



Strength for the Journey

CREDO INSTITUTE, INC.
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Photo Credit: W.S. Craddock

Strength for the Journey CREDO Conferences, Haiti

Our journey is “a quest for wholeness [that] has to do with softening our edges and strengthening our center... When our edges are soft, we are able to cross boundaries into worlds different from our own and respond creatively to ideas and situations that otherwise would be experienced only as threat.”

—James C. Fenhagen
from *Invitation to Holiness*





CREDO Institute, Inc.

The Journey toward Health and Wellness

During the foundational eight-day CREDO conference, participants are invited to reflect on the journey to which God is calling them and to assess their areas of strength and their faithful response to God's call.

During 2010, CREDO Institute Inc. conducted 28 eight-day conferences, including two for lay employee plan participants, and reached a total of 680 conference participants.

In February, CREDO held its biennial convocation in Memphis with 180 participants. Fifteen participants were new faculty members who were trained in their respective component areas. CREDO also worked with a Strategic Planning Committee to outline proposals for future health and wellness programming for plan participants.

CREDO planned and held a series of overnight Strength for the Journey conferences for clergy and lay leaders in the four reorganizing dioceses of Pittsburgh, Fort Worth, San Joaquin, and Quincy. CREDO also held two eight-day conferences for lay employees and lay leaders in 2010, following an eight-day conference for the clergy of the four dioceses in November 2009.

CREDO completed the booklet *A Guide to Spiritual Practice* and used the reflections as part of the curriculum at the SFJ lay conferences and the SFJ diocesan wellness conferences. This collection of reflections, written by CREDO faculty members Renée Miller and Brian Taylor, will be published in 2011 as a book, *Strength for the Journey: A Guide to Spiritual Practice*.

In September, CREDO introduced a new Web-based Wellness Resource Center for post-conferences resources and identified four faculty members as Associate Web Editors for four component areas of resource development.

CREDO Connection and related email publications serve as a battery of post-conference resources and deepen the conference experience beyond the foundational eight-day conference.

CREDO Conferences

During 2010, CREDO Institute Inc. conducted 28 eight-day conferences, including two for lay employee plan participants, and reached a total of 680 conference participants.

During eight days of reflection and renewal, people who participate in a CREDO conference are invited to reflect on where God is calling them to go and to assess their own strengths along their vocational and spiritual journeys. Accompanied by an experienced faculty team, participants are encouraged to remember and to revisit seminal moments of their own journeys and to rediscover or discover anew their paths toward mindfulness and clarity in their vocations and personal lives.

In February, CREDO held its faculty convocation in Memphis with 180 participants which included 15 new faculty members, CREDO staff, Presbyterian CREDO faculty, CREDO researchers, and CREDO Advisors and Directors. The Convocation focused on Renewing the Vision and exploring ways in which CREDO can change in order to deepen the CREDO experience for plan participants.

Eleven conference types based on age, vocational status, and language reflect CREDO's process of discovery about what transformational learning environments work well. They are:

- CREDO I (39 & under)
- CREDO I (40-54)
- CREDO I (55+)
- CREDO I for Lay Employees
- CREDO I for Bishops
- CREDO I in Spanish
- CREDO for Retired Clergy (55-67)
- CREDO for Retired Clergy (68-79)
- CREDO II (54 & under)
- CREDO II (55+)
- CREDO II for Bishops

What will you tell your peers about this conference?

“That it has been the best experience that I have had during ordained ministry. I finally feel like the Church cares for me and its clergy.”

—Participant C208,
September 2010



CREDO Conference C195



CREDO Convocation with faculty, staff, researchers, advisors and directors, February 2010.



Strength for the Journey — Haiti

Kouraj pou vwayaj la – Ayiti

The earthquake that rocked Haiti on January 12, 2010, took 230,000 lives and added 1.5 million people to Haiti's homeless population. The tragedy left much of the capital city of Port-au-Prince in ruins, including the Episcopal Church's Cathédrale Sainte Trinité. In addition, 70 percent of the Diocese of Haiti's church buildings and more than half of its schools were destroyed.

