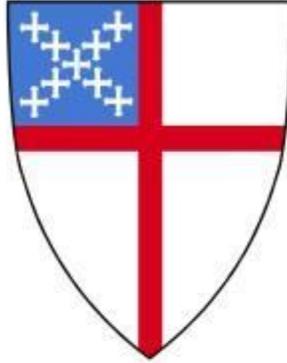


NATIONAL EPISCOPAL CURSILLO



GROWING
CHRIST-CENTERED
LEADERS

THE CLERGY TALK WORKBOOK

Booklet #15

2006

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The Episcopal Cursillo SPIRITUAL ADVISOR'S WORKBOOK has been compiled from numerous sources. The most significant single contribution was made by the Rev. James Stanton (Diocese of Iowa). Father Stanton completed the meditation and talk commentaries in time for the National Episcopal Cursillo Seminar in October 1983. At that time, a workshop session was scheduled to review material. Many helpful suggestions were made then and in subsequent correspondence.

The Rev. David L. Walters (Diocese of Vermont) was the workbook project leader for the Communications and Publications Subcommittee and wrote Part 1 based on Cursillo literature, seminar materials, and previously developed material from various dioceses.

The first complete draft of all the non-commentary material was reviewed by the NECC in April 1984. The Publications Subcommittee considered all comments made at that time and resolved basic policy questions.

This third edition was reviewed and edited for clarity of thought and ease of reading. It was an attempt to enhance the flow and continuity of the process of the Episcopal Cursillo Movement.

This fourth edition has been renamed THE CLERGY TALK WORKBOOK. This is in keeping with the new title of the lay book THE LAY TALK WORKBOOK. Work began on this revision in 2005. The Rev. Mike Flanagan (Diocese of Upper South Carolina) began by revising the Grace and Faith talks. The remainder of the book was revised by the Rev. Robert Dendtler (Diocese of Atlanta). The entire NECC reviewed the proposed book in May and June 2006. The Publication Subcommittee reviewed the comments and made necessary changes. The book was approved in July 2006.

NATIONAL EPISCOPAL CURSILLO COMMITTEE 2006

Preface

The *Clergy Talk Workbook* is one of a series of publications to provide an Episcopal approach to Cursillo. This is a reference and guide for clergy involved in the leadership of the Cursillo Movement. Throughout this publication, clergy are referred to as Spiritual Advisors since they provide more than just spiritual direction.

The *Clergy Talk Workbook* and the *Lay Talk Workbook* are complimentary publications that together provide guidelines and talk outlines for the Three-Day Weekend.

The principles of previous editions of this book were based on "An Outline of the Faith," (the catechism) found in *The Book of Common Prayer*, and the license agreement between the National Secretariat of the Cursillo Movement (Roman Catholic) and the National Episcopal Cursillo Committee. This book continues these principles. For more on the license agreement see Appendix 1.

The Catechism in *The Book of Common Prayer* reminds us that the ministers of the church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacon. The Cursillo Movement is a movement of the Church; therefore, clergy and lay persons are full partners in the conduct of the Movement. This workbook has been prepared to assist clergy in their servant ministry to the various Episcopal Cursillo communities.

This book is offered to the glory of God.
The National Episcopal Cursillo Committee
The Feast of the Transfiguration 2006

Fourth Edition 2006

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THE CURSILLO METHOD

Cursillo is a method of renewal in the Episcopal Church. It came to us from the Spanish Roman Catholic Church and is now present in most of our dioceses. The purpose of Cursillo is to convert Christians to a deeper relationship with God in order to better understand their individual callings to be Christian leaders. The goal of Cursillo is to Christianize our environments through apostolic action of Christian leaders in all areas of human activity.

There are three equally important parts of the Cursillo Method.

1. Pre-Cursillo is a time when those who have participated in a Three-Day Weekend are active in identifying persons for the Three-Day Weekend. Ideally, these persons are already leaders in their parish or are identified as potential leaders.
2. The Three-Day Weekend is a time when candidates are exposed to the Cursillo Method of piety, study, and action. This is accomplished by a series of fifteen talks, five meditations, music fellowship, worship, and daily Eucharist.
3. The Fourth Day, sometimes called Post-Cursillo, follows the Three-Day Weekend and includes Group Reunion, Ultreya, and Spiritual Direction.

In the Pre-Cursillo stage, those who participated in previous Three-Day Weekend are engaged in identifying environments which need to be Christianized. Potential leaders for these environments are identified and Cursillistas begin praying as to the right time to invite them to participate in Cursillo activities. When the time seems right, these potential leaders are invited to participate in a Three-Day Weekend and are assisted in becoming involved in Fourth Day activities.

The second part is the Three-Day Weekend where a team of lay leaders and spiritual advisors present a series of fifteen talks on the basics of Christianity and the concepts of piety, study, and action. Away from the everyday pressures of life, the participants form a Christian community through learning, praying, singing, sharing, and living together.

The third part of the Method includes three primary elements:

1. Frequent small group meetings with a few close friends for mutual support, encouragement and accountability in the life of grace, called Group Reunions.
2. Frequent meetings, called Ultreyas, involve others who have participated in a Three-Day Weekend or those interested in a Three-Day Weekend.
3. Regular Spiritual Direction.

The Three-Day Weekend, which may be life transforming, fulfills its purpose when participants return to their regular lives supported by fellow Christians in their Fourth Day.

Special terms such as Pre-Cursillo, Three-Day Weekend, Fourth Day, Ultreya, and Group Reunion are the roots of the movement. These terms provide efficient communication for those who understand them. These terms and phrases when used outside the Movement can become instruments of separation. Lay leaders, Spiritual Advisors and all participants of a Three-Day Weekend should be careful that these terms do not become divisive. The Movement needs to continue to be a creative and renewing force in the Church.

Part 1: The Spiritual Advisor's Role

Who Should be a Spiritual Advisor?

A Spiritual Advisor in the Cursillo Movement has many roles and tasks to perform. Those selecting Diocesan Spiritual Advisors or selecting Spiritual Advisors for a Three-Day Weekend or Ultreyas, must be aware of the demands placed on the Spiritual Advisor and prayerfully fill openings with qualified people. This part of the workbook sets forth these tasks, roles, and demands.

There are a few musts when selecting a Spiritual Advisor. First, the person under consideration must be an Episcopal deacon, priest, bishop or a member of a religious order. Second, the person must have participated in an Episcopal or Roman Catholic Three-Day Weekend and be practicing the Cursillo Method. However, clergy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) who have participated in a similar Three Day Weekend under the auspices of their denomination and with permission of both bishops may be selected.

One of the functions a Spiritual Advisor should be prepared to provide is that of spiritual direction on Three-Day Weekends and at Ultreyas. To provide spiritual direction, a person must have self-knowledge and have wrestled with his or her own spiritual growth. Ideally, this person should be under spiritual direction. A Spiritual Advisor acting in this capacity needs to be able to stand by others; to lend support to others; to accept others unconditionally; and to help others maintain perspective by asking the hard questions like "Why?" "What are you doing in this situation?" and "Is this leading you to unity with Jesus Christ?"

Cursillo and the Diocese

The Cursillo Movement in a diocese must have approval of the Diocesan Bishop. The work of the Movement in a diocese is done through a pastoral plan drafted by the Secretariat and approved by the Bishop. According to page 33 of the Leaders' Manual

"As part of the pastoral plan, the secretariat studies the environments of the diocese and determines which ones are to be given priority. The work of the pre-Cursillo is then directed toward the environments which have been given a high priority. In the pre-Cursillo, the persons and groups who should make the three-day exercise are identified, and they are prepared for the Cursillo weekend, keeping in mind they are ultimately being prepared to carry out the work of evangelization in their key environments in the Post-Cursillo."

A Diocesan Spiritual Advisor may be asked by the Bishop to oversee various parts of the Movement.

1. Steering Committee This is a group of people whose purpose is to study the Movement and its possibilities in the diocese and to establish it in the diocese.
2. Servant Community This is a group continuing the work of the Steering Committee by studying the Movement, training leaders and encouraging the use of the Cursillo Method.
3. Secretariat This group is responsible for all aspects of the Movement's functioning. Membership comes from the group of trained leaders. It oversees the work of the Servant Community and delegates work to them.

Choosing participants

The goal in selecting participants for a Three-Day Weekend is to identify those who are able to live the Cursillo method and who are likely to reach out to others with the Good News of Jesus Christ. The minimum expectations for a participant are being a baptized member of a Christian Church and an active participant in an Episcopal parish or mission (or a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [ELCA] with the permission of both bishops).

Spiritual Advisors and parish clergy should be aware that there are some things Cursillo is not. Persons should be discouraged from attending a Weekend when their reasons are not in accord with the Cursillo Movement. Cursillo is neither a problem-solving weekend for persons in serious personal or moral crisis nor an evangelistic weekend to convert non-Christians nor a weekend for those “seeking the truth.”

Team Selection

Each diocesan movement has a team selection process; however, there are minimum expectations of all team members. Each member must:

1. Be a member in good standing of the Episcopal Church (or a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [ELCA] with the permission of both bishops); and be active in a parish or mission;
2. Be actively committed to building up Christian community;
3. Have completed an authentic Three-Day Weekend;
4. Understand and be committed to living the Cursillo Method and be involved in Group Reunion;
5. Not currently be or recently been in a personal crisis;
6. Be committed to be present at all team meetings and to serve throughout the Three-Day Weekend.

