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Seven

The Process of Change

Two assertions and two related questions:

1. **The primary task of the parish church is to form Christians.**

   The gifts of the church are "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ." (Ephesians 4.12-13)

2. **How can the parish be a place that helps that happen?**

   The parish can help in the development of Christian character by offering direction, methods, and an understanding of how virtue and productive spiritual practices become habitual.

3. **We are to build Christian proficiency.**

   It's not a new idea. Aristotle said, "Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit."

   In part, Christian proficiency and formation is also developed through intentional training, guiding, and coaching. The parish can assist its members become more competent for participation in the Eucharist and Daily Office, sharing in the common life of a community, engaging in reflection, and offering service in the places they find themselves.

4. **How can we shape such a parish?**

   I'll address that in the remainder of this chapter and point the reader to my earlier books: *Fill All Things: The Dynamics*

of Spirituality in the Parish Church and *Power from on High: A Model for Parish Life and Development.*

Shaping a healthy community

I'm going to highlight just a few considerations about the process of change:

- Understand and use a critical mass strategy.
- Begin with what's easy to do.
- Understand what's involved in the "Use of Self".
- Understand the behaviors and assumptions that are barriers to change.
- Parish clergy engage parishioners around their spiritual life
- Place the parish in a context of support, competency building, and accountability

Understand and use a critical mass strategy

Critical mass theories are about building the level of commitment, competence and emotional maturity at the center of the organization so that it grounds the system in a mission orientation and an organizational culture that supports the mission. This will take the shape of a series of circles, one within the other. Those at the center will share more of the "common language" of healthy and useful skills, knowledge, attitudes and values.

Critical mass models invite leaders to attend to building the center and to stop the tendency to obsess about "fixing" the problems and dysfunction at the edges. New and unskilled leaders are especially inclined to focus on the "difficult people" or those who constantly demand personal attention, or the crisis of the moment.

A critical mass model suggests that we should give much more of our time and energy to developing the center. Support and build the capacity of those willing and able to more fully give themselves, whether to the overall health of the parish or to a particular project that moves toward health.

The emerging field of network science may help us understand how a critical mass develops. Network science studies how

behavioral changes spread through social systems. There's an obvious link to developing and spreading emotional intelligence, sound spiritual practice, and virtues such as kindness, patience, gentleness, courage and perseverance.

These social networks are of people in face-to-face contact, people we see regularly. Researchers are looking at how the structure of these networks affects our adopting and sustaining habits. There's some evidence that networks of overlapping social ties were the most effective. That is to say, we don't know everyone in the network, but we know some people and they know others. It's like a web. In such networks, people catch things from one another.

"Most of us are already aware of the direct effect we have on our friends and family; our actions can make them happy or sad, healthy or sick, even rich or poor. But we rarely consider that everything we think, feel, do or say can spread far beyond the people we know…As part of a social network, we transcend ourselves, for good or ill, and become part of something much larger. We are connected." [i]

Parish leaders don't control the social networks that exist within and beyond the parish. But they can encourage social connections and look favorably upon friendships in the parish. They may also influence those networks through the overall culture, climate, structures and processes of the parish. Exercising such influence has the capacity to build a critical mass around healthy and faithful practices.

Malcolm Gladwell's concept of the tipping point[ii] is related to the idea of critical mass. A tipping point is when the impetus for change becomes unstoppable. Gladwell defines a tipping point as "the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point."

Gladwell believes, "Ideas and products and messages and behaviors spread like viruses do." To facilitate critical mass around a healthier set of parish habits we might pay attention to Gladwell's notion that three types of people are needed: 1) connectors, those who easily make friends and build connections; 2) people with the new and needed competencies such as spiritual practice and emotional intelligence; and 3) people with skills at persuading and

negotiating. Not much good will happen in a parish if leaders discourage social connection, and/or are unskilled in the spiritual life, and/or are not able to draw members toward healthier practice.

The Shape of the Parish model is an example of a critical mass approach. See the Resources section for more on the model.

