

May 17, 1995

To: Those members of the Executive Committee who were present for the May 7 meeting and to three others with whom I spoke about the request from Para, with copies to Para Drake and Mark Wethington.

From: Mary Whanger

Dear Friends,

I want to let you know that I have met with Para to discuss the concerns that you expressed at the May 7 meeting. I felt that we had a very useful conversation. There are some misunderstandings which Para was able to clarify, and which you need to know.

Para's children are not now, and never have been, enrolled in Durham Academy. They went to the Montessori School their first 3 years, and since then have been in public schools. Currently, Weston is in Jordan High, Daria is in Githens Middle School, and William is in his last year at Montessori and will attend a public school hereafter.

Para's parents *have* helped her with the children, financially and otherwise, but it is not possible for them to be actively involved in caring for the children while Para is taking her Clinical Pastoral Education course. She is seeking to provide healthy, creative activities for them. As an aside, Weston will be helping to paint the basement of our church this summer as part of his work toward satisfying requirements to become an Eagle Scout.

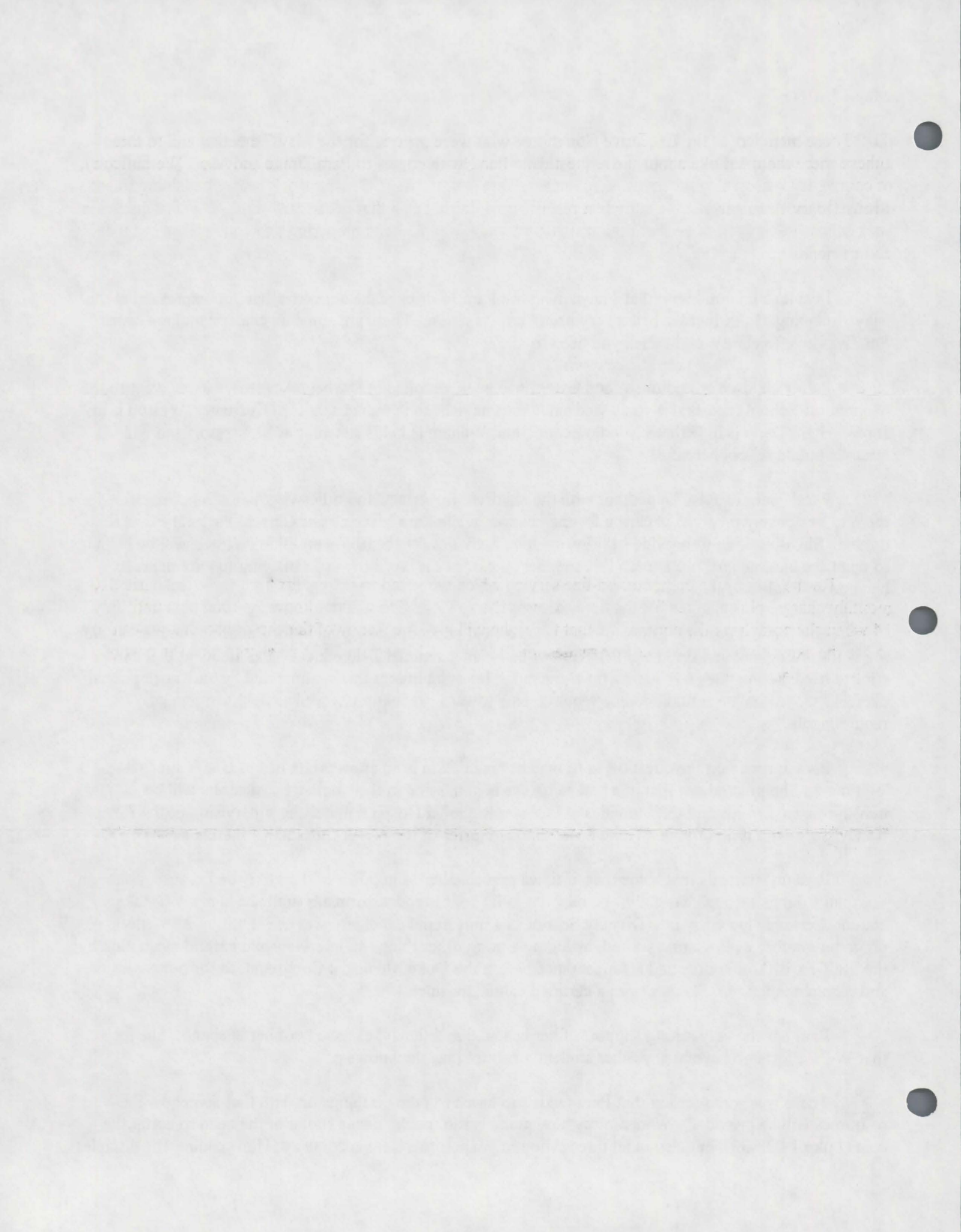
The Clinical Pastoral Education course *is* a field education assignment for Para this summer, as was the work in England last summer. Para *cannot* be given a summer field education assignment that carries a stipend because she does not qualify for a stipend. Her assignments this summer and last are not optional choices "tacked on", but fulfill course requirements toward graduation as well as field assignment requirements.

