dug out of the soil of our planet. Even in our modern industrial and highly technological world, we depend on the efficient use of well-maintained farmland to keep us fed and clothed while we go about our creation and consumption of wealth in other ways many steps removed from direct contact with the land."

Christopher J.H. Wright, God's People in God's Land: Family, Land, and Property in the Old Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 3.

"The people in rural communities you serve are on the front line of perhaps the most crucial global issues now that the Cold War is not an imminent danger--environmental sustainability and food production."

Dr. Richard Austin, environmentalist, theologian, author, 1991

The Creation is Made and Claimed by God the Creator

Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it."

Leviticus 25: 23, "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants."

This is a foundational concept to understanding the relationship of God, creation, and people. It permeates all the major categories of Old Testament literature: the Pentateuch, the wisdom literature, and the prophets. Fundamentally, the Old Testament assertion, with various nuances, is that God has created both Land and people and still holds claim to them. Yet God shares responsibility in some way with people for the Land.

Trust: A Biblical Concept of Sharing Responsibility for Creation A Definition

"...a charge or duty imposed in faith or confidence or as a condition of some relationship...something committed or entrusted to one to be used or cared for in the interest of another."

**"Trust," Webster's Third New International Dictionary,
(Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1993), 2456.**

"Israel's theory of land, as it is portrayed in the conquest traditions and in the torah provisions, is that the land is assigned to the entire community as a trust from Yahweh."

**Walter Bruggemann, "Land: Fertility and Justice" in Theology of the Land, Bernard F. Evans and Gregory D. Cusack ed.,
(Collegville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1987), 46.**

" ...the ultimate meaning of creation is to be found in the heart and purpose of the creator and that the world has been positively valued by God for itself. It must be valued by the creatures to whom it has been provisionally entrusted."

Walter Bruggemann, Genesis, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 12-13.

God's Claim as Creator

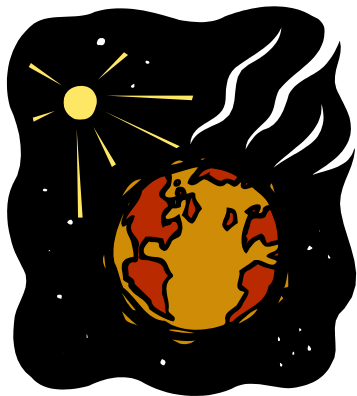
"In the beginning, when God created..."

The whole cluster of words--creator/ creation/ create/creature--are confessional words freighted with peculiar meaning. Terms such as "cosmos" and "nature" should never be carelessly used as equivalents, for these words do not touch the theocentric, covenantal relational affirmation being made. The word "creation" belongs inevitably with its counter word "creator."...The single sentence, "Creator creates creation," is decisive for everything....This governing sentence affirms that the creator is not disinterested and the creation is not autonomous.

Walter Brueggemann, Genesis, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 16-17.

DOMINION

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." Genesis 1:26



paths of the seas. Ps. 8:3-8

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ROYALTY

The ideal model for the relationship between humankind (man and woman) and the earth and its creatures is the king/people relationship. In passages where the same "have dominion" verb occurs, the emphasis is on gentleness and on an active program of caring that results in shalom.

James Limburg, "The Responsibility of Royalty: Genesis 1-11 and the Care of the Earth," in Word and World, Vol. XI, No. 2, (Spring 1991), 126.

"to till and to keep" Gen. 2:15



These two words describe the dual task of the farmer and of the entire society....From the beginning, alongside the work of tilling has been the responsibility of "keeping" the land. This "keeping" is the same word used to describe the Lord's caring relationship to a city (Ps 127:1) or to a people and an individual (Ps 121). The farmer and the community are called to till the land and to care for it as well.

Limburg, "The Responsibility of Royalty," 127.

People as a Part of Creation

adam (human) and `adama (ground)

Gen. 3:19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Deut. 20:19 If you besiege a town for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you must not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them. Although you may take food from them, you must not cut them down. Are trees in the field human beings that they should come under siege from you?

Deut. 22:6 If you come on a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs, with the mother sitting on the fledglings or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young.

Pedagogical Strategies for Creation Caring in a Rural Context

- Understand the relational nature of the context
 - Be present, listen, learn, build trust first
 - Communicate love of people and place
- Respect that for many people these are first order issues—a matter of life (culture) and living
 - Most are well-intentioned and faithful and have good reasons for what they do even if you do not necessarily agree
- Use narrative well and connect with the story of the people
- Use questions (not declarations) as a form of critique
- ?

What is Orr's argument?

Myths of our culture:

- Ignorance is a solvable problem
- With enough knowledge and technology we can manage planet Earth
- Knowledge is increasing and by implication human goodness
- We can adequately restore that which we have dismantled
- The purpose of education is that of giving you the means for upward mobility and success
- Our culture represents the pinnacle of human achievement

What education should be for:

- All education is environmental education (null, implicit, explicit)
- The goal of education is not mastery of subject material but of one's person
- Knowledge carries with it the responsibility to see that it is well used in the world
- We cannot say that we know something until we understand the effects of this knowledge on real people and their communities
- The importance of "minute particulars" and the power of examples over words
- The way learning occurs is as important as the content of particular courses

Appendix 1: Learning Portfolio

Developing and learning from a portfolio

Much of the following information in this section is based on the work of Stephen Brookfield, and his book *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995). Chapter Five of that book, pages 92-113 (which is on reserve in the library), might prove very helpful to you before attempting to put together your own portfolio.

