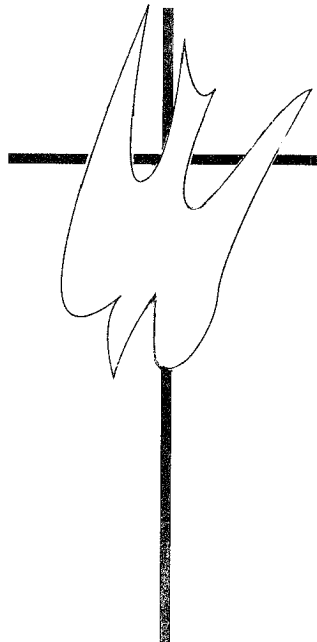


# *Pastors Reflections...*

*A study of the  
Cursillo Experience!*



To whom it may concern:

This past year, it has been a passion of mine to find a way to explain the value of Cursillo to pastors who have not attended a Cursillo "experience." It's almost an overwhelming task. How do you describe that river trip you experienced, that Super Bowl you attended or your child's first hit in Little League? It's virtually impossible to describe in enough detail any experience so that the listener "feels" that experience.

The Cursillo is just that...it's a non-duplicable experience. Each person's Cursillo is different from everyone else's Cursillo so there are no expectations of anyone getting "IT." There is no IT to get. But there is a movement to a new level of understanding of God's love. This love impacts each Cursillistas (those who have attended a Cursillo) differently. For some of us, it is life changing. For others, it is a very positive experience and draws us into a more active role in our home church. And yet a few find the weekend threatening, controlling or manipulative to be of any value. In the past ten years since my weekend, I can honestly say that I know of one pastor and three laypeople who did not enjoy the weekend out of the over 3,500 attendees of Lutheran Cursillo of Southern California. I believe those results stand on their own merit.

In an effort to give you some information to help guide your prayerful consideration of doing so, I asked five questions to over 100 pastors who have attended a 3-day Cursillo experience. The following pages are categorized by those questions. I encourage you to read every word from your colleagues as they share with you their experiences. Not all of the responses are positive. I made a commitment to God to print every response... good, bad or indifferent. Not all experiences can be 100% positive when thousands of people are involved, but I suggest to you that Cursillo comes very close to it. And after all, it is God's weekend with each attendee... how negative could that be?

I pray that you will prayerfully consider attending a Cursillo for the following reasons:

1. Personal spiritual renewal.
2. For your spouse's spiritual renewal.
3. So that your congregation can experience personal spiritual renewal.

In Cursillo, there are good reasons why pastors must attend first before the congregation can attend. In that way, you will understand and be able to channel the energy and enthusiasm for Christ that most of us lay-people discover as we come off of our Cursillo weekend. I pray that you will find God "nudging" you to come. If you do, you and your congregation will be blessed by the experience...and that's what it's all about.

In Christ,



Dale Schneider

### **Impact on those who attend a Cursillo weekend:**

"The people who attended are still talking about the experience they had. They **all** came back with a renewed faith and a servant's heart, on fire and ready and willing to be a disciple for Jesus Christ. They have spoken very positively about it with other members, and have a tremendous desire to see **everyone else** go on a weekend. They saw Jesus "in the flesh" and grasped in a more profound and real way what it means to be a committed Christian. They all commented that it was an experience like no other and yearn for others to have it."

**- Pastor #1**

"Cursillo has a way of opening up people to express love in a greater variety of ways. I had a pilgrim who was so cold and stiff before she went and she literally has been transformed into a warm and gracious Christian. We only have a few people who have attended. The meeting place is so far away from Santa Barbara that it has been difficult to get sponsors. But those who have attended seem to be freed up to give a more open expression of their faith...they smile and hug more."

**- Pastor #2**

"Cursillo has been a life-changing experience for some of our people. I can look at an improved marriage, and a mellowing of leadership style so that one who has so far adamantly refused to go can still say, "He has really changed!" For some the experience has become a good memory, but without producing the dramatic change. But those who have gone have become uniformly warmer and more positive in their support of the life of the church. Our congregation is small, but the growing Cursillo community is proving to be fine leaven for this loaf"

**- Pastor #3**

"For many years Cursillo has been an important part of our ministry at Resurrection. As members attend and return to the congregation after the weekend, they are filled with a new spirit of devotion and commitment to our Lord and His ministry. It is not by coincidence or accident that the vast majority of our leaders have experienced the joy of Cursillo."

**- Pastor #4**

"We've found that Cursillo and Walk to Emmaus are fine tools that God uses to open the hearts of people to experience the love of God. For many, their life of faith has been an intellectual exercise. This helps to connect the two."

**- Pastor #5**

"I have found Cursillo to be the best training to help lay persons fulfill their ministry. They return from their grace filled weekend better prepared and willing to serve in the local parish. These people were and still are strong leaders in the Church."