The Shape of the Parish model assumes that developing a "critical mass" around spiritual life and practice has the effect of drawing more people, and the parish as a whole, into a deeper relationship with God and the church. The existence of a critical mass of Apostolic Faith people in a parish can orient the parish toward Christ and away from its preoccupation with the more trivial aspects of religion and parish life.

By their behavior and character those closer to the center contribute to establishing a climate, "an energy not their own," that attracts others toward the center. By living the faith they draw others deeper into God. They become a means of grace for the parish by their contagious influence.

A goal might be to develop a critical mass of people of Apostolic Faith in the parish making up 15—20% of Sunday attendees. That would, in most situations, provide the weight needed to orient the parish in a healthy direction. What's needed is a condition where those of Apostolic Faith and Practice constitute a critical mass, where there are enough of them that they are setting the tone and climate.

In addition, leaders need to facilitate and strengthen the critical mass, the Apostolic core, by firmly and gently tilting the structures, processes and climate of the parish toward maturity and health. The whole atmosphere of the parish says that there is more; more than we have yet experienced and known.

The grounding of the parish in health and faithfulness then is enfleshed; made real in the lives of men and women. It is in the habits of people, not just the statements of leaders.

There are several interrelated areas in which special attention might have rewards in building critical mass:

- Use a Foundations Course[iii] approach in creating a critical

mass of members who have some competence for living the life.

- The competent participation of a critical mass of the congregation in the Eucharist.
- The development of common spiritual practices in the congregation around Eucharist, the Daily Prayers of the Church, reflection, community and service.
- Understanding and using the system dynamics of the parish's spiritual life. For example, knowing that the parish's Eucharist is deepened and enriched by the presence of a critical mass of members who join in the Daily Office and some form of personal devotions during the week.

Using Shape of the Parish as a starting point, there are three broad objectives that make up a critical mass strategy.

1. Nurture the Shape. If there are no people of Apostolic Faith, seek ways to establish a core of such people in the parish community; if there is no Vicarious ring, build relationships with other communities of people. Assume that it will take years to do these things.
2. Accept and Invite. Take a stance in which you *accept* people wherever they are in the journey and *invite* them to go deeper. Include people in a manner that respects and loves them for who they are now while also seeking opportunities to offer new ways and new life.
3. Set Loose the Dynamic. Root the overall climate of the parish in Apostolic Faith and set loose the dynamic by building the appropriate culture.

Begin with what's easy to do

Start in places that are both strategic and "easy." That could include working with groups of people of apostolic faith in mutual spiritual guidance and exploring their vocation in the family, workplace and civic life; begin and maintain an adult foundations course; train the congregation for participation in the Eucharist; begin using the Daily Office during the week. Work with promising

areas—begin in the places of health, strength and success.

Develop initiatives or interventions unlikely to cause much resistance. Consider:

- An activity people don't *have to* participate in. Change the Liturgy on Sunday and it impacts everyone and is likely to produce more resistance. Offer Evening Prayer every weeknight and it overtly affects only those who want to attend. Over time, the saying of the Office will influence the Sunday Eucharist.
- Activities that don't require a critical mass of support or high levels of internal commitment to get started.
- Things that are within the priest's assumed scope of initiation—adult education, mid-week worship, spiritual development. Clergy who have given lay committees the impression that they control such areas have made a serious mistake. It's fine to include people in these areas as long as that doesn't create a bottleneck.

Examples of such initiatives or interventions:

- Offering Foundations Courses.
- Anglican Spirituality: Spiritual Practice in Our Tradition—a six session program using experiential methods to teach people spiritual practices based on the model of this book. This could also be a module within a Foundations Course.
- Equipping individuals to be able to use the Office.
- Public saying of the Office—organizing a group of people to say it at least four times a week.
- Eucharistic Spirituality—two or three sessions each year, each about an hour to an hour-and-a-half, on practices of the person in the pew.

There are many others that may or may not cause resistance. A few examples:

- Establish listening processes in the parish (see the chapter on Community in this book, the section on "Theory and Methods" and *Fill All Things* pages 107—115).