Questions or problems concerning the selection of team members should be referred to the Diocesan Secretariat, who in turn may wish to consult with the Bishop.

Team Formation

Team building takes time and patience, and is the responsibility of the Spiritual Advisors and team leaders working together, centered in prayer. Team formation can begin with preparation sessions, with support from the Servant Community, but must be accomplished by the time team meetings have concluded. Team preparation includes community building. Team members need to get to know one another, accept, respect and trust one another, and love each other in Christ, who is the builder of community. During team formation, Spiritual Advisors are primarily responsible for critiquing all talks to ensure they are consistent with Episcopal theology and the Cursillo Method. (See NEC Library booklet, *“Apostolic Action and Team Formation”*) Every member of the team is vital to its success, and each person’s responsibilities are essential.

Liturgy

The Spiritual Advisor for the Weekend has overall responsibility for the liturgies of the Weekend. The Spiritual Advisor should work together with the Weekend music leaders to plan the themes and music well in advance of the Weekend. The Spiritual Advisor and assistants should plan in advance who will preside at each Eucharist.

The Spiritual Advisor should select and invite lay persons to act as lectors, leaders of the prayers of the people, and oblationers. Clergy, who are candidates, may be invited to read the Gospel and administer the Sacrament.

Blessing and Distribution of Crosses

Note: *There is a wide diversity of practices with regard to the material in this section. Please read it with this in mind.*

The tradition of distributing a cross to each participant during the weekend has in some dioceses been given the title *apostolic hour*. The name conveys the nature of the

recommitment when the Spiritual Advisor or other team members presents the cross and says, "Christ is counting on you!" The candidate replies "And I on Him!" This ceremony takes a variety of forms from community to community. Some have incorporated it in the Sunday Eucharist, others have included it in a Fourth Day Eucharist, and some as part of the Clausura.

Whatever form this takes, it is the responsibility of the Spiritual Advisor to bless the crosses. When the ceremony is separate from the Eucharist or Clausura, it is appropriate for a Spiritual Advisor to explain the apostolic hour. It is appropriate to read Scripture and give a brief homily on the reading. This is done before the distribution of the crosses. Close with prayer or other devotions.

Checklist of Responsibilities

Each Spiritual Advisor on the Weekend has specific responsibilities:

1. Be available for spiritual counsel as needed by the Rector and team before and during the Weekend.
2. Give theological presentations in accordance with this Clergy Talk Workbook.
3. Share in liturgy, liturgical planning, and preaching.
4. Provide spiritual counsel and opportunities for confession for the candidates during the Weekend.
5. Encourage participants to maintain contacts and continue friendships following the Weekend through Group Reunions, Ultreyas, Clausuras, and Palanca.
6. If the Spiritual Advisor learns that any participant in the Weekend should leave, temporarily or for the remainder of the Weekend, the Spiritual Advisor should give the Rector all relevant information.

The Spiritual Advisor for the Weekend has these additional responsibilities:

1. Discuss with the Rector plans for team formation and meetings; in particular, decide who will give the Flow of the Weekend presentation; make arrangements for Eucharists, and help the Rector with any special problems.
2. Assign the clergy talks and meditations, Eucharistic responsibilities, and help the Rector with any special problems.
3. Confirm that the chapel will be set up for the Weekend.
4. Listen to all talks to ensure that all essential points are covered and connections between talks are made.
5. Be the Rector's spiritual chaplain.

After the Weekend

The Spiritual Advisor should be prepared to provide an evaluation or report to the Secretariat or the Bishop even if not requested.

It is advisable that Spiritual Advisors avail themselves to participate in the Fourth Day activities of the movement, that is, maintaining relationships with the participants of the Weekend, attending Ultreyas, and providing continual spiritual advice. For more details see "Guidelines for Ultreya Speakers" in Appendix 5.

Part 2: The Meditations

The meditations are an integral part of the message of the Weekend and serve two purposes. First, the meditations are intended to aid the participant in self reflection and to heighten their awareness of their relationship with God. Second, the meditations provide a model for deepening each participant's relationship with God beyond the Weekend.

Meditations are not primarily content-oriented in the way the talks are structured. They are intended to raise questions and to begin moving participants to consider their relationship with God. The meditations are based on Biblical texts; however, the texts should not be proof texts. They are neither Bible studies nor lectures. The manner in which they are delivered is at least as important as the content. Meditations should be delivered in an unhurried, intimate fashion. They should give evidence of the Spiritual Advisors own prayerful reflection. The meditations are designed to open the Scripture to the participants so that the Word may shed light on their present lives and the potential for living the life of grace.

In many ways, the meditations set the tone for the Weekend by providing a time for quiet and prayerful reflection. Each meditation is essential. They set the tone and theme for each day; therefore, ample time should be allowed for reflection following each presentation.

In summary, meditations are:

1. Based on Scripture
2. Searching yet simple
3. Initiators of personal reflection
4. Guides for further growth

Meditation: Know Yourself

(about 10 minutes)

PURPOSE:

- To recognize the anxiety of the participants in a new setting and their concerns about what is going to happen.
- To assist the participants to accept in a positive way, the silence and self reflection of their first night.

CORE IDEAS:

- We need peace and quiet.
- We need clear sight.
- We need to see who we are, where we are going, and God's purpose for our lives.

INTRODUCTION:

1. This meditation is based on the Gospel of Mark 8:22-26.
2. Are we blind to God's presence and blind to the joy of living?
3. Can we see our own blindness? Can we admit our blindness?
4. Let us be still and let God be God.

THE BLIND MAN WAS BROUGHT BY FRIENDS:

(See Mark 8:22)

1. Please trust your friends who have brought you here.
2. These friends care about you and they have experienced the restoration of clear sight on their Weekend.
3. We ask you to trust your friends and all of us on this Weekend.

JESUS TOOK THE BLIND MAN AND LED HIM ASIDE:

(See Mark 8:23)

1. The reason we have come here this Weekend is to be with Christ away from the busyness of our world.
2. Please trust the One concerned with the blind man. He is concerned with you also.
3. The Lord will meet us where we are.
4. He met the blind man and did not pressure him. Neither will you be pressured.

THE MAN REGAINED HIS SIGHT GRADUALLY:

(See Mark 8:24)

1. This Weekend is a process that unfolds step by step. Please reserve your judgment until the end.
2. No specific response is required of you. The blind man could only see gradually at first.
3. The blind man's experience was his own and your experience will be yours alone.
4. We encourage you to share yourself, your gifts, and your insights.
5. Share your judgment at the end.

THE SECOND TOUCH:

(See Mark 8:25-26)

1. Jesus stayed with the blind man until his sight was restored.
2. Do not look for a single touch this Weekend.
3. The healing was not one-sided. Just as it involved the presence of Jesus and the faith of the blind man, so it can be for you.
4. Jesus touched the man a second time, and you too may want to take a fresh look at yourself.

CONCLUSION:

- This is your opportunity to look at the priorities in your life, what you are living for, and be present with the Lord who is present and accepts you.

Meditation: The Prodigal Son or the Loving Father

(about 10 minutes)

PURPOSE:

- To present the reality of the goodness and mercy of God in relation to human self-centeredness.
- To share the story so participants will see it as their story.
- To see the best way to live is to return to the Father.

CORE IDEAS:

- The human condition is self-centeredness.
- God allows us to make our own choices.
- God is willing to welcome us home even after making bad choices.

INTRODUCTION:

1. We know about God but do we know God?
2. What does God think of us?
3. What is God's reaction to our self-centeredness?
4. Luke 15:11-32 is everyone's story.

THE HUMAN CONDITION IS SELF-CENTEREDNESS

1. In our own lives we have behaved like the son.
2. Our self-centeredness cuts us off from being the person God created us to be.
3. We are cut off from relationships, including a relationship with God.

CONVERSION:

1. God allows us to fail.
2. God allows us to learn from our mistakes.
3. The first step for the son was to acknowledge his failure.
4. The son failed to realize the scope of his father's mercy.
5. The moment we decide to return to the Father, he receives us back.

GOD'S MERCY:

1. God awaits our return.
2. God's forgiveness is complete, and we are restored to His family as the son was restored to his father.
3. God rejoices in our return as did the father on the son's return.

HUMAN REACTION:

1. The older son represents the way "good" human beings tend to react. He refuses to forgive.
2. The older son is self-centered and motivated by his own self-interest.
3. God's ways are not based on our distorted concepts of right and wrong.
4. God's ways are determined by His own love and mercy.
5. The prodigal son rejoiced at his father's love.

CONCLUSION:

1. God is waiting for us to return and be full members of His family.
2. He meets us where we are and relieves us of our sins.
3. He wants to celebrate our return.
4. We must be willing to return.

Meditation: The Three Glances of Christ (about 10 minutes)

PURPOSE:

- To awaken the participants to their personal responsibility to open themselves to Christ.
- To acquaint the participants with Jesus' attitude towards them.
- To help participants understand the attitudes they present to Him.

CORE IDEAS:

- To help participants find themselves through three different persons Jesus encountered.
- To answer the question "What does Jesus see in me?"
- What is my response to Jesus?