**- Pastor #6**

**Impact on those who attend a Cursillo weekend:**

"After only one Via de Christo weekend here in Colorado we already have two very faithful small groups meeting weekly for ongoing support. They are small but enthusiastic groups and I believe that they will grow."

**- Pastor #7**

"Cursillo is SOLID because it's on Christ. ANYONE who goes through Cursillo encounters Christ in the Word and in the program. Christ and His Word never return empty! The effect is always there after someone experiences something as Christ-centered and Bible-based as this."

**- Pastor #8**

"I found Cursillo to be the best `discipleship making' immersion experience for pastors and lay people. In my humble opinion, there is absolutely nothing comparable or available to the local Lutheran pastor and lay member to educate and motivate them for preparation to ministry at the congregational level."

**- Pastor #9**

"Since I have been the pastor at Bethel (almost five years), those who have attended a Cursillo have been disproportionately represented in Bethel's leadership. It is my impression that a greater percentage of Cursillo attendees are willing to accept leadership and program responsibilities than non-Cursillo folks. It is also my impression that, at least for a time after their Cursillo weekend, people are a bit more faithful in attending worship services."

"Despite what I would consider to be an honest, and, for the most part, a fairly consistent effort not to come across this way, some of our non-Cursillo people still see the Cursillo community as elitist. Since several of our Cursillo people are involved in working Cursillo and VDC weekends, sometimes we notice a significant decrease in attendance on those weekends. Some of the Cursillo leadership at Bethel has not been able to be supportive of me and of my ministry at Bethel, and during a very contentious time of conflict in the congregation some of the Cursillo community and its leadership openly criticized me, questioned my competence to be the pastor of Bethel, and contended for my leaving. In my opinion that violates the spirit if not the letter of what Cursillo is supposed to be."

**- Pastor #10**

"Cursillo has added a good `small group' to the congregation."

**- Pastor #11**

"A few of the people who had not been very active in worship and service in our church attended a Cursillo and after they went, their worship and service activity mushroomed."

**- Pastor #12**

### **Impact on those who attend a Cursillo weekend:**

"The strongest and most supportive members I have in my congregation have been through Cursillo. It is a weekend that members are encouraged to become leaders in their congregations and supportive of their pastors. For the first time in my ministry I now have people who will come to me and pray for me."

- **Pastor #13**

"The positive impacts that Cursillo has had in our church are:

- A greater sense of partner in working for God's Kingdom.
- A greater level of participation and commitment to the work of the church. - A better sense of God's love for them.
- A greater willingness to be a part of a loving family environment with an increased level of trust."

- **Pastor #14**

"Those who have attended a Cursillo weekend are very active people. Cursillo has fostered several small group Bible studies that meet regularly. A great many of the Cursillistas have a deeper, more personal faith in Christ and a greater desire to find their place of service in the church."

- **Pastor #15**

"Cursillo helps the people of God step outside their safety net of living on auto-pilot. It provides the wonderful time to toss aside your security blanket that keeps you safe in your cautiously controlled zone of comfort. Cursillo helps you wrestle with who you are, why you believe what you profess, and what you do to provide meaning and structure in your daily activities and relationships. And we Lutherans need to be pulled out of our comfort zone!"

- **Pastor #16**

"Cursillo can be a 'breakthrough experience.' Cursillo can expand one's spiritual needs, and is a viable spiritual journey. A Cursillo experience can light the fire of lay leaders and provide spiritual renewal for those who are returning; to their church to serve Christ. It is definitely a win-win situation."

- **Past Bishop #1**

"We are still waiting at Bethany for the Spirit of Cursillo to sweep through us. Despite the continual up-holding of the experience as very special and needful, we've not had much response. Two women have attended subsequent to my weekend and the changes in the spiritual enrichment of each was immediately evident. One has subsequently moved while the other continues to spread the joy of the Spirit among us. We hope to have a couple of couples participate in the near future and get the grouping going."

- **Pastor #17**

### **Impact on those who attend a Cursillo weekend:**

"Over 50 members of Faith Lutheran Church in Huntington Beach have attended Cursillo. Most of those who attended Cursillo from the congregation were active in the life of the church, some became leaders and a few have lost interest in Cursillo activities."

- **Pastor #18**

"Only two couples from our church have attended Cursillo and both had life changing experiences. One of the husbands joined the church last Sunday after sitting on the fence for many years. The wife of the other person attending made a commitment to Christ and has been attending church with her husband. Both couples have been very excited and encouraged by their experience. These two couples make up the heart of our Christian Education leadership. One teaches our only adult class and another teaches our only children's Sunday School class! Although both couples support both VDC and Cursillo, it is too early to tell what the congregational impact will be. Both couples, well respected and well liked, still seem to get significant resistance about the weekends from those who haven't gone. Both couples also have been very supportive to me as their interim pastor, even more so since their weekends."