- Improve the Sunday experience. Create a Sunday morning experience that is focused on the gathering of the Eucharistic community. Work at having a great Liturgy and social time together. Make it an event that centers and renews, rather than simply another source of demands and pressure for their time, money, and energy. Develop a community that is competent for Eucharistic worship, spirituality and living.
- Improve vestry meetings by engaging self-assessment processes and making use of the methods mentioned in the chapter on Community.

Paying attention to readiness will help identify the "easy" initiatives in a particular parish. What is this parish ready to do? If there isn't a readiness to proceed with an improvement, for example listening processes, we need to ask, "What can we do to build that readiness?"

For example, with listening processes it is usually helpful to start with equipping people with the related skills, knowledge and methods. One of the reasons people resist new ways is that they fear appearing incompetent. The question then becomes, how do I introduce new competencies without doing that in the established groups, such as the vestry? One possibility is to offer a program in effective small groups that trains people in basic facilitation skills such as using newsprint, communication skills, and how to avoid screening the ideas of others.

Or, as part of the Foundations Course, have a module on Benedictine Spirituality that explores the spirituality of listening while teaching people ways to focus on the speaker and how to take a stance that assumes God may have a word for us in the words of others. Skills such as these also can be connected with our behavior during the Liturgy.

Another possible action is identifying settings where you can introduce the listening skills and processes without generating resistance. There's often more leeway in a foundations course, an orientation of new members, the vestry retreat, and special parish community meetings. You may also find it easier to introduce listening methods in groups you know to be more receptive. An

external consultant may be able to help people try new ways that would generate opposition if offered by the parish's leadership.

Once the new skills and methods have been introduced here and there, it may be easier to bring them into the vestry or other group. In fact, some people will wonder why it took you so long to do it.

Another aspect of starting in easy places is to think about the development of the parish in terms of at least three to five years. It will take that kind of time to significantly improve the community and organizational life of the congregation so it is "owned" and sustainable. Watch out for attempts at a quick fix. The quick fix compulsion only adds to the stress and encourages a kind of illusion about what it takes to change a parish.

If you are clear about the revitalization effort being both immediate and long term, you can accept a mindset of one initiative after another. Assume you will do dozens of interventions each year. Think of your work as moving from one congregational development initiative to another, and over the years shaping a healthier parish.

There's a good bit of repetitiveness involved. You offer the Eucharistic practices program three times a year, year after year. It never ends because there are always new people joining and older members wanting a refresher experience. Over time you build a competent Eucharistic community—10 people at the June session, six in the fall session. In time there's a critical mass and things are different.

This is a process of nurturing what organization development practitioners call "common language." You want to nurture a "common language" of spiritual practice. It helps to use a map such as that provided in this book: Eucharist and Office, Reflection and Community, and Service.

Have some clarity about the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that will be taught in relationship to the map. Teach, train, and coach. Remember that by doing this, you are providing options and choices about a deeper spiritual life, not ordering parishioners to do it your way.

Use of Self

The presiding priest of the community needs to establish habits and skills that help her or him be a centered and healthy presence as leader of the community in its life and worship. This certainly means being part of those who share the "common language." The priest needs to engage the map—Eucharist and Office, Community and Reflection, and Service.

It also means accepting oneself as a person on a journey to wholeness and holiness. We need to assume that we need to be changed. This is true for all parish leaders, but especially so for the clergy.

The other "use of self" issue is for all leaders to attend to their own emotional and social intelligence. This includes expanding and increasing our capacity for: connection with others, authenticity, self-awareness and self-management, the ability to read the dynamics in situations and to act effectively in the situation.

This involves accepting responsibility for the choices we make, including when we don't see choices. Part of our work is to expand the range of choices we see rather than be stuck on "automatic pilot."

We can help ourselves by establishing appropriate feedback processes about our leadership and receiving help from a spiritual director or therapist in seeing how our beliefs and mental models influence our thinking and the choices we see. There are what is called reframing[iv] methods that can help us expand our understanding and sense of what is possible in a particular situation.

