

***Orientation—Disorientation—New Orientation***  
***Praying the Psalms in Every Season***  
Covenant Cluster Network Consultation  
25-27 February 2010

More than 40 persons representing colleges, regions, seminaries, synods, synodical theological education programs and churchwide staff gathered at Carol Joy Holling Camp and Conference Center for the Fifth Covenant Cluster Network Consultation. The focus of the gathering was exploring the present and future opportunities for collaboration regarding theological education. The group reviewed the purpose statement.

**In order to provide greater access to theological education for ministry for all the baptized in Regions 4, 5 and 6, the Covenant Cluster Network will**

- convene the theological education providers within the Covenant Cluster including the colleges, seminaries, campus ministries, synods and synodical non-degree programs, outdoor ministries and teaching congregations
- encourage networking among theological education providers by creating the opportunity for coordination, cooperation and/or collaboration among theological education providers

For a more complete overview of the presentations on the Psalms by Pastor Susan Briehl, see the notes posted by Greg Kaufmann on the Covenant Cluster website at <http://www.covenantcluster.net/>

**The losses and laments participants are bringing to the consultation**

- idolatry of control
- loss of ELCA “as it is today”
- the razing of silos
- friends
- civility
- finding wisdom to know what to cling to
- prominence and authority in the culture
- that we may not really have had Christ as the center;
- that we depended on works, an image, traditions, institutional identity for security
- loss of job/livelihood
- give up the idea that someone is going to do it or fix it for us
- loss of community where we can speak truth and seek healing
- loss of a sense of vocation, what we thought we were called to do
- loss of vision; vision that is overwhelmed by the fear, pain
- loss of euro-centric Lutheran church
- loss of skill of compromise
- loss of sense of church as safe place
- no matter the size of the congregation, that they can remain open

- loss of dreams and goals
- loss of sense of the family
- loss of a common ritual
- loss of a visible, predictable, attainable future
- loss of a sense of right order among the generations that moves from work to retirement, making room for the next generation

#### Psalms of Orientation

- Creation: 8, 104, 145, 33
- Torah: 119, 1, 15
- Wisdom: 37, 14, 33
- Wellbeing: 133, 131

#### Psalms of Disorientation

- Personal Lament: 13, 86, 35, 88, 109
- Communal Laments: 74, 79, 137
- Penitential: 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143

#### Psalms of New Orientation

- Thanksgiving: 30, 40, 138, 34
- Community Thanksgiving: 65, 66, 124
- New Kingship psalms: 114, 29, 96, 47, 93, 97, 98, 99

### **The Covenant Cluster Network's additions to Psalm 136**

We bring energy and confusion

for God's mercy endures forever

A safe place was opened before us

for God's mercy endures forever

A place to dream, lament, share and engage others

for God's mercy endures forever

We struggled for language and focus

for God's mercy endures forever

Little was happening and no one knew the need

for God's mercy endures forever

A group came together and discovered their theological richness

for God's mercy endures forever

Difficult economic times limited possibilities

for God's mercy endures forever

Various institutions join together to share resources

for God's mercy endures forever

A new common mission with mutual shared suspicion

for God's mercy endures forever

Face to face meeting across multiple boundaries

for God's mercy endures forever

We suffered hurt and suspicion between partners

for God's mercy endures forever  
We've seen glimpses of being better together than separate  
for God's mercy endures forever  
We had not community to share our distress  
for God's mercy endures forever  
Opportunities for networking abound  
for God's mercy endures forever

***Reports:***

**Adult Catechumenate:** This group discussed the content and process of the catechumenate and explored the idea of a core curriculum for adult Christians.

**First Call Theological Education:** This group discussed the history of the FCTE program in the ELCA, talked about best practices they have been using in their synods/regions, and explored the possibility of adding a day to the next Cluster Network Consultation to focus on the First Call network in the Covenant Cluster.

**Online learning:** a group of about 15 people gathered basic information on distributive learning. The focus was primarily on Select and Fisher's Net. See [www.selectlearning.org](http://www.selectlearning.org)

**Missional leadership:** A group also discussed various missional leadership initiatives.

**Synodical lay schools:** rich in faculty persons who know how to work with lay people. Ask to have on the Covenant Cluster website a listing of faculty in the synod programs. Offer it as a model to the other two clusters. Interactive so the names of people could also be annotated by those who have used them to talk about what they've done well, etc. Connect also with the "stable" of Book of Faith teachers? Desire for the kind of exchange where teaching theologians could learn from synodically-based teachers.

***Reflections:***

Tammy Mast: Not what I expected! We are really in this together with a common interest. We are indeed connected with each other.

Dick Bruesehoff: Possibility of gathering First Call Theological Education leaders as part of a gathering of the Covenant Cluster Network. Use it as an opportunity to reach out to the college, seminaries and any others who have an interest in the healthy, successful transition of into ministry.

Greg Kaufmann: List all synod lay school websites (and names of contact person) on Covenant Cluster website.

Brenda Gibson: list synod lay program directors on the Covenant Cluster site who could give feedback on teachers they have used.

Bob Haak: This would work as a place to vet those already teaching. How can we add names of new teachers?

Diane Jacobson: Being at a meeting where she is not expected to do anything in particular—but this is a place to make connections. This is my work

Brenda Smith: Gratitude for the Psalms.

Brenda Gibson: Affirming of what already doing and adding new connections and passions to it. Overwhelmed by what to do with what she has experienced!

Tim Fehr: This is a place where he gets re-energized—by the presentations, by the conversations at meals and social time, etc. It is a gathering of people who get the job done and love to teach/encourage each other.

Jonathan Strandjord: Thinks it is important to have another go at the Cluster Teacher Network gathering. Diane Jacobson: connect the CTN idea more explicitly with the Book of Faith initiative. Scott Tunseth: Connecting the CTN idea with teaching Book of Faith teachers.

### ***Where to from here? What next?***

- Timing? Every year? Every other year?
- Need to confer soon with the Covenant Cluster Board.
- Less frequent than annually we'll lose momentum, have to work too hard to get things started if we meet less frequently than once per year.
- If we're to be serious about Covenant Cluster programming, we need to meet again next year.
- Missed input from the Covenant Cluster Seminaries. Do we know why they are not here this year? Is it economics? Is it that the program is not helpful? Do they want more time on the agenda? Can we talk soon about what our mutual hopes are for this consultation?
- As we think forward, be aware that there is a deposit of \$2500 at St. Mary's Center in Mundelein.
- Strong affirmation of the facilities, site, meals, etc. at Carol Joy Holling
- Need some focus on what impact the changes contemplated by the Covenant Cluster Board might have on the Covenant Cluster Network
- Move some of the affinity group time up closer to the beginning of the consultation.
- Topics:
  - Contemplated changes among the Covenant Cluster seminaries.
  - What is happening to bridge the divide between Christian Education and Theological Education? How do we do lifelong faith formation? What roles do the Covenant Cluster Network partners play in doing education in and with congregation?
  - Team building and study
  - Teaching in congregations and the relationship to the world of theological education.

- Missional congregations as places for formation of disciples, formation of leaders,
- Seminaries as places to learn to *teach* as well as to preach.
- Parker Palmer or one of the other people who has been focusing on spirituality, teaching and vocation
- Spirituality and young people