- **Pastor #19**

"It has been my experience that Cursillo is somewhat different from the Marriage Encounter community. Cursillo encourages church participation in all the areas of gifts that God has given. The church members of my former congregation who got involved, immediately became enmeshed in the activities and ministries of the church."

- **Pastor #20**

"Cursillo has had a very positive impact on those who have attended the weekend. I can't really tell if it has had any positive impact on the congregation as a whole because there are not enough who have gone through as yet."

- **Pastor #21**

"About 10% of St. Paul's confirmed members have now been through a Cursillo weekend. Almost all of those 25 people are in growth groups. Those people are rowing spiritually and are excited about serving. Some are taking on new areas of ministry, this has caused much of the congregation to sit up and take notice. They are impressed with what God is doing in the lives of these people."

- **Pastor #22**

"I am writing this letter to let you know of the very positive experience that I have had through Lutheran Cursillo in two different congregations since 1989. In fact, it has improved my ministry in some powerful ways. I believe that it changes people through the grace of God and causes them to be more loving and supportive."

- **Pastor #23**

**Impact on those who attend a Cursillo weekend:**

"Cursillo has been an opportunity for transformation and renewal for about 60 members of our congregation. These people have returned to the congregation as spirit-filled leaders who are willing to serve in any capacity where there is a match with the gifts they bring. I have also noticed that they do not look upon their experience as the pinnacle of their Christian walk, but are often the first in line to sign up for classes and experiences that will continue to expand their knowledge of Jesus and their spiritual formation as a disciple of Jesus. They have a greater attachment to the Church and are willing to be held accountable in small groups that originate following a Cursillo weekend.

They are the most faithful and caring supporters a Pastor could ever hope for. I am convinced that they are responding not on the basis of the Pastor's personality, but on the basis of obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ. The experience of Cursillo has helped these individuals to discover the healing power of God's Holy Spirit. They have experienced, first-hand, the power of prayer and returned equipped to share that blessing with others. Many of them return with a believing use of scripture, and all come to terms with what it means to take seriously God's Word.

Because of the many opportunities for sharing during a Cursillo weekend, these individuals have the capacity to become powerful witnesses to the transforming love of Jesus Christ in their lives. They are so encouraged when they return, that they are bold enough to share that Good News with others. Those who have experienced a Cursillo are leaven, salt and light in our community of faith here at Grace."

**-Pastor #24**

### **Impact on a Pastor attending a Cursillo weekend:**

"When I went on my weekend, Cursillo 31, I wasn't sure what to expect, yet I figured it would be similar to many of the `retreats' that I had been on over the years. Cursillo definitely rates as one of the most incredible, if not the most incredible spiritual experience I have ever had. The power of the Holy Spirit together with the awesome power Christ has in our lives became absolutely evident. I came away with a renewed understanding of what my purpose is as a Christian, and as a pastor. It gave me a new sense of hope for ministry in the Lutheran Church."

**- Pastor #1**

"I attended Cursillo #3 so that was a few years ago. I remember some of the silly things and some of the lay leaders came off rather coarse, but it was a growing experience and left a positive impression."

**- Pastor #2**

"My personal experience of the weekend as a pilgrim was thoroughly positive. I met some new friends, received some healing of wounds I was carrying, and was uplifted by the worship experiences and Communion celebrations. It was a marvelous experience, one for which I thank God. It helped me be encouraging to others and more generous."

**- Pastor #3**

"I found my Cursillo weekend to be one of the building blocks of my personal journey of faith. The fine organization of the weekend coupled with the fellowship and opportunities for sharing and learning made this an opportunity that I will long treasure and cherish."

**- Pastor #4**

"My personal experience on my Cursillo weekend was very refreshing. I received a call to the ministry. I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit within me. I was filled with compassion toward those who feel lost and rejected from our society. I also felt a responsibility to go and teach Jesus's commandment: `Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.' Matthew 28:19-20. I had an excellent experience of learning new things about God and His plans for all of us in our congregations. I was especially enlightened with the presence of Christ, and I freely received the Gifts that He bestowed on me."

**- Pastor #25**



### **Impact on a Pastor attending a Cursillo weekend:**

"Thursday night through Sunday I experienced Lutheran Cursillo, an exhilarating weekend of feeling God's presence, and an experience that was to be repeated one week later by my wife. I had heard some things about Lutheran Cursillo... very good things... but felt that I had attended many retreats, seminars, conferences, etc., and I might be just duplicating previous experiences. But, according to Lutheran Cursillo structure, one cannot attend unless his or her pastor has first attended. I certainly didn't want to stand in the way of some of them having a wonderful encounter with God. Besides, my wife said she wanted to have a Cursillo experience. So after pondering attendance at Cursillo for nearly three years, I finally made the commitment. Wow! What an experience! What a blessing!"

