

Spiritual Development for Inquirers and Candidates

I. The role of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry

A. To provide a framework, a context, and some parameters in which inquirers and candidates can talk about

- a. their encounter with God*
- b. the consequences of their encounter with the Almighty*
- c. how that encounter with God continues to play itself out and to shape the decisions and directions of the inquirer or candidate.*

CPMs are to encourage inquirers/candidates to articulate feelings about their journey with God and be prepared to find themselves on the receiving end of many rich and moving exchanges with inquirers/candidates. The content of these sharings includes:

- Who God is for me?*
- Where God is for me?*
- How God is for me?*
- When do I seem closest to God?*

B. To formalize CPM intentions to pursue diligently certain specific goals needed for deep spiritual growth using Covenant Agreements

- a. During the earliest days of Covenanting and during Annual Consultation, inquirers/candidates are to be encouraged to identify and list specific disciplines they intend to practice in order to grow spiritually.*
- b. CPMs are to communicate intentionally the concern of giving TIME for spiritual growth, a vital priority concern, not just another hoop to jump through.*
- c. Inquirers/candidates need to be told that spiritual growth is an ongoing lifelong process that must be undertaken with intentionality and seriousness if there is to be results.*

C. To identify areas in which to stimulate or encourage persons to explore their faith journey or to expand it further.

- a. Utilizing spiritual guides/directors.*
- b. The GOAL is for believers to be formed and molded by the Spirit of Christ into the likeness of Christ.*

D. To demonstrate a capacity to grow in faith, to show compassion, to be forgiving, and I to speak the truth to inquirers/candidates in love.

- a. CPMs are to be mindful of their own living faith experiences.*
- b. CPMs are to take continuing prayers and nurture and growth of persons for ministry seriously.*

c. CPMs are to prepare themselves for dialogue, engagement and growth in spiritual development.

d. CPMs are to be mindful of inquirers/candidates,

whose seminary experience has been dismantling,

who are trying desperately to reconstruct what they believe

who are struggling to understand their call to ministry in the context of a society and world beset with problems of affluence, militarism, and poverty,

who are struggling with the Presbyterian Church itself; its image, style and challenges .

II. The role of the Sessions and Liaisons

A. To take continuing prayers and nurture and growth of persons for ministry seriously.

B. To listen actively the faith journeys of inquirers/candidates and to be supportive.

C. To assist inquirers/candidates in seeking spiritual growth through actively participating in worship and in the corporate life of the congregation.

III. A list of some specific disciplines to practice for spiritual growth:

A. Designated times for prayer

B. Designated times for devotional

C. Designated times for scripture

D. Reading and reflection

E. Designated times for dialogue with Spiritual Director or Spiritual Partner

F. Designated times to seek/experience God's presence while exploring one's "ordinary" world.

G. Taking a course in Spiritual Formation or meditation.

H. Visiting retreat centers with designed programs for spiritual growth and development.

*I. Entering dialogue with seminary personnel in areas of spiritual development. *

J. Designing personal spiritual retreat experiences.

K. Keeping a spiritual journal of one's pilgrimage during the preparation process.

L. Keeping a journal of prayer or a journal of reflections on scriptures that have been particularly meaningful in understanding one's call to ministry.

M. Reflecting upon learnings through direct exposure to the harsh realities of this life and encounter with the problems of our world.

N. Reflecting upon learnings through failure, pain and suffering.

Excerpts from a speech of the Rev. Charles Marks. EH/8/96