Both emotional intelligence and spiritual practice abilities are addressed in a program such as Shaping the Parish™. The lab training approach of LTI (Leadership Training Institute) and NTL (National Training Labs) is especially useful in addressing emotional intelligence.

Understand the behaviors and assumptions that are barriers to change

It can be useful to acknowledge how we get in our own way, shoot ourselves in the foot, and block needed changes. This is an act of humility. We may acknowledge that what we are currently doing isn't working, even that we don't know what to do about it. That gives us a place to start. Then we may find ourselves free to receive help around our spiritual life, emotional and social intelligence, and the methods and tools of change.

A Distorting Influence: Well-Meaning Worriers

I was early for the Eucharist. Very early. I sat in the pew and did a perfunctory, though still useful, *lectio* on a reading for the day. Then my mind drifted back to a dynamic I'd seen in several parishes. It had to do with changes, large and small, that had been blocked by fear. I was groping for a word or phase to capture the dynamic. A word or phrase I could use in this section of the book. The Mass began and I let it go.

Later I settled in with eggs, toast and the *New York Times*. Nicholas Kristof was writing about America's history of fear around people who were new and unfamiliar. In regard to the latest manifestation of fear he wrote, "Most of the opponents aren't bigots but well-meaning worriers."[v] That was the phrase I wanted!

"Well-meaning worriers" captured it for me. Much of what undercut needed changes in parishes wasn't outright opposition. It was someone worrying about some hypothetical, or sometimes real, person or group whose feelings would be hurt or who would misunderstand or who would be offended.

"Well-meaning worriers" would plug into a poorly-differentiated rector or warden and the rector or warden would "catch" the worry. The worriers didn't themselves feel hurt or offended. They were just worried that someone might feel that way.

Pray for love.

Conversations we can't or don't know how to have

All too often we can't have the kind of conversations we need to have if change is to occur. We pontificate, we repeat the same positions endlessly, we think about what we're going to say next instead of listening to the person speaking, we try to build trust by telling our stories instead of being open about our feelings, we blame and grumble, and we fill our time at meetings with making reports.

"Undiscussables" are conversations we don't know how to have. We are certain that if we begin such a conversation someone will die. Well maybe not really die but someone will get badly hurt. The stance is that this is the way things are and there is nothing that can be done about it.

How we handle "undiscussables" is key in our ability to facilitate needed change.

We need conversations about creating the things we long for, the things that make for health and salvation. We need conversations in which we connect to one another and become a community.

It's not so much that we don't want such conversations. We may be stuck in the ways we know; we may lack the skills, discipline or courage to behave differently.

Pray for courage.

Another Distorting Influence: False and Limited Analogies[vi]

Most people in any parish have a limited grasp of the nature and mission of the church. The tradition's language of People of God and Body of Christ may be accepted with little sense of what flows from such images.

People do want to make sense of their parish community. They often have an investment in finding a way of describing the parish and in doing that, making a kind of meaning. So, we draw on images and analogies from other spheres of life. We take what is familiar to us, what makes sense to us, and we apply it to the church. Parishioners are also members of clubs, work in a business, are part of families, may be involved in a political or social change movement, and give time or money to various social

service groups. The purposes and ways of those other groups are frequently used in an attempt to understand the parish church.

In that process things get distorted. Vestries become boards of directors and rectors CEOs or executive directors. There's talk of how the parish needs to be run more like a business. Or stewardship is reduced to pledging and pledging in turn is reduced to "dues" or a kind of subscription fee. Evangelization becomes membership recruitment and hospitality is degraded to making people comfortable.

We see the distortion when the measure of whether the parish is a "good community" is reduced to social life. The more times and the more members who gather for parish dinners become the measures of health. There's a false analogy behind that view. Maybe it's the false analogy that the church is a social club.

At the same time, we miss the point when we resist the parish's social life. Reversing the situation isn't any better. Negating people's desire for informal, "non-religious" time together is a denial of incarnational faith.