**- Pastor #29**

"I had an uplifting and meaningful weekend. I went with an open mind and wanted God to use it for my growth. This was not the case with some other pastors there. Attitude is important! Some will have to deal with the loss of control or feelings of low inclusion when this is going on. That's why it's not for everyone."

**- Pastor #5**

"My Cursillo weekend was the best continuing education experience of my ministry. Everyone who has been involved in the life of the Church deserves this retreat. For me it was a taste of what heaven must be like. It was a grace-full and grace-filled weekend. 'Just go!' a friend said to me and it was seven years before I found the time. This was a big mistake on my part. Being a part of this community has been very rewarding in my Christian journey."

**- Pastor #6**

"I felt the Lord's presence at both the California Cursillo and the Colorado VDC weekend that I attended so far. It didn't change my life dramatically, but Cursillo has been one of many rich growing experiences that I've been blessed with on my faith journey. God has so many good opportunities for all of us, it's sometimes overwhelming!"

**- Pastor #7**

"I was very impressed with the faithfulness and Christ-honoring aspect of the weekend. So much work expended FOR ME! It reminds us all how much the Lord loves us!"

**- Pastor #8**

"My personal experience was that I not only learned what flying was about, I learned to fly and have been able to lead others spiritually, and theologically into 'high flight.' I have continued to feel the profound depths of my faith experientially as I with more fervor study our ancient and evangelical teachings. I simply understand with my mind better because I can also feel with my heart — the faith of Jesus Christ."

**- Pastor #9**

### **Impact on a Pastor attending a Cursillo weekend:**

"I waited many years to make a Cursillo weekend. I was exhausted when I finally was able to go and so I struggled personally a lot on that weekend, even though I saw immediately the potential for personal renewal in Christ for both the individual and for a congregation, providing that the congregation carries through with the grouping after the weekend. Subsequently, I was a Spiritual Director on a weekend and that was a much better weekend for me as I was involved in doing what I do best... ministering to people in God's name."

- **Pastor #17**

"My own experience was positive; the weekend provided a spiritual boost."

-**Pastor #1**

"My personal experience with Cursillo was very positive. I had some trying things happening in my life at that time and was ministered to very effectively."

- **Pastor #30**

"My initial personal experience of Cursillo included frustration and alienation. I felt very pressured to go and didn't want to be there. Also, I had some reservations about some of the Cursillistas in my congregation at the time. They came across as insensitive spiritual giants and acted as if only Cursillistas could possibly know anything worthwhile about Christianity. This I believe, looms large in the minds of many pastors I talk with who have troubles with Cursillo. Other pastors just can't imagine another lengthy commitment or 3 days!"

- **Pastor #19**

"I have been a part of the Cursillo community since 1988. I began in the Arizona community but became involved when we moved to California. I have had the opportunity to serve on three weekends; one as a presenter and two as one of the spiritual directors. In each case, the blessings have been so wonderful that the sustaining love has held me for weeks. I look forward to serving on another team for Southern California or for the introduction to the San Diego area. Please call upon me."

- **Pastor #20**

"My personal experience on my weekend was positive, renewing and life giving to my pilgrimage."

- **Pastor #21**

"I went through Cursillo within my first year in this parish. The transition had gone well but there was a lot of grief still needing to be worked through and some parts of the transition still going on which were causing some worry at the time. The whole weekend was a healing experience."

- **Pastor #22**

### **Impact on a Pastor attending a Cursillo weekend:**

"My own Cursillo weekend was a great blessing. Perhaps what touched me the most was what I saw happening in the lay people working the weekend. I have never seen people work so hard on a church related project. Not only did they work hard, but they were filled with joy and love as they worked. In addition, for the first time, I witnessed the theology that I was taught in seminary come alive in Cursillo. I saw many people transformed by the grace of God through word and sacrament. There was no conditional language used nor subtle forms of works righteousness to manipulate a response. Only a sincere effort at bringing the free and unconditional love and grace of God to those in attendance. The results in the lives of our members has been wonderful. There is greater love. There is a greater desire to sacrificially serve. There is a greater unity.

It would be easy for pastors to poke holes in some of the things that happen on a Cursillo weekend. Sometimes I think that we can be too easily critical. I live to encourage pastors to think about what Cursillo can do for their congregations. If a pastor will keep that in mind, he or she will see that this is a tremendous resource for his or her congregation. For me, it has been one of the greatest parts of my parish ministry. Cursillo gets done in one weekend what it takes years to do on Sunday morning. "

**- Pastor #23**

"My personal experience on my Cursillo weekend was one of healing and comfort during a time of my greatest grief – the death of a son. The experience of community and the comfort of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, was a profound focus. I was so overwhelmed by the love of Jesus through the lives of each and every person on the weekend, that I learned to receive love in a whole new way. It was the receiving of that love that strengthened my ability to share Jesus' love with others. The truth is, we cannot pass on what we haven't first received. Experiencing the personal touch of our Lord Jesus Christ through other believers on that weekend, has made a profound difference in my ministry and enabled me to see God's healing hand at work in my life following the tragic death of a first born son."