For the Caribbean nation that perennially ranks as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, the rebuilding process of the country's infrastructure would be daunting. Less visible, however, but just as threatening to the Diocese of Haiti's recovery was the seismic shift in confidence of Haiti's church leaders.



Conference for clergy and families, June 21-25

Who would care for the caretakers in a country that lay in ruin? Where might the church leaders, whose communities were in chaos, find a renewed sense of confidence?

Within weeks of the earthquake, CREDO Institute, Inc. and the Church Pension Group (CPG), of which CREDO is an affiliate, responded. In March, the Rev. Bruce Woodcock, manager of International Relations for the Church Pension Fund's Policy, Education, Research and Church Relations, and CREDO Managing Director William S. Craddock, Jr. met with Bishop Jean Zaché Duracin in Miami to begin planning a series of four five-day conferences designed to offer respite, recovery, and coping skills to ordained and lay leaders of the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti. The Rev. Ron Crocker, a CREDO conference leader, served as project manager and led a faculty team of 10 including two translators and three mental health professionals. The faculty team led four conferences.

Under the banner Strength for the Journey-Haiti (*Kouraj pou vwayaj la – Ayiti* in Creole), CREDO held the first three conferences—June 21-25, July 19-23, and September 27-October 1—in Santo Domingo in neighboring Dominican Republic, which was not ravaged by the earthquake.

CREDO conducted the fourth conference on December 5–9, with 40 clergy and 135 lay leaders gathering in Montrouis, 75 kilometers north of Port-au-Prince. Holding the conference in Haiti offered logistical challenges, but also opportunities to more deeply understand the journey of Haiti and the Episcopal Church there. Midway through the five-day conference, Haiti’s electoral board released the contested results of the national election, which led to a night of rioting, looting, and street barricading. The violence prevented Bishop Duracin from traveling to the conference and two days passed before streets were safe enough for all the participants and faculty to return to their homes.

The goal of the series of Strength for the Journey conferences was to address the psychological and spiritual needs of the clergy and lay leaders as well as help them develop coping skills both for themselves and for the people in their Episcopal Church communities.

Based on analysis of pre- and post-conference surveys from participants at all four Strength for the Journey-Haiti conferences, several results were found. Participants felt overwhelmingly positive about the content and structure of the conferences, rating the conferences on average 6.59 on a seven-point scale. Participants listed several positive results from the conferences, including a stronger sense of community and team spirit, greater spiritual resources, a heightened awareness of the need for self care and wellness, and the tools and an ability to plan for the future.

Finally, participants in the Strength for the Journey-Haiti conferences experienced changes in several attitudes and beliefs as a result of the conference. Perceived burnout, or emotional exhaustion, decreased over the course of the June and July conferences. Also, increases were noted in support self-efficacy, spiritual self-efficacy, and confidence that goals could be met and problems solved.*

* Elaine Hollensbe, Ph.D., University of Cincinnati
Evaluation Report: 2010 Strength for the Journey-Haiti Conferences

Evaluation of Strength for the Journey in Haiti



Bishop Jean Zaché Duracin

“As we start to rebuild our churches, we must rebuild our personal selves to give us the strength to carry on. We now have a deeper understanding of the feelings that come with a disaster and how to cope with the stress and the pain. For many of us, it was the first opportunity to relax in a safe place because we feel the earthquake within us.”

—Bishop Jean Zaché Duracin
Diocese of Haiti

“I can say that I have felt that after participating in this series of conferences, my life has completely changed.”

—Lay Participant,
December 2010



Sister Kethia and the Rev. Père Frantz Cole

“I have found strength to continue in the journey; I have learned to like and care for myself, and how to reconstruct our community.”

—Clergy Participant,
December 2010



Faculty Team, December 2010

Strength for the Journey

Pittsburgh, Fort Worth, San Joaquin, and Quincy

Starting in 2008, four diocesan bishops and some diocesan and congregational leaders in the Episcopal dioceses of Pittsburgh, Fort Worth, San Joaquin, and Quincy realigned themselves with the non-geographic provinces and left the Episcopal Church.

