



Curriculum Conversations Relating Theory and Practice

Interim Chair: Rebecca Davis

Staff: Garland F. Pierce

Program Mission/Purpose:

To provide a creative arena that deals with various issues inherent in the basic question, "What kind of curriculum is needed by our churches today in the task of Christian education?" Space is provided for networking and dialogue for persons responsible for Christian education at the local church level, persons responsible for creating congregational resources, and persons responsible at the seminary level for Christian education and leadership development

1. What specific actions has the program ministry committee taken or plans to take to follow through with the work on cultural proficiency begun in the January 2005 ELMC meeting?

Cultural proficiency continues to be an operating principle as the members of the steering committee, the core leadership team which works in the interim to plan the next consultation, are selected to serve and in the planning of the consultation itself. When selecting presenters and respondents, racial, gender, and confessional diversity is kept in mind as is diversity of perspective.

2. What actions has the program ministry committee taken to strengthen its relations to:

a. Other ELMC program ministry committees: Through participation in the January ELMC meeting we seek to encourage attendance in the annual consultation. When planning for the annual consultation, with intention, we seek planning input and encourage event participation from across the board. Other ELMC program ministries are made aware of upcoming events, particularly through announcements and details sent via the commission and program ministry committee listserves. CCRTP is currently in conversation about a closer relationship with CUS, given that both deal with curriculum development. The hope is that they will be scheduled around the same time so that members of CUS have a better chance of participating in the annual CCRTP.

b. NCCC member communions not represented at the table: The invitation to the annual event is distributed widely to all NCCC member communions. Communion diversity and concentration are considered even when selecting the venue of the consultation. This year Richmond was selected in hopes of drawing from the concentration of Presbyterians, Baptists, and members of Historic Black Churches and because of the ecumenical consortium there.

c. Other communions and/or agencies? We advertise the annual consultation through the website and publications of the Religious Education Association (REA)/Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education (APRRE) as well as to independent publishers.

3. How does the work of your program ministry committee make ELMC a stronger witness to the unity of the church?

A steering committee or planning team, composed of persons who participated in previous Curriculum Conversations, convenes for the purpose of scheduling the ensuing event, inclusive of selecting the venue, topic and presenters. The planning team is challenged to choose carefully so that we enthuse our three audiences (theological educators, publishers, practitioners) and achieve a healthy balance (for the upcoming event, and over the course of several years) of representation from each of the three. The steering committee completes its task via interim assignments, conference calls and email exchanges.

4. What work of this program ministry committee was carried forward between meetings of the committee and how was it done?

The committee strives to be faithful to ELMC's vision and mission. A major task of the committee is the enabling and encouraging of theological and educational reflection on curriculum and curriculum development, and the resourcing of one another for daily work.

5. What resources/products/services does the program ministry offer to denominations/congregations/the public?

The primary product of this ministry is the annual consultation that provides a unique table where people from the academy, publishing, and local congregations come together drawn by their passion for Christian education resourcing. While professors of religious education have a professional organization, the Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education (APRRE), and publishers have their associations, such as New Earth Publishers and the Protestant Church-owned Publishing Association (PCPA), the annual consultation creates a space to engage these diverse groups in discussions about developing resources for Christian education. The Curriculum Conversations ministry serves as a networking group for a particular audience and does not create resources. Participants have identified an ongoing strength of the group as "an excellent and necessary opportunity for conversation between academy, curriculum development, and local congregation."

This year's consultation focused on teaching as leadership. The primary presenter was Dr. Israel Galindo of Baptist Theological Seminary, Richmond. The primary text was his book, *The Hidden Lives of Congregations*. Responders were Dr. Anne Wimberly of the Interdenominational Theological Center, offering a perspective from the academy, and The Rev. Mary Jane Pierce Norton of the United Methodist Church General Board of Discipleship and ELMC Vice Chair, offering a perspective from congregational resource development.

6. What recommendations do you want to make to the Education and Leadership Ministries Commission? To the NCCC?

With an understanding of our endeavors, freely offer suggestions for topics for exploration and, likewise, freely offer ideas for "collaborative initiatives" with other ELMC program ministry committees and/or other NCCC entities.

The consultation should be re-instated as a committee (with rotating members representing academics, publishers, and congregational educators).

Participants in the 2006 Conversation:

Judith Fagalde-Bennett	The Resource Center
Timothy W. Brock	Campbell University Divinity School
Marty Canaday	Derbyshire Baptist Church
Rebecca L. Davis	Myers Park Presbyterian Church
José Abraham De Jesús	United Church of Christ
Robert G. Fulbright	Smyth and Helwys Publishing
Israel Galindo	Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond
Judy Hockenberry	Presbyterian Church (USA)
Mary Jane Pierce Norton	United Methodist Church
R. Kenneth Ostermiller	United Church of Christ
Elsie Hannah Ruth Rempel	Mennonite Church Canada
Robin Porter Smith	African Methodist Episcopal Church
Nelson Strobert	Gettysburg Seminary
Anne Wimberly	Interdenominational Theological Center

Presenters

Israel Galindo
Anne Wimberly
Mary Jane Pierce Norton

