

Shayla: Are you opposed to retreats like Cursillo, Walk to Emmaus, Tres Dies or Via de Cristo?

Meforshim:

First, let me say that I do not actively “oppose” the Cursillo movement. I would have to describe my feelings as ambivalent at worst, indifferent at best. This is because I have found it to be potentially dangerous (depending on who’s running the event) at worst and ineffective at best.

Cursillo is the original Catholic version. It has three offshoots:
Tres Dies – the charismatic version associated with the UMC
Walk to Emmaus – the regular UMC version
Via de Cristo – the Lutheran version

Not against – simply indifferent.

Not effective – GIGO – if you only get what you put into it, then the system itself is not really effective.

Generally opposed to anything that calls people away from church.

God did not establish parachurch organizations. It is the Church concerning which He said “the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” I agree that there may be times when special spiritual refreshment is due, but it should take place within the context of church, under the watch and authority of the church.

I generally oppose anything that requires secrecy.

Possibility of abuse due to isolation and intensity of time.

Gets people focused on an experience.

Get’s them to mistake an emotional feeling for spiritual renewal.

It often sets up an elitist attitude.

Says it wants to teach people to serve. I agree with the goal. However, it does so by having the people waited on hand and foot. I disagree with the method. What it’s doing is following the general humanistic philosophy that if you give people good info or good examples they’ll do the right thing or make the right decisions. We have thousands of years of sordid history to prove that theory wrong!

I have usually found two things:

Every time a group goes, one or two who come back give me fits.

Those who go most often are often my most emotional and thin skinned parishioners.

Chrysalis is the youth and young adult version of its parent movement, Walk to Emmaus. Chrysalis walks (or retreats) are called “flights” for 10th through 12th graders and “journeys” for young adults ages 19 through 24. Participants in the 72 hour retreats must be sponsored by alumni of previous retreats.

Walk to Emmaus is an adaptation of a Roman Catholic movement, Cursillo de Cristianidad, which means “little course in Christianity.” This movement, designed to empower persons to “Christianize their environment,” originated in Spain in 1948.

During the 1960’s and 1970’s, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and several non-denominational groups offered Cursillo. The first Cursillo weekend in the Episcopal Church was conducted in the early 1960's with help from Roman Catholic sponsors in the Diocese of Iowa. The doctrine taught in Cursillo was traditional Catholicism. In 1978, The Upper Room, which is the Spiritual Formation unit of the General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church, adapted the program for a primarily Protestant audience and began to offer it under the name The Upper Room Cursillo. The name was later changed to the more ecumenical Upper Room

Walk to Emmaus.

The Upper Room of the General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church sponsors both Chrysalis and Walk to Emmaus and offers them through local Emmaus groups around the world. Although connected through The Upper Room to The United Methodist Church, The Walk to Emmaus is ecumenical.

Most Christians believe the ecumenical movement is simply a movement for more unity among believers. That is not the case. The ecumenical movement was spawned in the Vatican with the express purpose of returning the separated brethren (Protestants) to the Roman Catholic fold. Walk to Emmaus and Chrysalis groups contribute to this purpose by introducing protestant believers to spiritual disciplines which include meditation techniques that have been, until more recent times, uniquely eastern and Roman Catholic in nature.

Before leaving for home, participants in the Chrysalis and Walk to Emmaus three day retreats are introduced to the concept of the Fourth Day. Fourth Day living includes follow-up with ongoing small group get-togethers and resources that Upper Room Spiritual Directors hope will continue to provide “spiritual guidance and nurture” to Chrysalis and Walk to Emmaus initiates. Recommended resources include authors who are Roman Catholic mystics such as St. Teresa of Avila and the Desert Fathers who are the Fathers of Contemplative Prayer. Books by Evelyn Underhill are also recommended as nurturing and guiding resources. Underhill was an Anglican mystic who believed that mysticism (meditation/contemplative prayer also known as “The Silence”) was the vehicle in which all religions could come into contact with the "Absolute" (God) however one perceived him to be—clearly not a concept found in scripture nor compatible with the exclusive gospel of Jesus Christ as the only way to the Father and to eternal life.

All denominations are participating in Walk to Emmaus retreats which are extremely seductive. Participants leave them claiming to be completely renewed, committed to Christ and on a spiritual high. It is difficult to argue with such lofty concepts as Emmaus walk initiates are encouraged to pursue—concepts such as piety (giving our hearts to Christ), study (giving our minds to Christ), and action (giving our hands to Christ). However, we must remember that Satan can and does appear as an angel of light. His ministers masquerade as ministers of righteousness.

These Chrysalis and Emmaus Walk spiritual renewal retreats are nothing less than a potent blend of rat poison. Rat poison is 98-99% good stuff. Furthermore, the higher the percentage of good ingredients the poison contains the more of it the rats are likely to ingest. However in the end, it doesn't matter how good the good stuff is, it's that tiny 1% of bad stuff that kills the rat.

Check out stuff on <http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/walktoemmaus.htm>