Para agreed that the question as to whether education is an appropriate use of UMW funds is legitimate. She pointed out that in a real sense she is in mission in this course, because she will be ministering to patients and their families at Durham Regional Hospital under the supervision of the Rev. Nancy Best, who is an ordained United Methodist minister of the North Carolina Conference.

Para understands that some may at times perceive her as impulsive. This may be because, although she thinks things through carefully, she may not talk about her ideas or plans until she is ready to take action. Certainly her entry into Divinity School as a ministerial candidate was the result of a lengthy procedure before even getting started, including among other things an interview and careful evaluation by the Staff-Parish Committee and an appearance before the Duke Memorial Congregation for our assessment and recommendation. She has been a certified candidate since 1993.

Para has the very strong support of her husband and family, especially of her husband. She feels that Wil's efforts go beyond any other student's spouse that she knows of.

There was some feeling that Para tends too much to take on things on faith that somehow the resources will be provided. Who can say how much is too much? Jesus spoke of the need to count the cost (Luke 14:28-33), but also in all three synoptic gospels there are accounts of Him sending His disciples



out two by two on a mission of ministry and telling them not to take with them any money or clothes or supplies of any kind (Matt. 10:5-15, Mark 6:7-13, Luke 9:1-6), and again sending out 70 others carrying no provisions (Luke 10:1-12). Clearly, He expected them to go on faith that their needs would be met. I believe there are times when this is still the case, when He wants us to trust Him to provide. The difficulty, of course, is in discerning when this is so, and to what extent. As for taking stock before beginning to see whether or not she would have sufficient resources to finish, I feel that Para really tried. Divinity School is very expensive (it used to be that tuition was not required of students preparing for the ministry, but that is no longer the case), and is a considerable undertaking for anybody, especially for young parents with children. Unexpected expenses and other needs do come up in a family from time to time. And, it is not always possible for anyone to do as much as someone outside looking on might think they ought to be able to do.

I did express to Para that, along with these negative feelings and misunderstandings, there is a lot of admiration for her and appreciation for what she is doing, both in her training and in her life and ministry here at Duke Memorial. Para saw our discussion as a means for her growth. She very much wanted me to write this kind of letter to you, and she and I both hope it will be a means of reconciliation and of greater understanding and openness between her and you. (By the way, she does not know your names.) She very much wants and needs our love, our respect, our support, and our prayers. Academically, Para is doing extremely well, having made all A's except for one A+ this semester.

Para has received our check for \$300 toward the cost of the course. She is deeply grateful.

Re the cost of the computer on-line service which we voted to supply for her: there is a basic \$10 monthly charge, plus charges for the time she uses the service. She will not know the total cost until July 14 when she completes the course. At that time, she will give me a copy of the charges so that we can pay to her the exact amount up to her first request of \$125; i.e., \$10 per month basic charge plus the cost of using the service for 10 weeks.

If you have talked with others about this matter, I ask you now, as quickly as possible, to talk with those same persons again and correct the misperceptions about Para and her family. I know that some of you have talked about this in your Circles, which is appropriate, since the allocation of UMW funds is involved. Para has been deeply hurt, and while none of us intended false witness, nevertheless that has happened. We have it in our power to ease Para's hurt, hopefully to heal it, and to bring about a greater sense of unity in our particular group of the Family of God simply by making known the contents of this letter to whomever we are responsible for informing. Please do not delay. Any time we can be agents of healing, it is not only a responsibility but a privilege.

God bless you, keep you, and make His face to shine upon you.

Mary Khanger