In this class we will be using a learning portfolio process to help you document your learning about educational leadership, and to provide me with a concrete way to coach you in your learning journey.

Your final portfolio should include five sections.

The first section will include a summary of your learning journal (or other integrative writing), and the learning unit you have developed.

The second, third and fourth sections will be structured around the three areas of competency (knowledge, attitudes and skills) outlined for educational leadership at Luther Seminary. Here your objective will be to assess where you are in terms of achieving these competencies, and proposing ways to meet those that you are still working on.

The fifth and final section will be devoted to evaluation of this class as a learning experience. Please bring a draft of your portfolio to our second weekend (October 10-12). The final version will be due on December 6th.

Section One – Gathering pieces you’ve produced

In this section you need to write a summary of what you’ve learned from your process of integrative writing. Brookfield’s chapter (referenced above) has some excellent writing prompts for doing this kind of summary. Please be sure to touch on your experience with the Schut text, with the denominational statements, with the other books you’ve read in the course, with your practice of earth care, you’re your experience in developing the learning unit, and with the broader process of working on the learning competencies.

Section Two – Tracking the knowledge competencies

There are many ways to engage this section of the portfolio. Perhaps the most straightforward is simply to go element by element and comment on where you are in relation to that competency. The first one, for example, reads “able to articulate a clear statement of their vision for providing leadership in supporting faith nurture across the lifespan.”

How able are you to do this? Where are you in the process? You could include a draft of such a statement here, or one that you’ve worked with in other contexts that you feel you affirm. If you’ve been involved with developing such a vision in your contextualization site, for instance, you could include it here.

Please be sure to “take your temperature” on each of these competencies. Where you still need more practice or exposure to meet one of them, try to suggest how you might do so in the future. If you are uncertain to what a particular competency even refers, please note that, too! The key is to begin to reflect on where you stand in relation to these goals.

The competencies for this section are as follows:

1a able to articulate a clear statement of their vision for providing leadership in supporting faith nurture across the lifespan

1b familiar with basic faith nurture and learning theories: faith development over the life cycle, multiple intelligences, constructivist learning design, developmental learning principles, cross cultural learning, etc.

1c familiar with the integration of biblical narrative, theological inquiry and ritual practice within religious education

1d familiar with the history and trajectories of faith nurture, particularly in the student’s primary denominational/faith community context, so as to be able to assess a specific context and develop learning strategies within it

1e familiar with a variety of ways of supporting, structuring, facilitating and trouble-shooting learning communities

1f familiar with multiple models of faith nurture

You will notice that most of these use the language of “familiarity” rather than expertise, but familiarity can mean many things! You needn’t itemize everything that you’ve learned in a specific area, but you should be able to call to mind examples of moments when you demonstrated such familiarity, or alternatively, moments when it was clear to you that you didn’t yet understand a specific competency, or how that competency connected with religious education practice.

Please remember: because this is an emerging set, and the division at Luther has not yet adopted them, we’re not expecting you to have achieved all of these goals. Rather I would like you to reflect upon where you are in the journey, and the utility of the list more generally.

Section Three – Tracking your attitudinal experiences

In this section of the portfolio you will reflect upon your experiences in this class as they touch upon or inform the attitude elements of the educational leadership learning competencies.

Those competencies are as follows:

- 2a inquires easily into, and responds openly to others' ideas
- 2b easily and constructively surfaces and questions assumptions underlying ideas, feelings, and actions
- 2c comfortably uses their own experience to critique expert opinion AND uses expert opinion to critique their own experience
- 2d nourishes personal curiosity about God's activities in the world, and is able to wonder with awe at God's activities
- 2e comfortably engages diversity with personal integrity
- 2f is deeply engaged in lifelong learning

This section of should include your reflection on each of these competencies, and ought to be full of short descriptions and examples. Where were you when you began the course on a particular competency, and what (if any) progress have you made?

You should find fertile ground for such reflection in your integrative journal and the critical incident inquiry reports collected along the way (a short process we'll engage during class times). In particular, you might use Brookfield's questions from pages 104-106 of his Chapter Five to help you to focus your reflections here.

Section Four– Tracking your skill development

This is the section of the portfolio where you will most likely have identified specific goals to work on in your September conversation with me.

For those competencies you've met prior to entering this course, highlight them in color and give a brief example or two. For the specific goals you worked on in this class, explain your approach and critique your achievements. For those competencies which are still emerging in your practice, try to imagine how you might meet them. Are there ways in which you could shape assignments in your other classes to help you demonstrate competence in a specific area? Will you work on a specific issue during your first professional call? And so on.