INTRODUCTION:

1. The parable of the Prodigal Son or the Loving Father illustrates who God is and how He regards us.
2. We will look at three instances in which Jesus met others and how he responded to them.
3. We notice how they reacted to Him.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN: Mark 10:17-22

1. The man is living the “good life” and searching to do God’s will.
2. Jesus invited him to remove the one obstacle that prevented growth in his personal relationship with God.
3. The rich young man failed because he put his trust in something other than Jesus.
4. Out of his love for the young man Jesus let him go on his way.
5. Jesus gives us the strength to meet the challenges.
6. Is this your story? Do you feel trapped between your desire to live for the Lord and your attachment to material things?

JUDAS: John 12:4-6

1. We may fool others into believing we are devoted followers, but we cannot fool Jesus.
2. Jesus leaves the door open for us to return just as he did for Judas(see John 13:30)
3. In the beginning, Judas was enthusiastic to share Jesus ministry.
4. Although Judas abandoned Jesus, Jesus never abandoned Judas.
5. Has this been your story? Have you grown deaf to His call? Are you afraid to ask forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation?

PETER: Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:54-62; John 21:15-17

1. Peter, a typical human being, was devoted to Jesus.
2. The problem for Peter was trusting too much in his own efforts to live the Christ-like life.
3. By Peter trusting in his own efforts, he experienced failure when he encountered a major challenge.
4. Peter did learn how to repent. He learned that Jesus understands our human failings and forgives us.
5. Peter learned through Jesus he could have the strength to overcome obstacles.
6. Peter discerned that he needed to love Jesus in order to serve Him.

CONCLUSION:

1. Is Jesus reaching out to you this Weekend?
2. What is your response as He speaks to your heart and you see His glance?
3. Are you afraid to encounter Him? Even though you are imperfect, are you willing to love Him and trust him?

Meditation: The Person of Christ

(preferably 10 minutes)

PURPOSE:

- To help the participants relate to Jesus and deepen their relationship with Him as a person.
- To help the participants realize the benefits of a life of grace through God.

CORE IDEAS:

- Jesus is in the fullest sense human; therefore, the way is open for us to relate to Him. He shares our struggles and understands our condition.
- Jesus is also divine and God’s unique presence among us; therefore, he saves us and He is the solution to our problems.

INTRODUCTION:

1. How does an individual become a “real” person for us?
2. For many Jesus is a distant figure with whom we cannot have a personal relationship.
3. This meditation will look at how the crucified Jesus became a person in the lives of his disciples following the Resurrection. Jesus, once dead, but now alive, can be a personality, one with whom we can have more than a mere revered relationship.

THE DISCIPLES DID NOT RECOGNIZE JESUS: Luke 24:13-17

1. For most of Jesus earthly ministry, he was not recognized as the person he truly was.
2. Those closest to Jesus failed to recognize Him as a person. Following his death and resurrection, the disciples failed to recognize Him.
3. On the road to Emmaus, His followers failed to recognize Him. They were absorbed in their own world and preoccupied with their own problems. They failed to notice His presence among them.
4. Do we in our churches fail to recognize Jesus as a person? How well do we know Him? Are we ready to know Him at a deeper level?

JESUS LISTENED: Luke 24:18-24

1. One sign of a “real” person is someone who is willing to listen. Listening demonstrates a willingness to enter someone’s life and share feelings on our terms.
2. Jesus listened intently and patiently to the frustrations, disappointments, hopes, and fears of the disciples on the road.
3. Jesus was the master listener.
4. Examples of Jesus as listener:
 - A. Zacchaeus: Luke 19:1-10
 - B. Mary and Martha: John 11:17-44
 - C. Children: Luke 18:11-17
5. We know that Jesus listened to his disciples. He is willing to listen to the fears and the frustrations we carry. (see Hebrews 2:18)

JESUS ALSO WAITED: Luke 24:28-29

1. Jesus did not announce who he was and the disciples did not recognize Him as long as they remained absorbed in themselves.
2. Jesus did not become a “real” person to the disciples until they poured out themselves and invited Him into their lives.
3. If Jesus is to become a “real” person to us, we must be willing to share our lives with Him. He waits for us.

JESUS BLESSED THE DISCIPLES: Luke 24:30-35

1. Jesus blessed the disciples by making sense of their encounter with the Risen Christ, and He showed himself in all His majesty and power in the breaking of the bread.
2. Jesus came as the Risen Christ with the power to transform the world and the life of each of the disciples.
3. Once the disciples poured out their hearts and had invited Him into their lives, He became not just a revered personality but their Savior as well.
4. When Jesus first appeared to them, the disciples could not recognize Him because they held Him at a distance in their hearts. Now they could see Him for whom He truly was, who would forever live in their hearts. The way to eternal friendship was opened.

CONCLUSION:

1. As Jesus becomes a “real” person for us, the barriers that separate us from God are torn down.
2. Jesus is alive and so we can approach Him with confidence and share our lives with Him.
3. Jesus waits for us to invite Him into our lives today and everyday.

Meditation: The Message of Christ to the Participant (about 10 minutes)

PURPOSE:

- To prepare participants for return into the world.
- To assist participants to discover their own Christian calling.
- To challenge the participants to do greater things with the assurance that through God all things are possible.

CORE IDEAS:

- This meditation calls us to reflect upon our encounter in and outside the Christian community.
- The meditation should be as personal as possible to the participants.

INTRODUCTION:

1. This Weekend is like the time Jesus spent teaching His Apostles to carry out His ministry. (John 14-17)
2. Jesus brought us to this Weekend to prepare us to do a better job of His work in the world. (See John 15:16)

THE MOUNTAIN TOP:

1. Like the Apostles, it is tempting to stay on the mountain top but this mountain top vision is given to prepare us for life in the valley below.
2. Jesus brought us to this Weekend to send us out to do His work in the world. We are to live out His calling in our environments. This is the apostolic action that will bear fruit.

JESUS' STRATEGY:

1. After three years of ministry, Jesus had only a small band of followers. In the eyes of the world this was not a successful ministry.
2. Jesus' strategy was that of building community. His time was spent building an intimate community, knowing His work would endure as long as they remained together.

BUILDING COMMUNITY:

1. Jesus' prayer was that his disciples would remain committed to His strategy of building community. (John 17:21)
2. As a Christian community, we are a sign of His presence in the world.
3. Our effectiveness will be in proportion to our living in union with Him and each other. (John 15:5)

OUR CONVERSION:

1. Our progressive conversion must continue long after this Weekend.
2. With His help we can be Apostles for Him. (John 14:12)
3. Jesus is the transforming power. (Eph. 1:10; John 15:8)

CONCLUSION:

1. The challenge of returning to our world should not frighten us.
2. The victory has already been won for us. We need to proclaim it. (John 16:33)

Part 3: The Talk Outlines and Their Use

The talk outlines are provided in a format to be of maximum use to the Spiritual Advisor in preparing the talk.

The first section is "Purpose". It is designed as an overview and objective of the talk. The second section is "Core Ideas". This section contains the key points that need to be communicated to the participants. The core ideas should be referred to frequently enough to assure all of them appear in the talk. The third section is the talk outline. Here the key ideas that need to be included are set forth in an order which builds to a logical conclusion. This is a skeleton outline and you need to bring your own experience and witness to the talk. The fourth section is "Commentary on the Outline". The Spiritual Advisor may use materials other than those suggested but should always be certain they are within the theme, purpose, and scope of the talk.

The Weekend is a short course in Christianity and cannot be expected to touch on every aspect of the Christian life. This is not a Confirmation class. Many participants will already have a deep spiritual life while others may be just embarking on one. Departing from the outlines takes the risk that essential points will not be covered. Future speakers will be building on the content of the previous talks; therefore, care must be exercised in preparation. The outlines include all essential points.

GRACE

(preferably 15 to 20 minutes)

PURPOSE:

- The ideal talk calls us to live our lives with an ideal. The Grace talk calls us to live out the Christian ideal.
- This talk is intended to inform the participants that God calls us to share a new life in Christ, a life rooted in and empowered by grace. Grace opens us up to an encounter with God where we can become converted to new life.
- This new life of grace transforms us. We become a child of God, a brother or sister of Christ, and a temple of the Holy Spirit.

CORE IDEAS:

- God is inviting us into a new, living relationship.
- We are free to accept or reject this invitation.
- When we accept it, God begins a progressive transformation of our lives – conversion.
- Conversion involves our whole self and our relationships.
- By God's grace we are able to live an "abundant life."

INTRODUCTION:

1. Everyone has an ideal. What is the Christian ideal?
2. The Christian ideal is a life rooted in God and empowered by grace.
3. To live this new life of grace, we only need to say “yes” to God’s invitation.