**- Pastor #24**

### **Impact of Cursillo on the pastor's spouse:**

"My wife was overwhelmed with emotion following her weekend. It changed her life! Discipleship for her has taken on a new meaning. It taught her what it means to take up the cross and follow Jesus, and most of all, what it means to be a servant of Jesus Christ."

- **Pastor #1**

"The impact on my spouse was all very positive."

- **Pastor #2**

"She became ill and could not go to the weekend that was paired with mine. We had to wait to share the joy. The weekend was deep and rich for her, and has helped her find certain dimensions of community in Christ that have been a great blessing. She is able to encourage others into the experience, and has been richly supportive to them. The two of us served as team members on one women's Cursillo and were blessed to work together in that way."

- **Pastor #3**

"My wife was also deeply moved by the weekend and in it she found a new depth to her faith. Friends made during her Cursillo weekend continue to support her through prayer and fellowship."

- **Pastor #4**

"My husband had a positive experience. After being at Cursillo, he was able to write four songs. In these songs he praised God and told others how he had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ! He now has a ministry of helping others in any way he can. His life has really changed for good!!"

- **Pastor #25**

"My wife was ready to attend long before I was. She has enjoyed this Spirit-filled fellowship where she could be herself both on her weekend and at the monthly get togethers. This Christian fellowship has been a real blessing for both of us."

- **Pastor #6**

"She enjoyed her weekend too, but is at a stage in her life where she is trying very hard to learn to say 'no' to so many things related to the church, since she is also traveling fairly often with her fulltime ministry at Group Publishing... AND we have 3 busy, active little boys!"

- **Pastor #7**

"My wife is a better wife than I deserve. She is a saint ...was a saint before Cursillo... is still a saint. She said it was a good weekend. If she says that ... it is!"

- **Pastor #8**

### **Impact of Cursillo on the pastor's spouse:**

"My spouse has grown in her faith. Coming from a traditional religious background, she never really understood what faith was (a rural former Roman Catholic from Mexico) — but she understood religiosity. For her, faith became a joyous celebration, not an obligation."

- **Pastor #9**

"My spouse's reactions to the weekend were surprisingly similar to mine, even though I scrupulously respected the rubric of not discussing my weekend with her until after hers. She is an R.N. with 20 years experience in psychiatric nursing and was, if anything, even more turned off by what she also perceived to be emotionally manipulative techniques. She came home with a stronger impression than I received that she had been pressured to acknowledge some sort of spiritually\_ profound experience on the weekend. Both of us had the reaction several times: 'I'm glad something exciting is happening for you here, but I have had these experiences many times throughout my Christian walk. I'm happy you are discovering fire, but that fire was kindled in me long ago, and I would appreciate it, if you didn't question that, or, even worse, almost seem to resent it.' I tended to chalk that up to naiveté; my wife to arrogance."

- **Pastor # 31**

"There has not been any impact on my spouse because she has yet to attend."

- **Pastor #11**

"Laura had a delightful time. A very spiritual person to begin with, she found the mutual edification of the sisters in Christ to be most meaningful — she was and still is smarting from the loss of her mother very suddenly in June 1991. She found others similarly situated and was able to find strength through those contacts."

- **Pastor #12**

"My wife was given access to a new community with good people that have become good friends."

- **Pastor #13**

"My spouse was prepared by God through her weekend to accept the possibilities God had in store for her and her family (namely becoming a 'Pastor's spouse'). Also, it enabled her to sustain throughout my time in seminary by having a local Cursillo community in which to draw and share strength from when it was most needed."

- **Pastor #14**

"My wife had a good, spiritually enriching week-end too. She felt that the week-end enabled her to draw closer to the Lord in faith."

- **Pastor #15**

### **Impact of Cursillo on the pastor's spouse:**

"The impact on my wife was very positive."

- **Pastor #7**

"The impact was positive for my wife also."

- **Pastor #18**

"Her experience was not as positive as mine. She was going through a great deal of stress and couldn't assimilate much of the weekend. Her total weekend was positive and she was happy to have attended, but it was working Cursillo weekends at a later date that had the most impact on her life."

- **Pastor #27**

"My wife and I were active in the Arizona community, but has had little contact since moving here. Unfortunately, our congregation has not had the privilege of being a part of the Cursillo experience, because the distance is somewhat prohibitive. I am looking forward to helping establish a community within the San Diego/South Orange County area."

- **Pastor #20**

"The impact on her was not as powerful. She has worked a weekend after her weekend but is not as motivated to serve in Cursillo as I am."

- **Pastor #21**

"My wife is a lady who has been somewhat leery of retreats etc. due to some negative experiences along the line. She had a great weekend and now is very hard at work supporting all who attend, leading a growth group, and she had a great experience working on a recent weekend."