The specific competencies identified in this area are as follows:

- 3a capable of adequately developing, critiquing, and tailoring curriculum materials for use in a specific context (this includes denominational issues)
- 3b capable of supporting theological and biblical reflection in a variety of contexts, and with a variety of people involved
- 3c capable of supporting cross cultural engagement in at least one specific cultural context
- 3d capable of supporting intergenerational learning
- 3e capable of engaging at least one pressing contemporary learning challenge from within a faith community framework (denominational pluralism, interfaith dialogue, media culture, environmental pressures, socio-political unrest, peace and justice issues, race and class issues, gender, disability, etc.)
- 3f capable of recruiting, training, supporting, supervising, evaluating and affirming volunteers in the shared ministry of Christian faith nurture

Section Five – tracking your overall learning experience in this course

In this section of the portfolio I am asking you to reflect on your experience as a learner in this course. Please try to respond to at least the following questions:

- how did the reading assignments in this course support your learning? Were they relevant, pertinent, accessible? Which ones would you keep for future versions of this class, and which would you discard?
- how well did the design of the course support your own learning? Was the structure of the class clear? Did the assignments support your skill development? How would you improve the course design?
- what do you think future students should know about EL3530 to survive, or better yet, to flourish during the class?
- how have your experiences in this class shaped your future teaching practice, if at all? How have they shaped your role as a learner in other settings, if at all?
- anything else you'd like to add!

Grading Rubric

Mary Hess / Luther Seminary / 2004-05 Academic Year

(Most of the following is drawn from the scoring rubrics in place at the Crosswinds Middle School,

<http://www.emid6067.net/Crosswinds/Details/GradingRubric.html>)

Failing -- Level 1

Minimal achievement in terms of stated objectives, and the student requires nearly continual support.

Failing -- Level 2

Very limited achievement in all the learning objectives. The student has difficulty in understanding the required knowledge, attitudes, and skills and is unable to apply them fully in normal situations, even with support.

Failing/Marginal -- Level 3

Limited achievement in most of the learning objectives, or clear difficulty in some areas. The student demonstrates a limited understanding of the required knowledge and skills and is only able to apply them fully in normal situations with support.

Marginal/Passing -- Level 4

A good general understanding of the required knowledge, attitudes, and skills, plus the ability to apply them effectively in normal situations. There is some evidence of the skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The student fulfills all of the requirements of the lesson.

Passing -- Level 5

A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge, attitudes and skills, and the ability to apply them in a variety of situations. The student generally shows evidence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation where appropriate and occasionally demonstrates originality and insight. The student produces work of consistent quality and works independently.

Grade of B -- Level 6

A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge, attitudes and skills, and the ability to apply them in a wide variety of situations. There is consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation where appropriate. The student generally demonstrates insight, produces work of quality, meets the expectations of the lesson at a high level, and shows some evidence of originality.

Grade of A -- Level 7

A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them almost faultlessly in a wide variety of situations. There is consistent evidence of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation where appropriate. The student consistently demonstrates originality and insight and always produces work of high quality. The student is able to teach necessary skills to another student. The student works beyond the expectations of the lesson, and uses original ideas and concepts.

COURSE FORMS

Initial learning agreement

The design of this course assumes your ability to be an independent and active learner. Use this form to prepare for your September meeting with me.

Please also take the time to read over the course workbook, and note any questions or concerns you have in relation to fulfilling course requirements. If there are particular learning goals you have that are not identified in the course design, please feel invited to discuss alternatives with me.

My experiences with integrative writing in the past suggest that I will find this aspect of the course:

(think about the kinds of integrative writing you've done, whether you need frequent feedback, what kind of support from me you'd like, etc.)

For the earth care assignment I would like to try:

(look on the web for ideas, think about where and how you live, etc.)

I think my learning unit design will focus on:

(identify the context, the kind of group, the basic goal for your design, etc.)

I am most concerned about (what?) in meeting the learning competencies list:

I will choose the following book from the options presented:

Hessel, et. al. *Earth Habitat: Eco-Injustice and the Church's Response*
Sally McFague, *Super, Natural Christians*
Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women Healing Earth: Third World Women on Ecology, Feminism, Religion*
Joseph Sittler, *Evocations of Grace*

(Your Name) _____

Classroom Critical Incident Questionnaire

Please take about five minutes to respond to each of the questions below about this week's session on the carbonless paper I provide. Don't put your name on the sheet – your responses are anonymous. When you have finished writing, put one copy on the table by the door and keep the other for yourself (you might find it useful as you write in your learning journal). At the start of next week's class, I will be sharing some of the responses of the group. Thanks for taking the time to do this. What you write will help me make this class more responsive to your concerns.

1. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most engaged with what was happening?
2. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most distanced from what was happening?
3. What action that anyone (teacher or student) took in class this week did you find most affirming and helpful?
4. What action that anyone (teacher or student) took in class this week did you find most puzzling or confusing?
5. What about the class this week surprised you the most? (This could be something about your own reactions to what went on, or something that someone did, or anything else that occurs to you).

Taken from "Understanding classroom dynamics: The critical incident questionnaire," in Brookfield (1995), *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), p. 115