While the process of making analogies with these other groups is inevitable, and at times even useful, it also creates a problem. "People come to the conclusion that the Church is a 'society created by human enterprise and designed to serve particular human ends,' that it is created by the 'agreement of a number of individual persons who presumably define the terms of their association and its goals.' ...Church means, not corporation and not club, but a collection of people who have been called out together by a voice or a word or a summons which comes to them from outside."[vii]

Pray for knowledge.

Trapped in the existing demand system

This was discussed in the first chapter. We can be unmindful of the web of expectations, pressures, and beliefs that inhibit our ability to do what's necessary for a healthier parish. We get driven along through the weeks and years by the routine demands of parish life. We assume there will be a time when we have the time

to work on all the strategic and truly important developmental possibilities. It's a never-to-arrive point in the future.

Developmental work occurs when we make the developmental and strategic matters part of our demand system by doing things such as: creating a parish development team, using a skilled external consultant, having a yearly leadership retreat that is only about strategic and developmental concerns, and attending a program like Shaping the Parish™. Putting developmental activities on the parish schedule and weaving them into the fabric of parish life will create a new system of demands and expectations.

Pray for wisdom.

The parish priest engaging parishioners around their spiritual life

By ordination the priest carries the primary responsibility for the pastoral oversight of the parish church. The priest is there to shape the parish. Others may, and hopefully will, share in that ministry and collaborate with the priest. But finally the priest needs to accept this oversight role if the parish is to become healthier and more faithful.

In fact, a strong lay role in shaping the parish is unlikely if the priest fails to personally engage the oversight responsibility to "equip the saints for the work of ministry and the building up of his body." Roy Oswald of Alban Institute put it this way: "We have noted time and again the phenomenon in which the top leadership in an organization does not assume its rightful authority, with the result that others in the system are not able to assume their authority."

There are a variety of opportunities for the priest to engage the task.

Taking initiative with people

This means doing something many clergy avoid—opening up a conversation about the member's spiritual practices.

I believe that most people "want clergy to be interested in their spiritual life. The expectation may be strongest among those of Experimenting, Progressing and Apostolic Faith. They aren't

seeking an interrogation ('Do you pray?') but a sense of curiosity and an openness to listen. 'Tell me about your spiritual life,' 'I'd love to hear something about who the people were and are in your life who have helped you in your spiritual life.' "[viii]

The Resources section of *Fill All Things* contains the "Three Interview Process." This has been used by participants in the Church Development Institute (CDI) to explore spiritual life with others in the parish. It's been used by hundreds of laity and clergy to provide a sense of safety for what is usually a very important conversation for both parties. Some clergy may find it helpful to have a routine that makes use of such a method with all new members. It could be part of early visiting as well as check-ins. It could be used in more structured settings such as Foundations Courses or parish orientation sessions and then followed up one-on-one.

What the priest wants to accomplish here is creating an unspoken psychological contract with new members that helps them know they can approach the priest about spiritual practice and allows the priest to more easily take initiative as circumstances allow or demand. It requires persistence and patience.[ix]

Spontaneous opportunities

There are moments when it's right to ask a question, offer a brief thought, or invite a person to sit and talk. You might see the moment in curiosity or a new openness, an emotional outburst, or a change in behavior.

Offering group and individual guidance

I've heard some priests try to beg off from making such offerings because they don't have formal training in spiritual direction. While those with certificates and formal training are very helpful in this ministry, it remains true that providing spiritual guidance is part of the routine stuff of parish ministry. If you feel a need for special training, get it. If you feel out of your depth, pray and seek help. If you feel as though you are being arrogant, submit to spiritual guidance yourself.

For an outline of what could be provided see "Offering Spiritual Guidance in the Parish" in *Fill All Things*.

Confession[x]

Confession isn't the same thing as spiritual guidance but it is related. In parishes where the sacramental confession is routinely offered clergy are often surprised that if they do offer it, and educate about it, some will make use of the rite.

Minimally, it makes sense to occasionally note in the bulletin that it is available on request. Setting aside a few hours in Lent or Holy Week when the priest will be available at a specific location is also useful.