- **Pastor #22**

"My wife experienced Cursillo much later, and it was a source of great renewal in our relationship. It deepened our sense of intimacy because we had the opportunity to share in the most intimate part of our lives, our faith in Jesus Christ. We talked about our mutual experiences, we discussed the truth of God's Word that was shared during the weekend, and we began a prayer life together that we had only experienced alone prior to the Cursillo weekend."

- **Pastor #24**

## **Statistical impact of Cursillo:**

"I have only been at our church for ten months and we've only had seven attend thus far, although we have about ten more applications in for the next weekend. With more people attending in the future, I am looking forward to seeing the impact it will have on our congregation. The people who have gone already, are using their gifts in ways that they wouldn't have otherwise. They are 'on fire' for the Lord and are so excited about serving. For example, one of those who attended, is now getting back into playing the guitar and is helping with the music for our Sunday School."

**- Pastor #1**

"Eleven people from here have gone through the weekend. Some have moved elsewhere by now. Still there are seven 'Cursillistas' in the congregation, and one more who will probably join us after graduation."

**- Pastor #3**

"Over 20% of our confirmed membership has participated in this weekend of renewal and reflection. As they return to the congregation, they are filled with a new spirit of devotion and commitment to our Lord and His ministry. It is not by coincidence or accident that the vast majority of our leaders have experienced the joy of Cursillo."

**- Pastor #4**

"Of the community at this church, I can point to over 50 people who have attended a Cursillo or a similar three-day weekend as a direct result of my people helping them get there. Anything from sponsoring to working to help others in their journey to get to know Christ personally."

**- Pastor #14**

"We can point to 75 people who have gone through a week-end and appear to be more dedicated Christians. One reason for the growth in worship attendance at Mount of Olives may very well be the influence of Cursillo people. There has been an attempt on the part of the senior pastor to have every council person and every member of the church staff as well as key leaders go on a Cursillo weekend."

**- Pastor #15**

"Today at Resurrection there are over 70 people who attended a Cursillo weekend. It changed the congregational attitude. More prayer time. More Bible stud opportunities surfaced. At Mount of Olives during our time there, we also saw the impact of Cursillo on the spiritual growth of the congregation."

**- Pastor #16**

### **Statistical impact of Cursillo:**

"Nearly every key leader at our church has attended a VDC or Cursillo weekend. It took several years of gentle persuasion until some momentum developed from those who attended these weekends. Key people opened the door for like-minded people who came back inspired, encouraged and ready to commit themselves to ministry involvements. I credit these three day movements with greatly helping to invigorate an already vital congregation. As the pastor, I received great support from people who had attended one of these weekends."

**- Pastor #19**

"I can site no statistics to support a positive impact of Cursillo on the congregation. I can only say that all the members of the congregation that have gone through a weekend have related what a positive and renewing experience it was. All of them have mentioned the love that they felt and experienced on the weekend. I wish I could get those same folks to be more aggressive in asking others to attend a weekend."

**- Pastor #21**

"In my congregation, 8 of my 9 church council members have gone through Cursillo. We also developed a 'Board of Elders' who are lay ministers who meet with me once a month for theological training. They are a 'lay' extension of the pastor's office, especially in shut-in visitation, Eucharistic assistants and lectors 8 of 9 Elders have gone through Cursillo."

"As each person returns from their Cursillo weekend experience, they return prepared to do 'one' thing for the church. I always directed them to teach Sunday School. As our Sunday School program for children grew, they became teachers of the faith. More parents and families came more people went through Cursillo and the impact was as follows:

- We grew from an average worship attendance of 55 to 210 in less than six gars.
- We started a Praise Service and a Contemporary-Blended Service in addition to our continued LBW Service.
- 28% of our Confirmed Members are tithers.
- 13% of our budget goes to general benevolence and 3% more goes to Mission Partners.
- We have 5 adult Sunday School sessions with 50 adults participating.
- There are 4 Cursillo prayer groups during the week and several lay led Bible studies and devotional meetings.
- We have a multi-year vision plan and can see that we will confidently approach the 1200 worship attendance level in the next several years.
- Personally, I do a lot less work since I have a lot of well trained, gifted and motivated lay ministers who can think on their feet and are not afraid to fail.
- Other than Church Council meetings, I don't attend any committee meetings'

**- Pastor #9**



"About 10% or 25 members have attended Cursillo and nearly 100% of those 25 are in growth routes. And I would add that they are all actively promoting Cursillo all the time among their friends in the church."

- **Pastor #22**

"I believe the Cursillo community has had a positive impact on strengthening our internal sense of commitment to follow Jesus at every turn. It is the members of the Cursillo community who are leading our prayer ministry. It was leadership from the Cursillo community who guided our stewardship program to a 22% increase in giving this year. It is the members of our Cursillo community who are leading the evangelism efforts in our Evangelism Explosion ministry and in our new Alpha course. It is the members of our Cursillo community who are first in line to begin new ministries to reach the hurting, lonely and impoverished.