GOD IS INVITING US INTO RELATIONSHIP:

1. God is not remote, difficult to approach or waiting for us to get it “right”.
2. God is present among us, reaching out to us to offer the Divine Presence. This was most clearly demonstrated in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. (We recall God’s love for us in Eucharistic Prayer B, “the goodness and love which you have made known to us in your creation; in calling Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus your Son” (BCP, p. 368) Jesus is Emmanuel – God with us (Matt: 1:23). (See also Luke 1:8-9; John 4:9-19)
3. God reaches out to us as pure gift – we cannot and do not earn it. (See Eph.1:47; Luke 12:32)
4. This is the first meaning of grace – “God’s favor towards us, unearned and undeserved”. (BCP p. 858)

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS A LIVING RELATIONSHIP:

1. Accepting God’s offer of relationship begins a living encounter with God. We become members of the family of God. (See John 3:1-2; Rom. 8:1-17a)
2. This living encounter is life-giving and soul-filling. God alone is able to fill our empty souls.
3. We receive life – “abundant life” – with the potential of its deepest, most complete fulfillment. (See 1 John 3:1-2; Rom. 8:14-17a)
4. We become “a new creation”, a human being, able to live as the image of God we were intended to be at birth. (See 2 Cor. 5:17ff)
5. This is the second meaning of grace – the gift of God, restoring us to God’s image and likeness. (See 2 Cor. 3:18)

WE ARE FREE TO ACCEPT, REJECT, OR IGNORE THIS INVITATION:

1. Some do not respond because they are too busy with their own agenda. (See Luke 18:18-30: The rich young man)
2. God respects our freedom of choice, but continually offers new life in Christ. We must choose Christ if we are to begin a new life. (One saying in the 12 step community is “Without God, I can’t. Without me, God won’t.”)
3. The good news is – we CAN choose Christ. It is within our power to say “yes” to God’s freely offered invitation to a new life. (See Rom. 10:6-9)

IF AND WHEN WE ACCEPT GOD’S INVITATION, GOD BEGINS A PROGRESSIVE TRANSFORMATION OF OUR WHOLE LIVES – CONVERSION:

1. The moment we say “yes” to God we begin to be transformed in every way, that we may fully enjoy our lives in Christ.
 - A. For some, this is an instantaneous, dramatic effect.
 - B. For many others it is a less dramatic, slow unfolding of a new awareness of God.
 - C. For all, it is only the beginning of a lifelong walk with God.
2. Conversion is a lifelong process of turning to God, coming to rely on God more and more in all circumstances of life. (See John 3:1-10: The story of Nicodemus)
 - A. It does not happen all at once; it occurs over time.
 - B. It is progressive. As we turn to God, we find God ready to deepen our conversion as we grow ready to allow God more and more control in our lives.

- C. By relying on God, we find ourselves growing stronger in peace of mind and the power of love.
- 3. Conversion means living a life of grace – a life that God’s grace makes possible. (See Gal. 2:20)
- 4. This is the third meaning of grace; the power God gives us through grace to live more and more from God’s resources and less from those resources which we imagine to be our own.
- 5. This is the Christian ideal.

CONVERSION INVOLVES THE WHOLE PERSON:

- 1. The life of grace is often referred to as “salvation” which also means “to be healed” or to be made whole.
- 2. Our whole conversion includes:
 - A. Our intellect – Faith is reasonable and gives new insight to our intellect;
 - B. Our emotions - Faith involves, but does not depend upon our feelings;
 - C. Our wills – The decision to turn to God is our decision, our choice.
- 3. Conversion is “metanoia”: a fundamental reorientation of life to God in heart, mind, soul, and strength. (See Acts 2:37-39, translated “repent”, metanoia is to changes one’s way of knowing)

CONVERSION INVOLVES OUR RELATIONSHIPS:

- 1. We are not saved – made whole – in a “vacuum”. (See the BCP p. 303, “Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?”)
- 2. We are saved – made whole – in our relationships. (See Col. 3:12-17)
 - A. Family;
 - B. Friends;
 - C. Work relationships;
 - D. The created world (nature) as well as the world of our social interactions.
- 3. God’s grace begins the progressive transformation of all these relationships. It begins when we say “yes” to God’s love for all that has been made.

GOD’S GRACE BRINGS US ABUNDANT LIFE:

- 1. A life of grace is a rich life filled with God’s love.
- 2. See John 10:10b

COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE:

The clergy person giving this talk may want to include some personal testimony. Personal examples of a changed relationship with God and others can be excellent illustrations of the salient points. It is wise to remember that the candidates are likely to be hesitant at this point. The talk is best if it is reassuring, convincing and yet not overly evangelical. The proclamation in this talk is gentle and reassuring: “Here’s a little of my journey of grace.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Life of the Beloved by Henri Nouwen

Amazing Grace by Kathleen Norris

Reaching for the Invisible God by Philip Yancey

FAITH

(preferably 15 to 20 minutes)

PURPOSE:

- Thus far in the Weekend, the participants have received three proclamations: Live life with an ideal; the Christian ideal; Christian ideal is lived out within a community (Laity). This talk is intended to offer an answer to the question: "How do I respond to these proclamations?" The response is faith.
- This talk is also intended: to help alleviate fears about not being able to live out the Christian ideal; to clarify the role of faith in living this ideal; and to show that the Holy Spirit is God's gift enabling us to live the ideal of grace.

CORE IDEAS:

- God's call to us is all encompassing.
- If we are to proceed under our own efforts, we will likely fail.
- There is a transforming power available to all Christians.
- Faith is the key to unlocking this transforming power.
- To receive this transforming power, we must open ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit works through faith.
- Palanca are signs of the faith of others.

INTRODUCTION:

1. God's call to us is all-encompassing. As we have heard in the last three talks, we have three primary calls from God.
 - A. We are called to be fully human – with an ideal which motivates us and all our life.
 - B. We are called to be fully Christian – to live the Christian ideal – a life of grace in close relationship with God in Christ.
 - C. We are called to be active apostles – our life in grace is lived out in community. We bring Christ to the world and bring the world to Christ.
2. On our own, we are not likely to succeed in our call – for two reasons:
 - A. We would not know what to do or how to do it.
 - 1) Left to ourselves, we usually tend to serve our own interests.
 - 2) Our nature is tainted by sin. We are likely to misuse our freedom. (See BCP p. 848ff. "Sin and Redemption")
 - B. We become easily frustrated and discouraged.
 - 1) The good we want to do eludes us, sometimes becoming the very opposite of what we intend. (Rom. 7:18-20)
 - 2) In the face of obstacles we tend to give up or in, falling back into our old, unproductive patterns. (Rom. 7:21-23)

THERE IS A TRANSFORMING POWER AVAILABLE TO EVERY CHRISTIAN:

(Recall the Grace talk and the emphasis on God's willingness to give us all the grace we desire if we will only say "yes" to God's invitation. Faith is that "yes" to God's call)

1. Faith is the key to a life of grace. (Recall the Greek word for faith, "*pistis*", is a verb – faith is an action word in the Greek language as well as a noun.)
 - A. Faith is freely and wholeheartedly saying "yes" to God's invitation.

- B. Faith is trusting God with the whole self. (Heb. 11:1ff)
 - C. Faith does not require sophisticated beliefs, strong convictions, or moral perfection.
 - D. Faith is ACTIVE - it is making an investment of all you are and all you shall be in what God has promised.
 - E. Faith is less something we *have* and more something we *do*. People came to Jesus for healing. Their coming and asking demonstrated their faith.
2. Faith is essential to the life of grace.
 - A. Faith is turning to God as we are.
 - B. Grace tells us that God will accept us as we are even with our doubts, fears, and guilt.
 - C. Faith confesses, "I am a fallen soul." God's grace says, "You are my beloved child."
 - D. Faith is a surrender of control to God. "Without God, I can't. Without me, God won't." (12 Step saying)
 - E. Faith answers the call to be human (Ideal), to be a Christian human (Grace), and to be a Christian in community (Laity) with the words, "I will with God's help." (BCP p. 304ff.)
 - F. Faith is not a product of intellect. We can find it in the profoundly disabled. (See "Adam" by Henri Nouwen)

THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH OUR FAITH:

1. Grace and faith are closely related. (Eph. 2:8-9)
 - A. Grace is the power of God present to us at all times. (God's favor towards us, unearned and undeserved;" BCP p. 858) (There was a time in the church when this was referred to as "habitual grace".)
 - B. Faith is the way of responding to this power of God. As we open ourselves to this power, it becomes effective in us.
 - C. When we exercise our faith, this general presence of God becomes present in a unique, individual way. (This was at one time referred to as "actualized grace".)
2. When we exercise our faith (when we say "yes" to God's call), God the Holy Spirit becomes specifically present to us. (John 14:15-17)
3. Through faith and the presence of the Spirit, we are sent out in Christ's name. (John 20:21-23)
4. The Holy Spirit has a specific nature and work.
 - A. The Holy Spirit is God- the fullness of God available to us and for us. (John 3:1-8)
 - B. The Holy Spirit is the presence of the Risen Christ in our midst. (1 Cor. 12:11-13; Rom. 8:9; John 14:22-23)
 - C. The Holy Spirit leads us into a greater love for God. (John 14:15-17)
 - 1) This love opens our eyes to what is real, true. (1 Cor. 2: 9-13)
 - 2) This love prompts us to offer ourselves more freely to God. (Rom. 12:1)
 - 3) This love animates our worship and praise.
 - D. The Holy Spirit sustains us in the conflicts of life.
 - 1) Interceding for us, assisting us in prayer even in weakness. (Rom. 8:26-27)
 - 2) Giving us a vision of God at work in our lives. (2 Cor. 4:13-18)
 - 3) Granting us a share in the victory of Christ over sin and death, increasing our strength to deal with everyday living. (Eph. 3:14-19)
 - E. The Holy Spirit enables us to be the Church – more than an institution or organization – a living center, a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 3:16-17) – a royal priesthood to carry on God's work of healing and redemption in the world.