Guiding the parish as a whole

Pastoral oversight includes three dimensions of parish life: leadership, community, and spirituality.[xi] Oversight is expressed as we seek to weave these three threads into the routine business of parish life. Oversight is about knitting things together in harmony and beauty.

Our oversight has the purpose of advancing the "holy order" of Christ. We are to enable a parish life in which people may rest in God, offer their lives to God, give themselves to the mission they share in the Body of Christ, and be transformed more and more into his likeness.

Each parish activity, all parish groups, every decision made, offers an opportunity for leadership and deeper community and spirituality. Of course, relentlessness about this will have the effect of damaging the parish's harmony. That can create a driven and sometimes hostile tone. We do need prudence, good sense, gentleness, and practical judgment, along with persistence. We need leadership grounded in truth and directed toward what is good for the parish and the person.

Some will want to aggressively recruit new members. Pastoral oversight will point to the organic evangelization of the Body of Christ and guide people into humility and patience. Some will want to fill Sunday morning with business meetings and education. Pastoral oversight will seek to create a climate of holiness and community. Some will want to ask 100% commitment and participation (the cause will vary from pledging to the potluck

dinner). Pastoral oversight will suggest invitation and the wisdom to know there is never 100%.

Place the parish in a context of support, competency building, and accountability

You want to create a new "demand system" that draws the energies of the parish around the primary task, spiritual practices and other strategic matters. There are a few examples of turn-arounds without such support, but in such cases there is all too often a high cost in clergy over-functioning or conflict.

Consultants

Good consultants can provide a source for new energy and focus. It will be most effective if the consultation stretches over a period of at least 18 months or is a long weekend each year for three or four years. The form of consultation is, of course, critical.

Beware of consultants who have "the Answer" and are eager to provide you with a written report or program as the primary outcome. Effective consultants build the parish's internal capacity by leveraging their strengths in the service of your own development. For this kind of work, it is generally not helpful for an expert to provide the parish with a "solution" outside of itself.

Shaping the Parish™

I think what Michelle Heyne and I are doing in Shaping the Parish™ provides such a system. For a 16-month period, participants enter into a context that includes regular workshop time, six well-thought-out and planned parish initiatives, a course of readings, and support and guidance from peers and the training staff. The goal is to revitalize parishes.

We are confident that parishes sending a team that includes their priest are very likely to see early results after 16 months in the program. If they stay with what they have started, they will get healthier and might even generate the kind of energy that facilitates membership grow.

If they continue to use the program for several cycles we think most will find themselves in a significantly better place. See www.shapingtheparish.com.

There are other training programs in dioceses requiring a substantial investment of time and effort by parish leaders. The Church Development Institute is the program with the most experience, involving the largest number of people. Its focus is primarily on developing competent congregational development practitioners.

The diocese

The role of the diocese can be critical but is rarely enough in itself. The exceptions have often been in situations where the diocese had the authority to insist on participation in developmental processes. There are other cases where the bishop's office took a stance of persistent encouragement to help parishes enter into the needed context.

In the 60s and 70s, the Lutherans in Philadelphia created the Center City Lutheran Parish (CCLP).[xii] Twenty-two churches participated. They all experienced increased health and growth. This was happening at the same time the Episcopal diocese in the city continued to close parish after parish.

Among the factors related to their success were: recruiting some of the best younger clergy right out of seminary[xiii]; leaving clergy in place for the long term, adequate funding for each parish over a significant period of time; a required weekly gathering of pastors for support and accountability, and the development of lay leaders.

In the 1980s I was the Congregational Development Officer in Connecticut. That position included oversight of all the aided congregations (all smaller parishes). We required all the aided parishes to meet together, engage in self and mutual assessment, have a three-party development agreement (vestry, priest, bishop's office), use a consultant, and for all new vicars to participate in what was an early form of CDI.

In a five-year period those parishes increased their average pledge by 68% and attendance by 15%. In congregations with leaders participating in the training program, the figures were 80% average pledge increase and 24% in attendance. All parishes reported increased satisfaction with the central elements of parish life, e.g., worship, formation, service, evangelization, etc. We did

this while also decreasing the percentage of the diocesan budget used for financial aid to those parishes. It was also a time when the state's population was declining.