I believe they are involved because they take seriously the teachings of God's Word and respond obediently with lives that are open to the prompting of His Holy Spirit. They trust that God can do amazing things in these ministries because He has already done amazing things in their lives. That positive influence has helped to sustain our continued growth as a congregation."

- **Pastor #24**

### **What would you say to a pastor who has not attended a Cursillo?**

"I recommend that all pastors attend because the Cursillo experience cannot be duplicated, even remotely, in the parish setting, or a retreat setting. In my opinion, it is the most effective way to get pastors and laity motivated and enthusiastic about being a disciple of Jesus Christ. When pastors send the laity to Cursillo, it accomplishes something in one weekend that may never happen in a lifetime of normal church attendance and participation. I have never witnessed the TRANSFORMATION of lives like I have on these weekends. And the church reaps the benefits of these changed lives as they go back to their church. What pastor wouldn't want that?"

**- Pastor #1**

"The Church is not a building, it is not a steeple, it is PEOPLE, and we need to empower the laity if we are going to get the Great Commission and the Great Commandment accomplished in our midst. It's all about equipping the saints for ministry. We need to multiply ourselves if we are going to make any sort of impact on this dying world. Keep this high goal and purpose ever before the eyes of the leaders and workers."

**- Pastor #2**

"Motivating another pastor to attend is not the easiest thing. It takes some kind of conviction and courage for a pastor to take the plunge into this unknown. I have not heard anyone in pastoral ministry in our circles who did it knock it. I have heard many in our synod who did it, praise it and support it and radiate a lot of joy in the process. If a man is moved by the Spirit of the Lord to take part in spite of the elements of suspicion in the environment, I think he will be glad to have yielded to that nudging. I believe he and his wife will be blessed; and by God's moving grace, so will that congregation and the wider circles of the Church."

**- Pastor #3**

"I invite and encourage all pastors to consider this unique opportunity for spiritual growth and development. You will be blessed by Cursillo's commitment to the core values of our Lutheran faith and tradition which are shared in an atmosphere of informality and openness."

**- Pastor #4**

"I would urge other pastors to attend Cursillo. They would have an uplifting experience and Spiritual renewal. It was exciting and invigorating to be with others to share the same belief I have."

**- Pastor #25**

"My wife and I have been able to help in getting this program started in Colorado and our next two weekends will be in November of 98. We look forward to our next experience of being together with God's people."

**- Pastor #6**

### **What would you say to a pastor who has not attended a Cursillo?**

"I would encourage any pastor that wants to `fire-up' some folks to try a Cursillo weekend and certainly to be open to encouraging members to participate."

- **Pastor #7**

"It is their responsibility to endorse by involvement any and every program that is this faithful to Christ and as influential as Cursillo! Cursillo is a partner in Christ's mission and ministry!"

- **Pastor #8**

"My comments to a pastor who might be interested would be to say:

- if you are really interested in working smarter and not harder;

-if you really want to see the priesthood of all believers take over their own ministry - if you are looking for a program/experience that equips the saints for their ministry;

- if you really want to reach the `intellectual' Christians with an immersion experience that is lay led and clergy supported;

- if you are interested in church growth: both qualitatively and quantitatively; THEN, Cursillo is certainly worth the time and effort."

- **Pastor #9**

"Whenever I am asked how I feel about the Cursillo community at Bethel I say that it has been a mixed blessing. There have been some serious problems. There have been some fine blessings. In my opinion at the moment, the plusses outweigh the minuses."

- **Pastor #26**

"I would say to any pastor who has not attended to attend first for your own sake as you will get much from it."

- **Pastor #11**

"In order to motivate a pastor to attend, I frankly would ask him to come with an open mind, to allow God to work in his week-end in whatever way He wills. I would encourage him by telling him how much of a difference it has made in other pastors' lives. I would remind him that we didn't learn these things at seminary, and most of us did not find these things in the daily routine of our parish ministries. I would somehow try to indicate the total sacrifice that others are planning to give, in order that he/she might have a spiritually rewarding and uplifting week-end. I would encourage him/her to talk with other pastors who have attended."

- **Pastor #12**

## **What would you say to a pastor who has not attended a Cursillo?**

"This is what I would say to another pastor: The work of the ministry can be mundane. There are people to see in hospitals and those that are shut-ins, Bible Studies and sermons to prepare, counseling sessions to hold and administrative duties to perform. Lutherans are at their best `watering and nurturing' the crop. Cursillo gives us a time to be a part of the harvest. While I don't understand how it happens, I have seen people who finally understand faith. Who are finally willing to trust? Who, for the first time, `get it.' To be a pastor at a Cursillo weekend is to be re-energized for ministry."