5. We will be filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - A. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism. (Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; BCP p. 308)
 - B. We are further filled with the Holy Spirit:
 - 1) if we desiring to be filled;
 - 2) if we willing to be led;
 - 3) if we repent of sin; and
 - 4) if we entrust ourselves into God's care.
 - C. The choice is ours; the Holy Spirit will not overpower us. In saying "yes" to God's invitation in faith, we become freer, more fully human, as we are filled with the Holy Spirit. God does not do away with our essential selves, but enhances that which we are.
6. As the Holy Spirit is available to us, so we are called to be available to the Spirit:
 - A. Through prayer (daily fellowship/Eucharist);
 - B. Through faith (trusting God for the impossible);
 - C. Through action (translating faith into deeds);
 - D. Through confidence (leaving the outcome to God).
7. Palanca are special signs of faith. (See Appendix 2. Definitions)

COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE:

At this point in the Weekend, the participants are settling in a little. The heart of this talk is the "transforming power" section where they are encouraged to trust God for the power to carry out the ministry to which they are called. This talk concludes the proclamations of the call to be human, the call to be a Christian human, and the call to be a Christian in community by inviting them to believe that they can respond to that call "with God's help." The objective is to offer a joyful conviction that we can live a life of grace, and it will permeate our lives. "Whatever you eat or drink, and whatever else you do, do it all for the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10:31)

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Adam by Henri Nouwen

Reaching to the Invisible God by Philip Yancey

SACRAMENTS

(30-45 minutes)

PURPOSE:

- To show how God works through our material world to make His presence known to us.
- To present the sacraments as signs (actions) of Christ's presence here and now.
- To examine each of the sacraments in light of our being called to share in Christ's ministry to the world.
- To identify ourselves as sacraments of Christ and His Church in the world.

CORE IDEAS:

- God works through the sacraments for our sake.
- The sacraments are special encounters with the Risen Christ.
- A personal relationship with Christ is possible.
- The sacraments are the ways in which God continues to reach out to us to strengthen us for life in Him.

INTRODUCTION:

1. The “bookends” of this talk are Baptism and the Eucharist.
 - A. In baptism we are made members of the body of Christ and to share in His ministry.
 - B. The Eucharist signifies our unity with God, one another, and with self; it is a personal encounter with the Risen Christ that empowers our ministry day by day.
 - C. These are the two sacraments of the Gospel. (see BCP p. 858)
 - D. The other sacraments of the Church are means by which God supports our ministry with and in Jesus Christ.
2. We have been considering the ways in which God enables us to live continually in His grace.
 - A. Piety and study are two ways which enable us to live a life of grace.
 - B. Another way which we can live a life of grace is through the sacraments.
3. The sacraments are not magical actions to influence God and the course of human events.
4. Sacraments affect us personally.
5. Sacraments also have apostolic effects, that is, they empower us to carry out our ministry in union with Christ.

GOD WORKS THROUGH THE SACRAMENTS FOR OUR SAKE:

1. We are made of matter and spirit. (see Gen. 2:7)
2. When God meets us it is through the material as well as the spiritual.
 - A. God reaches us through all creation. (see Psalm 19:1-4; Rom. 1:19-20; Eucharistic Prayer B, BCP p. 368)
 - B. God reaches out to us through people, family, friends, prophets, and pastors.
 - C. God has reached out to us in the Word made flesh, Jesus of Nazareth.
3. What is a sacrament?
 - A. The formal definition is “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace” (BCP p. 857)
 - B. Outward and visible signs are those events where spiritual realities shine in through the material, which is where God is known.
 - C. Signs of inward and spiritual grace are those events where God’s grace, His power to transform, are given in a particular way.

THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH ARE SPECIAL ENCOUNTERS WITH THE RISEN CHRIST:

1. The sacraments are given by Christ. This does not mean that Christ gave instructions to his disciples on the number and nature of the sacraments.
 - A. It means that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, has led His people to discover that God acts in special ways to nurture them.
 - B. These are not the only ways in which God can act but we may be sure that in these ways God does nurture us. (see BCP p. 861)
2. The sacraments of the Church are means by which Christ is here and now, communicates His saving presence to us, and strengthens our communion with God.
3. What is required of us for the sacraments to be effective is a faithful response, trust in the presence of Christ, offering ourselves to Him, and receiving the grace intended in each sacrament.

BAPTISM:

1. Baptism is the sacrament of new life. It tells us who we are and whose we are. (see BCP p. 306)
2. The outward sign of baptism is water.

- A. Water symbolizes the washing away of sin.(see Acts 22:16; 1 Cor 6:11; Titus 3:5; Heb.10:22)
 - B. Water symbolizes the passage from sin and death to the life of grace. (see 1 Cor.10:1-2)
 - C. Water is also connected with burial and resurrection in its identity with Christ. (see Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12)
 - D. Water is about growth and life – watering plants and quenching our thirst.
3. The inward grace is assurance of sins forgiven, the assurance of new life through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the assurance of life eternal.
 4. The personal effects of baptism are:
 - A. Adoption as God’s children;
 - B. Members of the Body of Christ;
 - C. Inheritors of the Kingdom of God and joint heirs with Christ.
 5. The apostolic effects of this sacrament are:
 - A. A new life and power through the Holy Spirit to gain victory over sin and death. (see Acts 1:4-5; Gal. 3:27)
 - B. A ministry to bear the Good News of life in Christ as we live the life of grace in the world. (see Rom. 12:5-8; 2 Cor. 5:18-19; Col. 3:23-24)
 - C. Growth into the likeness of Christ.

CONFIRMATION:

1. Many people are baptized in infancy and this does not take away from the reality and effects of the sacrament; however, it is necessary to make a mature public commitment to Christ.
2. The sacrament of confirmation is making a mature commitment to Christ. (see BCP p. 860)
3. The outward sign of confirmation is the laying on of hands by a bishop.
 - A. This is a sign of blessing. The blessing we seek is the power of the Holy Spirit to live in grace.
 - B. In this sacrament we are strengthened for our own ministry to represent Christ and His Church, bearing witness in the various environments of the world according to the gifts given them.
4. The inward grace is the strength to carry out our service to Christ and the strength to remain faithful to Christ.
5. The personal effects of the sacrament are the confident affirmation of our faith, the assurance that the grace given at baptism continues and a new awareness of our place in the ministry of Christ’s Church. (see BCP p. 418)
6. The apostolic effect of this sacrament is our commissioning to serve others, and our empowerment to witness and minister in Christ’s name. Our commissioning is recognized in a public setting. (see BCP p. 418)

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION:

1. Baptism and Confirmation equip us for the ongoing ministry of the Risen Christ. .
2. Baptism and Confirmation help us discover our vocation as God’s servants to others. This is also a guiding principle of the Weekend.
3. The other sacraments of the Church are means by which God under girds and supports our ministry with and in Jesus Christ.

HOLY ORDERS:

1. This is the sacrament of spiritual leadership.

- A. The Church exists for ministry. To carry out effective ministry, we need those who will guide, coordinate, and support us. (see BCP pp. 854-855)
- B. This sacrament signifies a ministry of service to the ministers of the church.
- 2. The Bishop has a specific ministry of guarding the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church. (see BCP p. 855)
 - A. The Bishop is an apostle, chief priest, and pastor of the Church in a diocese.
 - B. The Bishop has responsibility for the continuing ministry through the power to ordain and confirm.
- 3. A priest or presbyter has the specific ministry of pastoral care. (see BCP p. 856)
 - A. This ministry includes teaching, preaching, administering the Word of God with the bishop, administering the sacraments of the new covenant, blessing, and declaring pardon in God's name.
 - B. Priests share with bishops and fellow presbyters in overseeing the work of the Church.
- 4. The deacon has a specific ministry of service. (see BCP p. 856)
 - A. This ministry represents Christ and his Church to those in need and interprets those needs to the Church.
 - B. The deacon assists the bishop and presbyters in proclaiming the Word of God and administering the sacraments.
- 5. The outward and visible sign of Holy Orders is the laying on of hands by a bishop.
 - A. The sign is a blessing. The bishop signifies the acceptance of the one ordained into a common ministry. The sign confers authority.
 - B. Ordination is not a reward for good service but marks the beginning of a specialized ministry.
- 6. The inward grace of ordination is the abiding power of the Holy Spirit to do the work of the particular order. Ordination does not create competent professionals.
- 7. The end is neither clericalism, i.e. domination of the Church by clergy, or laicism, i.e. domination of the Church by the laity. Wholeness is each order serving others for the building up of the Body.

RECONCILIATION:

- 1. This is the sacrament of renewal. (see BCP p. 861)
- 2. The outward sign is an examination of conscience, confession of sin, and absolution in the name of Christ. The priest may also offer counsel, direction, and comfort.
- 3. The inward grace is the forgiveness of sin, peace and unity with God and His Church, and the power of the Holy Spirit to amend life.
- 4. The personal effect of the sacrament is to set us on firm ground for spiritual growth.
- 5. The apostolic effect is to enable us to take our productive place in the ministry of the Church.