More recently the Diocese of Washington has followed a strategy of providing consulting and training resources along with interventions from the diocesan office to monitor development, facilitate decision making when hard choices were necessary, and provide empathetic support for parish leaders. When parish leaders give themselves to the process we see hope and less fear, new energy, health, and organic membership growth.

[i] *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives*, Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler, Little, Brown and Company, 2009. page 30.
[ii] *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* , Malcolm Gladwell, Little Brown, 2000.
[iii] A foundations course is a substantial educational and training program that is repeated over the years and is used to incorporate people into the parish and the spirituality of the Episcopal Church. A foundations course is a resource for setting loose an energy in individuals and the parish that can stir new thinking and behavior and may help move some people into a more Apostolic expression of faith and practice. There needs to be enough substance to it that it has the potential of taking participants to a new place in their spiritual life. Some parishes have nine or ten sessions. Others have modules that extend over three years. It's a resource for:

- People exploring faith and spiritual life
- People joining the parish and/or the Episcopal Church
- Existing members who have not engaged these issues in recent years
- Adults preparing for baptism, confirmation, reception, or reaffirmation
- New comers who want to connect to the parish and meet other people

[iv] Reframing or cognitive reframing is a method of changing the way we look at things and developing alternative ways of explaining and dealing with situations.
[v] *The New York Times*, September 5, 2010, "America's History of Fear," by Nicholas D. Kristof.
[vi] See *Fill All Things*, pages 7, 23, 49 and 200.
[vii] Richard Norris, *Understanding the Faith of the Church*, Seabury Press, NY, 1979.
[viii] *Fill All Things* page 150.
[ix] Proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching 2 Timothy 4:2.
[x] "The Reconciliation of a Penitent" (BCP p.448).
[xi] See *Fill All Things*, pages 82 – 85, 197 – 199.
[xii] In 1981 I wrote a Forward Movement booklet, "Stay in the City," that proposed a strategy for the health and growth of inner city parishes. It included the following. In the 1960s and 70s in Philadelphia the Episcopalians continued a close city parishes strategy while the Lutherans went in another direction. In the case of the Episcopalians, "Since 1940 we have seen the death of almost one congregation per year in the City of Philadelphia. Between 1900 and 1940 we averaged one closing or merger every other year. Sixty parishes in eighty years."

The Lutherans had a comparable situation. In a 1975 Synod report they painted this picture, "In one generation inner city Philadelphia churches had dwindled from 46 to 26. … It was obvious that unless something drastic were done, there would be little or no Lutheran witness within another generation." The Synod's response was this, "In the fall of 1964, inner city churches were invited to participate in the newly formed Center City Lutheran Parish (CCLP). Twenty-two joined. Each parish remained autonomous with their own council, control of finances, and normally their own pastor. Respect was shown for the ability of each pastor and council to know its own parish best needs best. CCLP provided assistance in responding to those needs, and a context of accountability and
direction in regard to basic standards."

"Since 1964 (up till 1981), none of the parishes have closed. Black baptized membership went from about 500 to 3400. … Emergency food centers were established, major work with youth has been started, congregations are involved in the issues of their communities, the Director has been involved in city-wide issues, the giving of members has increased. A report in the mid 70s identified these factors as connected to the success of the effort: 1. Long-term, experienced pastors whose efforts were not interrupted by long vacancies. 2. Adequate funding – A significant period of time was guaranteed each parish. None of this 'turn things around in three years' stuff. 3. A weekly gathering of pastors - a support/accountability system 4. The Synod was very supportive. 5. Lay leadership was developed – people were trained."
[xiii] The invitation to the soon-to-be pastors was something like this: "We can't pay you much. You'll need to live in a troubled neighborhood. The parish has been in decline for years. You'll need to agree to stay for at least 7 years. We'll expect a lot of you and will stand with you in the process."