

Canadian Anglican Cursillo

Revitalizing a Cursillo Movement



The NEC publication, *“The Health and Well Being of the Movement”* states that Cursillo has a single purpose and when individual Movements lose sight of that purpose, they can be seduced into other paths of focus. The Cursillo purpose is to convert Christians to a deeper relationship with God and to help them to understand their individual calling to be Christian leaders.

Two of the symptoms of this degeneration are identified as:

- using only a part of the method, for example – being weekend focused and putting on weekends without developing a 4th Day (i.e. lifelong spiritual growth) program; and,
- using Cursillo as a panacea for all the problems and limitations people may have, rather than focusing upon identifying and equipping strong Christian leaders.

Another symptom of a Diocesan Cursillo Movement which needs revitalization is *“Cursillo-itis”* which demonstrates itself as people wanting to control Cursillo activities, changing the Cursillo method, and becoming “career Cursillistas” (i.e. always wanting to be on a weekend team; not wanting to give up a position on Secretariat, etc.).

The National Episcopal Cursillo publication *“The Health and Well Being of the Movement”* offers a number of prescriptions for Movements which are facing challenges to their vitality. Three of these seem to relate closely to the need for revitalization in the particular areas we are concerned with:

1. Plan for your Secretariat and Servant Community to Study the “basics” of the Movement during periodic meetings or during a specific retreat or other “away” setting. [Include your area representative from the Canadian Anglican Cursillo Secretariat in the planning and implementation of this endeavour.]
2. Schedule a CLW (Cursillo Learners Workshop) – the purpose of which is to revitalize the Movement by recapturing the vision of what Cursillo is designed to do and how the design is to be implemented. Part of a CLW is to have the Diocesan Movement develop a plan for what it will do in the future. CLWs are offered by CACS with the support of Diocesan Secretariats.
3. Appreciate and support those who take on leadership roles within the Cursillo Community. Encourage participation by all, not just a few. Remember, the Servant

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Community and the Secretariat, are training grounds for future leaders. No “in group” of Cursillistas should dominate the leadership in either group for years.

Communicate faithfully with all Cursillistas. Recruit those who seem to be bearing fruit but remain on the fringe. Look for opportunities to work with different persons, rather than the “same old bunch”. Pray for those who seem distant to the Cursillo Movement. The Secretariat and Servant Community should accept criticism or negative comments and grow from them.

Finally, Leaders should not be discouraged when some become disinterested in the work of Cursillo. Remember, it is the Spirit, not you, who moves the hearts of people to do various ministries. He may be moving some people to do other ministries or may not want some people to be involved in Cursillo at a particular time.

What does a “healthy” Cursillo Movement look like?

Movements that are thriving have an active Diocesan leadership which subscribes to the authentic Cursillo method. Good parish-based leadership, with strong Sponsorship practices and Cursillistas active in their 4th Day are also indicative of healthy Cursillo Movements.

Here are some of the ways to ensure that you maintain an active and vital Cursillo movement:

- **Put God first**
- **Focus** on supporting the entire Cursillo movement with prayer
- **Put the Fourth Day first** and become a community focussed on piety, study and action, rather than making the weekend the focus of Cursillo
- **Ensure** that repeated Secretariat or weekend participation by any one individual does not occur. Encourage the growth of **new leadership** through Servant Community activities.
- **Authentic and spiritual activities** are the focus of the community and the weekend
- Allow **adequate time during the 3-Day Cursillo Weekend for candidates to pray and reflect**
- **Acknowledge the value and talents** that each Cursillista brings to the Movement
- Ensure that Cursillistas are integrated into their **local faith communities** first
- Focus on the founder’s vision of **changing self and environments for Christ**
- **Recognize** that Cursillo is not just a “nice weekend” but a **method** to change the world for Christ.

Here are some recommendations which may help “revitalize” a flagging Cursillo Movement.

1. **Adhere to CACS guidelines (as well as NEC Guidelines) regarding the:**

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- a) Authentic Three Day Weekend – Team selection and development and the Weekend Agenda
- b) Sponsorship
- c) Fourth Day - Group Reunion, Ultreya, Servant Community/Leaders School
- d) Spiritual Direction
- e) Diocesan Pastoral Plan
- f) Diocesan Secretariat
- g) Respecting Personal Boundaries

2. Put the emphasis on prayer for the community

3. Put the Fourth Day first –

- a) Ensure that Group Reunions, Ultreyas, and Servant Community/Leaders Schools are the focus of the community and that these are held on a regular basis
- b) Ensure that the **Fourth Day** is emphasized on the Three Day Weekend and at the weekend Closing Service

4. Host a Cursillo Learners' Workshop (CLW), which is delivered by CACS, for the entire Cursillo community. This not only brings together the entire Diocesan community, but allows a single focus on the revitalization of an authentic movement within the Cursillo community

5. Offer a Day of Deeper Understanding

6. Offer a Grand Ultreya for the entire diocese and include a special “pot luck” before or after the Ultreya.

7. Offer to host the CACS semi-annual meeting, thereby allowing both the local Secretariat and greater Cursillo community to meet and discuss issues of local concern with the National Secretariat.

Other Ways to Help Build Community within your Cursillo Movement and Diocese:

- Celebrate your significant Cursillo community dates (e.g. special anniversaries).
- Plan, host and sponsor a prayer/praise event with a special speaker, or other workshop for the entire Diocese.
- Have a “back to Cursillo” Ultreya, similar to a “back to Church Sunday”.
- Ask your Diocesan Bishop to have a Bishop’s Teaching Day to be hosted by the Cursillo community.
- Host a special Prayer and Praise event or specific prayer vigil for the Cursillo Community and invite others to attend.
- Focus on a Cursillo-wide Apostolic Action project e.g. a Habitat for Humanity Build; a fundraising event to help support a particular Diocesan outreach mission or church outreach project.

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Lastly, be in regular communication with your Diocesan Bishop and your Canadian Anglican Cursillo Secretariat (CACS) representative for sharing of information and for help or clarification on issues. When these lines of communication are established, Movements will be able to respond quickly when issues arise.

Further References:

- NEC Library – Health and Well Being of the Movement 2008