MINISTRY TO THE SICK (UNCTION):

- 1. This is the sacrament of healing. (see BCP p. 861)
- 2. The outward sign is prayer appropriate to the needs of the individual. The Laying on of Hands and anointing with oil in the name of the Lord by a bishop or priest is also a sign.
- 3. The inward grace relieves anxieties restores spiritual strength, and in some cases restores physical health. Confession and absolution provide forgiveness of sin and assurance of God's mercy and may be a part of unction.
- 4. The personal effect of the sacrament is placing the whole person into the care of God and receiving comfort and the assurance of God's care.
- 5. The apostolic effect is the restoration of health (in varying degrees) in order for us to be effective witnesses to the power and love of God.

MARRIAGE:

1. This is the sacrament of the union between a man and a woman. (see Eph. 5: 31-32) Marriage symbolizes the relationship of Christ to His Church characterized by unity and sacrifice.
2. The outward sign is the mutual consent of the man and woman to live as husband and wife, vows of fidelity with the intention of a life-long union, and the blessing of God by a bishop or priest. (see BCP p. 861)
3. The inward grace is God's favor and blessing of the union and the wisdom and will to care for each other.
4. The effect is that marriage has a ministry. The more that is given from marriage to Christ's service, the more joy and meaning can be found in marriage.

NOTE: The Spiritual Advisor may be required to deal with the realities of separation and divorce. It may also be appropriate to speak to those who choose to remain single.

THE EUCHARIST:

1. This is the sacrament of unity: unity with Christ in His body and blood; unity with God through the self-offering of Christ; unity with Christ's body the Church; unity with ourselves growing into the life of grace.
2. The outward sign is the bread and wine given and received according to Christ's institution. The sacrament is received in harmony with others, with openness to the Word of God, with response to prayer and action, offering our souls and bodies to God.
3. The inward grace is the Body and Blood of Christ given to his people and received by faith.
4. The personal effect is living and giving thanks and praise to God for the wonder of His grace.
 - A. It is a joyous encounter with the Risen Lord on a continuing basis.
 - B. It is the opportunity to offer ourselves anew for the work of Christ.
 - C. The new covenant unlike the old covenant set in stone is set in love and mercy and inscribed on our hearts. (Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor 3:3)
 - D. The effect of the Eucharist is the forgiveness of sins, strengthening our union with Christ and one another.
 - E. This is a foretaste of the Kingdom.
5. The effect is the empowerment of the body of Christ in the world, and witnessing the Good News of God's love.

CONCLUSION:

1. Through the sacraments of Christ, we become living sacraments.
2. We are the living presence of Christ in and for the sake of the world He loves and seeks to redeem.

COMMENTARY:

1. In some communities a Eucharist will follow this talk. This may be an opportunity to say some additional words. This should not, however, be an instructed Eucharist.
2. The Spiritual Advisor needs to be aware that this is not a confirmation class. Many of the participants may already be aware of what is included in the talk and it will be a refresher.
3. The focus of the talk is to have participants come to an understanding what it means to be sacramental.

OBSTACLES TO A LIFE OF GRACE

(preferably 20 - 30 minutes)

PURPOSE:

- To be aware of the obstacles which prevent us from living a life of grace.
- To understand the nature and sources of these obstacles i.e. sin
- To present remedies to grapple with obstacles and more fully live a life of grace.

CORE IDEAS:

- We encounter obstacles as we try to live a life of grace.
- The sources of sin are spiritually unhealthy attractions of the world - our focus on self or selfishness and the devil.
- There are remedies to assist us in overcoming these obstacles.

INTRODUCTION:

1. It would be wonderful to live a life of grace without failing, but we encounter obstacles which can lead to sin.
2. We need to realize that other than Jesus no one has lived a life without sinning.
3. We tend to fall back into old patterns of thought, word, and deeds when faced with obstacles.
4. We need to admit our sins and seek remedies to live a life of grace.

WE NEED TO BE REALISTIC ABOUT THE OBSTACLES WE ENCOUNTER:

1. In the life of grace we encounter obstacles. (see 1 John 2:1)
 - A. These obstacles arise from our individual lives and the world around us. (see James 1:15)
 - B. These obstacles are not sent by God. (see James 1:13)
 - C. Obstacles can lead to sin when we give in to them. Sinning is missing the mark because we fall short of God's purpose.
2. Sin has very definite effects.
 - A. We are alienated and become strangers to God, ourselves, and one another. (see BCP p. 848; Eph. 2:12; Rom. 7:14-17)
 - B. The outcome of sin is spiritual death. (see James 1:15; Rom. 6:20-21; Rom. 1:28-32; Gal: 6:7-8)
3. Some people deny the reality of sin. (see 1 John 1 8,10)
 - A. Some equate sin to socially unacceptable behavior.
 - B. When we mask the nature of sin, we attempt to justify ourselves and refuse to trust God.
 - C. If we deny the reality of sin, we infer God does not care about how we live our lives.
4. God intends for us to be free, full of life, and joyful. To live into what God intends, we must be realistic about how we frustrate God's purpose for us.

SIN INVOLVES A CONSCIOUS WILFULLNESS:

1. Sin, which is missing the mark, means failing to love God, neighbor and ourselves.
 - A. We must be conscious of our rebellion against God. (see Rom. 5:13)
 - B. When we sin, we choose to go against God's will. (see James 4:17)
 - C. Feeling temptation is not sin but dwelling on, entertaining, or acting on temptation is sin.
 - D. We do not fall from God's grace by accident.
 - E. We can become oblivious to sin unless we realize the sources of sin.

THERE ARE MANY SOURCES OF SIN:

1. The unhealthy attractions of this world are the unjust and improper use of God's creation which lead to waste, hoarding, greed and lust for power that creates divisions among the people of the earth. (see Luke 12:12-21; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:1-4; James 5:1ff; Rev. 3:15-18)
2. The focus on (me first) self or our selfishness is the internal forces, appetites, and desires which arise from our being and lead us to misuse our lives and those of others. These are not just sinful acts but attitudes such as pride, envy, hatred, and lust. (see Rom. 6:12-13; 1 Cor. 3:3; Rom. 13:13-14)
3. The "devil" in biblical terms "Satan" means adversary i.e. one opposed to God's will. (see Eph. 6:12; 1Tim. 3:6; 1 John 3:8)
 - A. Satan is the personification of deep spiritual evil.
 - B. Satan has no power unless we cooperate with him and stand against God's purposes.

THERE ARE REMEDIES TO OVERCOME THE OBSTACLES TO GRACE:

1. We must repent, that is, turn again and again to God. (see 2 Cor.10:7a; Heb.12:18-24; Gal. 5:1; 2 Cor. 7:1)
 - A. We have the freedom to choose God's will or our own.
 - B. By turning to God, we can join in His creative work and give to others as he has given to us.
2. Confession is honestly confronting sin. (see 1 John 1:7,9; 1Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 4:14)
 - A. Confession is not wallowing in our past sins.
 - B. Confession is giving over our sins to God.
 - C. Confession is grasping the wonder of God's power to redeem us.
3. To resist sin we must train ourselves and training requires discipline.
 - A. We develop spiritual muscle through God's help in resisting sin.
 - B. Spiritual direction, counsel, and the sacraments help us develop spiritual muscle.
 - C. The Sacrament of Reconciliation restores us to God and opens new areas for growth.
 - D. A life centered in prayer nurtures our fellowship with God.
 - E. Sharing our struggles and joys with fellow Christians nurtures our life in grace. (Group Reunion and Ultreya)

REMEDIES ARE NOT AUTOMATIC:

1. We must have the will and discipline to use these remedies.
2. Sin cannot be dispensed once and for all. To dispense with sin once and for all is a gift of God which belongs to our final victory in Christ.
3. We can expect to grow in our mastery over sin by trusting in God's grace.
4. There are two biblical metaphors which apply.
 - A. From the athletic arena "training", "running the race" – training which results in spiritual strength. (see 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 1 Tim. 4:7-10; 2 Tim. 2:5; Phil. 3:14)
 - B. From the battlefield, the Greek strateia, "strategy" which means being forearmed so that we may gain victory over sin. (see 1 Peter 4:1-2; 2 Cor. 10:3-6; Eph. 6:13)

COMMENTARY:

1. The spirit of this talk is not pessimistic but one of hope.
2. An analysis of sin is useful but not the point of the talk.
3. The primary focus of the talk should be remedies.

FURTHER SUGGESTED READING: Speaking of Sin by Barbara Brown Taylor

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

(preferably 20 minutes)

PURPOSE:

- To present the service sheet or the Rule of Life sheet, which will help the participants structure their lives.
- To make a plan for growth in piety.
- To familiarize participants with the aids for growth in their life in grace.

CORE IDEAS:

- Jesus is the pattern for true Christian piety and our pattern for spiritual growth.
- The importance of a rule of life.
- Persuading participants to develop their own rule of life.
- Various aids are available to grow in a life of grace.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Retrace the steps the participants have been through during the Weekend.
2. Clarify any items not adequately covered in previous talks or which need clarification. Therefore, to some extent this talk is prepared as the Weekend progresses.
3. Repeat the themes of grace and faith, and our need for piety, study, and action to maintain our life in grace.
4. We rely upon the sacraments to seal our fellowship with God and to empower our mission into the world.
5. The obstacles to grace threaten our fellowship and mission.
6. To live the Christian life we need a plan, a rule of life.