**- Pastor #13**

"First is that you owe it to your flock to know (first hand) what they have experienced in Christ. Second is that you owe it to your spouse or loved one. And finally, you owe it to yourself to find a special blessing that God may want you to experience for you, not just Pastor (your last name), but (your name)!"

**- Pastor #14**

"A pastor should go for the sake of your own and your spouse's) spiritual uplift and renewal. You need to know about one of the vital lay ministries in the church, so that you may have a leadership and encouraging influence. Cursillo can have a very positive, renewing influence on your congregation. The pastor must go before he can approve lay people going. If you don't go, your people will be deprived of a wonderful spiritual opportunity."

**- Pastor #15**

"I would encourage any pastor who is looking for spiritual renewal for their parish to attend and have lay people attend Cursillo. It will definitely change them for the good of the Kingdom."

**- Pastor #16**

"It is difficult to get clergy to add anything to their already overworked schedules. Our method was to have members of their own congregation make the weekend and then "recruit" the pastor(s)."

**- Pastor #7**

"I really do believe that the Cursillo movement has the potential for opening both individuals and congregations to the workings of the Spirit. I believe that the Cursillo movement could change the world in Christ's name."

**- Pastor #17**

## **What would you say to a pastor who has not attended a Cursillo?**

"I would encourage a pastor to attend Cursillo to have the opportunity for a spiritual battery charging. To the extent his own experience is positive; he will work at involving his members. If a pastor comes into a congregation that has members involved with Cursillo he might be encouraged to attend that he might share their experience to better understand their joy and enthusiasm. He will also be able to provide leadership, direction, and strategy for the utilization of the Cursillistas zeal for the growth of the Kingdom."

**- Pastor #18**

"I know of one pastor who went to the weekend so down on his ministry that he was actually considering either resigning or taking an early retirement. He came away from Cursillo with a renewed vigor and enthusiasm for his ministry."

**- Pastor #12**

"My greatest joy in ministry centers around seeing people get excited and motivated about their Christian faith. Cursillo invariably helps people to get a handle on what it means to be a disciple. I see immediate changes in people who have been unresponsive to the minimal input I can have on them in a few minutes on any given Sunday morning."

**- Pastor #19**

"I would tell a pastor that the weekend will give him/her a tremendous spiritual experience for the family. It will be a great experience for the congregation if it is not allowed to create division and hurt feelings."

**- Pastor #27**

"Equally important for the pastor and the church members, Cursillo is a gift you allow yourself to receive. The very nature of the program is It is an enactment of God's love and grace. I wholeheartedly encourage every pastor and spouse to get involved so that their churches can become involved in this wonderful gift."

**- Pastor #20**

"What would I tell another pastor that would motivate the pastor to attend? That's a hard one! I think the biggest factor is trust. If I could say, 'Trust me! You will love Cursillo! You deserve to be refreshed and blessed by the weekend.' The pastor may respond in the affirmative. However, like in everything else, Cursillo is not for everyone. A pastor who has rigid theological and ecclesiastical points of view will not enjoy a Cursillo weekend. One pastor I know who went through a weekend was really bothered by some of the talks by the laymen. He felt the theology was not good. S000, there we are."

**- Pastor #21**

**What would you say to a pastor who has not attended a Cursillo?**

"Do you want a program that you can offer to your people which will motivate people who are on the fringe to become active members, perhaps even leaders? Do you want a program that can give active, tired, dedicated laity a spiritual lift, maybe even a new lease on life? Do you want a program that is Word and Sacrament centered, truly inter-Lutheran, and led by the most dedicated group of laypersons of all ages from young adulthood on up? If you answered yes to any of the above, then Cursillo is for you!

- **Pastor #22**

"I urge you to go to Cursillo and then to send your members. It will also be a blessing to you as a pastor. So much of the time we are criticized and people point out our shortcomings. Cursillo will be a time of renewal in which you will be loved in ways that will encourage you. Think you will find, like I have, that this has a rich ability to help us in our parish."

- **Pastor #23**

"To my brothers and sisters serving in leadership positions as Pastors, I offer a strong word of encouragement for you to consider Cursillo. If you are suffering from personal burnout or professional exhaustion and find yourself looking for spiritual renewal, believe Cursillo is a resource that you should experience and just see what God will do to heal your heart, strengthen your spirit, and renew your life.

Furthermore, if your congregation needs renewal, and you would like to see them take seriously the priesthood of all believers, then you must give your people a chance to be a part of this renewal movement. It will provide renewed strength for your community spirit, it will increase your pool of volunteers and leaders, and the Cursillo community will become a source of ongoing support for your leadership and God's direction for your congregation. What I have discovered is that I need to do less and less because God's Holy Spirit, working through His people, is able to do much more than I ever could by myself. Trust God in this matter and just try it."

- **Pastor #24**