JESUS IS OUR LIFE AND PATTERN FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

1. In Jesus, we find pardon, purpose, peace, and power. (see Rom. 5:8-11; Matt. 6:33; John 14:27; 1 Cor.10:13; 1 Cor. 1:18-25)
2. Jesus is a pattern for overcoming despair, sin, and death in our own lives. Jesus in John 14:6 said "I am the way the truth and the life." This can be related to piety, study and action, our three-legged stool.
3. We must seek to allow Jesus to enter our lives more fully and to reshape them. We cannot just admire Him from afar. (Heb.12:2-3)
4. The most prominent feature of Jesus' pattern of life was prayer and communion with God. (Luke 3:21; 6:12; 9:18; 22:41-46)

WE MUST MAKE A CONSCIOUS DECISION TO LET JESUS BECOME OUR WAY OF LIFE:

1. Distribute the Rule of Life sheets. Take time to examine the sheets. On this sheet we describe ourselves and our intentions.
2. No one is to feel coerced to make this commitment and before making any commitment participants should realize what it entails. Participants may want to complete the Rule of Life sheet after further prayer.
3. The Rule of Life sheet provides a method to let Jesus enter our lives more fully and to reshape them because of the commitment we make.
4. There are a variety of aids for developing piety in the life of grace.

CORPORATE WORSHIP:

1. Corporate worship in union with fellow Christians is part of our obligation. (BCP p. 855; Heb.10:24-25)
2. Worshipping together provides mutual support.
3. Our worship is essential to our witness and the truth of the Christian faith. (2 Pet.1:8-10; James 1:22)

COMMUNION:

1. We are created to be in communion with God.
2. We need frequent communion if we expect to enjoy eternal communion with Him.
3. The Eucharist is a model for other kinds of communion.
 - A. We are joined with Christ.
 - B. We express praise and thanks to God. (Col. 2:6-7; Phil. 4:6; Eph. 5:4)
 - C. We receive forgiveness and strength.

PERSONAL PRAYER:

1. Prayer is a prominent feature of our lives.
2. Prayer is communion with God.
3. There are different kinds of prayer:
 - A. A morning, noon, and evening offering.
 - B. Adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitence, intercession, oblation and petition. (BCP pp. 856-857)
 - C. All prayer involves openness to God, honesty with God, and waiting upon God.
4. We may not experience communion with God each time we pray but we grow spiritually as we continue to pray.
5. Have a plan for praying. The key elements are: a period of time; posture; place; a passage of scripture; practice the patience of God.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION:

1. We need friends in our spiritual life to develop our relationship with Jesus.
2. A friend to help us is a spiritual director.
3. A spiritual director is someone wise in spiritual matters, objective, and trustworthy. A spiritual director does not have to be a priest.
4. The purpose of spiritual direction is to examine our spiritual journey, set priorities, and find guides for growing our life in grace.

SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION:

1. Confession is being realistic about our failures so we may be forgiven.
2. An explanation of the confession process should be given.

MEDITATION:

1. Meditation is giving attention to God so we may become more Christ-like.
2. There are numerous methods of meditation. Some examples may be given.

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER:

1. The Prayer Book is a resource for spiritual growth.
2. The Prayer Book is a "pilgrim's guide" and intended for everyone from child to Bishop.
3. The Prayer Book is a resource for praying and teaching.

COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE:

1. Following the talk, time should be provided for thought and prayer before participants complete their sheets, however some participants may want more time to complete their Rule of Life sheet.
2. Participants should have time to consult with a Spiritual Advisor if desired.
3. The talk should be convincing, practical, and instructional.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING:

The Anglican Vision by James Griffiss
A Matter of Faith by Charles P. Price
Faith and Practice by Frank E. Wilson
What is Anglicanism by Urban T. Holmes III

Appendices

Definitions

APOSTOLIC ACTION: Action planned to bring someone closer to Christ that involves words as well as deeds and the witness of a Christian life.

CLAUSURA: A Closing Ceremony for the Weekend with members of the Fourth Day community.

CURSILLO DE CHRISTIANDAD: A short course in Christianity or little courses in living what is fundamental to being a Christian.

CURSILLO MOVEMENT: The Cursillo Movement is a movement of the Church that has as its purpose the Christianization of the world through the apostolic action of Christian leaders in all areas of human activity. The Movement's purpose is achieved by means of a certain strategy and method.

DE COLORES: The colors. A Spanish song used in Cursillo with many verses.

ENVIRONMENT: The sum of ideas and circumstances brought about by the people around us people and situations with which we are in contact. Refers to groups of people rather than a physical setting.

FOURTH DAY: The rest of your life.

GROUP REUNION: Group reunion is simply a meeting of a small group: to share last week's experience of piety, study and action, to pray together, and to be mutually accountable to one another for carrying out a plan "to make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ." The group follows the Cursillo Method. The following are types of group reunions:

1. **ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP REUNION:** consists of friends who share an environment: a business, a parish, a neighborhood, etc. , which is their common field of apostolic action.
2. **FLOATING GROUP REUNION:** the groups which meet during ultreya, usually made up of different people each time.

3. PERMANENT OR FRIENDSHIP GROUP REUNION: consists of friends regardless of whether they share environments.

METHOD: The Method of Cursillo is basically one of perseverance. The Method is used in the Fourth Day and is a means for lay apostles to meet, share, and plan their apostolic work together in small groups (group reunion) and larger groups (ultreyas) where Cursillistas meet to give life and impetus to a community endeavor.

PALANCA: Literally means “a lever.” It is used in Cursillo to mean an outward expression, through prayer or sacrifice, of our Christian love.

ROLLO: A Spanish word used in Cursillo to refer to the talks given by both clergy and laity.

STRATEGY: The strategy of Cursillo involves seeking out key people in the different environments (the Pre-Cursillo phase), converting them to a deeper relationship with God by having them accept their role as lay apostles (The Three-Day Weekend), and then linking them together for their mutual support and apostolic effectiveness (the Fourth Day).

ULTREYA: Onward! Keep on going! A medieval Spanish word which is associated with pilgrimages made on foot to the Shrine of St. James at Compostella in Spain. It is a word of encouragement which one group of pilgrims would call out to another. It conveys the meaning of “pressing on to the end” or “persevere.” (See NEC Booklet *Ultreya*)

A Talk Flow Presentation

No two Weekends are the same; however, all Weekends are united by four basics. First, they are united, by the one who sent us, our Lord Jesus Christ. Second, they are united by the purpose of Cursillo, which is to have people live what is fundamental for bring a Christian. Third, the Weekends are united by the team’s self-giving participation. Fourth, the Weekends are united:

- The tender loving care in Christian community
- The teaching and witness provided by the speaking team

Each day of the Three-Day Weekend is a unit. The first day tells the participants what to be, the second tells them what to do, and the third tells them what they must have.

First Evening

Although we think of the Weekend as being three days, the events of the first evening are equally important. The meditations are intended to establish an atmosphere for a spiritual retreat. The evening stresses the need for self-examination and response, the need for openness and reserved judgment, the need for quietness, and a concern for God and each other. From this point, the candidate is face to face with the love of God and the need to respond to that love.

First Day

The five talks of the first day proclaim the ideal of the Christian person living the life of grace. The first talk, “Ideal,” asks the question, What is it to be a person? The answer: We are creatures who live by ideals that direct our lives. Most participants respond by repeating to themselves, “My ideal is to be a Christian.”

They are doing this while the speaker is asking them to consider what they do with their time, thoughts, money, and anything else that might indicate their real commitments. The first talk is preparing the soil for the seed.

The second talk is a call to the Christian ideal – life in grace. Grace is God’s favorable attitude towards us, His self-giving. The talk “Grace” presents the life of grace as a gift. Images that describe the life of grace may include the generous, forgiving father (or husband, Hosea) who welcomes his prodigal son (wandering wife) home. Everything on the Weekend is based on the life of grace.

The third talk “Laity” focuses on grace and the Church in the world. The Church is the community of those who live in grace, and the Church is the channel for that grace to the rest of the world. The world can be saved by bringing it to live the life of grace.

So far the candidates have heard they are called to live a life of grace, and they are called to meet the problems of the world through active participation in the Body of Christ, the Church.

Candidates may now feel less apprehensive. They may now accept that God thinks they are loveable. They may now feel challenged.

The fourth talk outlines a simple theme: God is always ready to help those who need Him, and everyone needs His help. The talk “Faith” says that being a Christian is possible because God always helps when help is needed. It is at the end of this talk that palanca are distributed. They are evidence of help from people, many of whom we hardly know.

The last talk on Friday sums up what has been said so far and presents the first of three steps toward the ideal. The first step is based on God’s wanting to direct our entire life toward Him. There are many ways to avoid such intimacy, just as we avoid intimacy with each other. The last talk of the day, “Piety” points out some of the ways we avoid full dedication to God. It suggests that what is necessary is a life of prayer in which we not only talk to Him but also listen to Him.

Second Day

The first day has left the candidates with the question, “How do I live this life of grace?” The second day is dedicated to showing how. The message is that the candidate is to be a leader through prayer, study and action. The first talk of the second day is “Study” and its message is, “You have to use your head.” The Christian life is a special kind of life, and consequently it is necessary to study how to live it.

God wants intimacy. God expressed this intimacy by living among us. We respond by getting to know His Son. The Sacraments talk stresses this personal relationship and it is in the Eucharist where we pray “that we may ever more dwell in Him and He in us.”

The third talk is “Action.” It is a practical talk like “Study” but instead of using your head the message is “use your voice, ears, hand and feet.” Apostolic action is based on personal contact, so that others may meet the Christ in you so that they too might function as leaders in forming a Christian life.

The fourth talk is the “Obstacles to a Life of Grace.” The talk is principally an explanation of how to resist those things that can draw us away from our Christian ideal.

“Leaders” is the last talk of the day and summarizes the talks of the day. It is not a verbal rehash but portrays someone who has done the things talked about. The talk does not illustrate an easy walk but the hard work which is necessary.

Third Day

The third day presents those ideas that make this Weekend unique and different from a seminar, retreat, or conference. The day starts with a meditation of what is Christ saying to me? The third presents the plans which spread Christian life into the environment.

By this time the candidates should understand life in grace more clearly. It is nearly time to return to daily life and time to consider each person’s responsibilities in that life. A major part of the talk “The Study and Evangelization of Environments,” is a consideration of the environment from the point of view of the relation of the people in it to God and to the life of grace. This practical talk considers situations as well as the people in them.

The purpose of the “Christian Life” talk is to show how Christian values are put into practice in daily life. This talk ties together, piety, study, and action. The Spiritual Advisor may schedule this talk to follow “Christian Community in Action.” In many ways such an arrangement is a fitting lead-in to the talk on Group Reunion and allows the Spiritual Advisor a better opportunity to draw together the various points raised during the Weekend. The basic message is that the secret to success is intimacy with Christ.

In the talk “Christian Community in Action” stress is placed on the problem of remaking the world. This is best done through the building of Christian community at the family and parish level.

“Group Reunion” portrays a person who is persevering in the Christian life, not only through intimacy with God but through contact with others in group reunion.

The “Ultreya” talk explains ultreya and portrays someone in his/her Christian journey, portraying someone who has used spiritual direction, group reunion and Ultreya and seen the results.

Permanent Group Reunion

Group reunion simply means a “group meeting.” You may already be involved in group reunion or have the basis for one without being aware of it or applying the name to it.

Do you meet regularly with a friend or a group of friends to pray, read Scripture, and talk about your life in Christ? Do you ask these people for prayer and support when you feel God is leading you into new or especially difficult situations in carrying out His work? If you have a support group like this, then you are already involved in what could become a group reunion.

What is a group reunion?

- The group meets weekly.
- The members consider it a primary commitment.
- The Group Reunion service card with the prayer to the Holy Spirit, and the group sharing of the past week’s experiences in piety, the moment closest to Christ, study, and finally action.

- Members tell how they are planning “apostolic action” some word or deed, which will help bring a person or a group closer to Christ at home, school, work, recreation, parish, or other environment.
- They pray daily for one another and their common environment.
- There may be some other activities in common.

It is not necessary for people to make a Three-Day Weekend to be in a group reunion. Three-Day Weekend’s are held so there will be people to participate in group reunions. Anyone who is willing to use the ideals of personal sharing and mutual accountability as a means to becoming a better witness for Christ should be welcomed to participate in a group reunion.

How permanent is “permanent” group reunion? A group may go on for years, growing in the friendship of Jesus and others. Sometimes a group is right for a period of time but then its members decide to seek new associations for a group reunion. THIS IS NOT FAILURE. This change is part of life. It is important to begin group reunion as if it were to be forever but only God knows the right life span.

If you are not currently in a group reunion consider starting one with two or three people in your parish, neighborhood, or work place. Chose people whose company confidentiality and counsel you trust. Pray about your choices. Read your Group Reunion card over to be sure you know what is involved in grouping and let God lead you to invite others to join you.

A Group Reunion of two to five people should take no more than thirty to forty-five minutes if all share briefly. Some groups may decide to spend more time together. The point is that group reunion, an essential part of the Cursillo Method does not need to be an overwhelming time commitment. Those who have invested themselves in group reunion testify that God has honored their commitment by increasing their faith, hope, and love, resulting in a desire to bring the world to Christ.

Group reunion is not intended to be problem centered, or group therapy, but is centered on Christ. The test of a group reunion’s success is whether environments are being Christianized.

About the Ultreya

Starting times for an Ultreya may vary from place to place. A time of 8:00 p.m. is used as an example. In some places, the Servant Community may be scheduled to meet before the ultreya. This would then incorporate the leader’s group reunion. Before the ultreya, the leaders should conduct a brief leaders group reunion and arrange the room.

Ultreya Outline (Primitive or Basic Form)

- 8:00 Opening prayer by the leader for the evening. Each person gives their name and parish. The ultreya leaders help form groups of three to four people in some random manner.
- 8:05 The group reunion begins. The leaders make sure people have Floating Group Reunion cards. The level of sharing will not be as deep as in a permanent group reunion. The Floating Group Reunion card should provide enough categories to have meaningful sharing. A Spiritual Advisor may want to be available in a different room for spiritual counsel or direction.
- 8:25 Leader warns that five minutes remain to complete sharing.
- 8:30 Leader introduces the lay witness speaker. The topic: How I am transforming my environment for Christ.” The talk should deal with a recent experience of an action, and is Christ-centered. See *Guidelines for Ultreya Speakers* below.

- 8:40 Leader invites responses or echoes to the witness talk. Two people should be asked in advance to be ready to respond. The purpose of these responses is to confirm or affirm the speaker's presentation by brief comments on the experience he or she has shared, but from a different environmental perspective.
- 8:45 Leader introduces Spiritual Advisor for Biblical reflections or Gospel summary on the witness talk and responses, tying them together with some incident or teaching from Jesus life. This is not a prepared talk. See *Guidelines for Ultreya Speakers* below.
- 9:00 Leader asks for or makes announcements pertaining to Cursillo. A closing prayer by a Spiritual Advisor, ultreya leader, or by all should conclude the ultreya.

"Ultreya" was originally a cry or shout of encouragement for those on pilgrimage. Today, it is a word of encouragement to make what we have learned on a Cursillo Weekend a continuing force in our lives. The ultreya should be a strong current of faith, hope, and love to carry each person towards greater service to one another and to God. The Fourth Day is not intended to duplicate the Weekend experience but to continue it.

Guidelines of Ultreya Speakers

The Lay Witness is:

1. About 10 minutes in length.
2. A personal story, told simply and briefly.
3. About Jesus Christ. The aim of the talk is to tell about a specific way in which you have tried to bring those He loves closer to Him. The talk is about how you live with Jesus at the center of your life, and how your love for Him draws you to act and speak for Him.
4. About a recent living experience. Tell how through prayer, study, and action you made a plan to bring others closer to Jesus, in the normal flow of you own life. Make one or two points and build your talk around them.
5. Concrete and practical. Make your talk vivid by describing who, how, why, what and when, as you tell about carrying this action which you planned to bring one of your environments closer to Christ. Tell what happened as a result, whether it seemed like a success or failure.

You may want to center the talk on a Bible verse or passage.

The lay witness talk should answer the following questions.

1. Does the talk show that Jesus Christ is in my life?
2. Will it show how much I want to follow Him?
3. Does Jesus Himself hold the most important place in the talk?
4. Will this experience I am sharing stimulate people to think of things which they might plan to transform their home, work, parish, or other environment for Christ?

The lay witness talk should not be:

1. sensational: a big flashy production number
2. too emotional – emotions will be affected by a simple, sincere talk about how you live with Jesus at the center of your life.

A few days before the ultreya, talk over with the Spiritual Advisor for the ultreya what you are going to say, to help him or her prepare.

Echo or Responses Speakers

Two people may be asked in advance to respond. It is best if these persons are from different professions and life situations than the speaker, so that they can show that they share in their own experience the same principles of living with Christ and of being witnesses for Him in their environments. They may confirm the speaker's message: "Yes, I have done something like that

also: it works,” or affirm it; “I know that has been effective for others,” or “I am going to try that in my situation;” or “I recognize that as a good principle of Christian action.”

Gospel Summary or Scriptural Reflection

(Spiritual Advisor – ten minutes)

There is no experience that cannot be related to the Scripture; therefore, one of the functions of the summary or reflection is to link it to the Bible. You are not asked to prepare a formal written talk. To help in your preparation, the lay witness speaker should share in advance what he or she will be saying, together with the Scripture to be used. After listening to the lay witness talk and responses, the task of the Spiritual Advisor is to relate the talk and responses to some part of the Bible. Like the lay witness talk, the Gospel summary should be simple, brief, and informal. This is an important teaching phase of the ultreya and is the means by which the listeners grow spiritually in their attempt to interpret the Scripture in relationship to their daily living.

Spiritual Advisor

The Spiritual Advisor should arrive slightly before the starting time for the ultreya and be available for spiritual direction and counsel during group reunion time. The leader should make this known at the opening of the ultreya. The Spiritual Advisor may be asked to conclude the prayers at the close of the ultreya. This should be spontaneous and can be a very effective teaching function in developing the prayer lives of those attending.

NOTE: If there is no ordained person available to relate what has been shared, it is appropriate for one of the ultreya leaders who is familiar with the Scripture to carry out this function. Many lay people are well read in the Scripture and many have had formal training.

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