In February 2009, CREDO's Board of Directors approved an initiative to address the health and wellness of the remaining Episcopalians, both lay and ordained, and the trustees of the Church Pension Fund allocated a \$1.4 million grant to CREDO to launch the Strength for the Journey project in the four re-organizing dioceses. The Ven. Richard I. Cluett, a CREDO conference leader, was appointed by CREDO to serve as the project manager while he served concurrently as the Presiding Bishop's Deputy for Pastoral Assistance to Reorganizing Dioceses.

CREDO held the first Strength for the Journey eight-day conference in November 2009 for clergy of the four reorganizing dioceses. In May and September 2010, CREDO hosted two similar eight-day Strength for the Journey conferences for lay employees and lay leaders in the four dioceses.

Through Strength for the Journey, CREDO also facilitated a series of two-day wellness conferences in each of the four reorganizing dioceses. The Pittsburgh conference was May 21-22. San Joaquin held a conference June 4-5 in Fresno. The Quincy conference was in Peoria June 11-12. The Diocese of Fort Worth conference was in Arlington September 24-25.

The Strength for the Journey initiative also helped Pittsburgh, San Joaquin, and Fort Worth implement Fresh Start—a diocesan-led program for clergy and congregations in transition that uses training and resources delivered and produced at the Churchwide level. Fresh Start initiated local leadership training in San Joaquin in 2009 and returned in the spring of 2010 to assist diocesan Fresh Start facilitators and clergy. In the dioceses of Pittsburgh and Fort Worth, CREDO conducted Fresh Start planning meetings with the bishops and senior staffs and conducted diocesan training events in October and November.



Diocesan Wellness Conference, Fort Worth

“This is my first convention and I am so impressed with all I learned. I have been in despair in my faith with the way my parish had been moving. Now I feel I am more ready and able to move forward in faith. Thank you so much for this!”

—Participant
Wellness Conference
Diocese of Pittsburgh

“It feels to me as though this experience has changed my life—or at least has opened for me the doors on a new path, a fresh start, leading to a richer and fuller exercise of the ministry the Church has given me. Thank you!”

—Participant CLE-11
Lay SFJ Conference

“We have more depth and leaders within our congregation than we ever imagined, even in congregations that were torn in half as mine was. This is very helpful. Love the quote, ‘Courage comes and goes. Hold on for the next supply.’ This conference was the next supply for me, for all of us.”

—Participant
Wellness Conference
Diocese of Pittsburgh



Diocesan Wellness Conference, San Joaquin



Strength for the Journey, eight-day conference



Exploring spiritual exercises at lay conferences

Resources for the Journey

CREDO Communication

CREDO is more than an eight-day conference experience. Many conference participants use the experience to retrace important steps along their personal journey of faith. Many others find new directions for their vocational and spiritual journeys.

CREDO instills in conference participants a deep, sustainable spirit of wellness and a commitment to a lifelong journey to improving their health and wellbeing in all aspect of their lives.

For that lifelong journey toward health and wellness, CREDO introduced in 2010 a communication strategy that included the development of a Web-based Wellness Resource Center and an array of post-conference resources that build on and deepen the CREDO conference experience.

As an online publication, *CREDO Connection* reaches 7,000 people with monthly updates and news on the CREDO program. *A Guide to Spiritual Practice*, launched in the fall of 2010, delivered bimonthly reflections to 2,300 people, helping them explore spiritual practice in everyday life. More than 1,200 people subscribed to an Advent daily spiritual reflection (and health tip from Medical Trust) through *A Window on Wellness*.

CREDO also developed and strengthened post-conference resources in the four component areas of Health, Vocational, Spiritual, and Financial and enlisted the assistance of four CREDO faculty members as Web editors.

In September, CREDO assisted the *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, a Public Broadcasting Network program, in the production of the feature story exploring factors contributing to clergy burnout and CREDO Conference C208 and Lake Logan in North Carolina served as the filming location for the special program.



Strength for our Journeys

Partnerships, Collaboration, and Research

In partnerships and collaborations with other agencies, CREDO's journey is one of empowerment and support. CREDO continues to collaborate with a network of wellness partners, principally Presbyterian CREDO, the other affiliates of the Church Pension Group, Fresh Start, and College for Bishops, and continues to sponsor specific areas of research.

The Presbyterian Church USA collaborates with CREDO to provide the CREDO program for Presbyterian pastors. Presbyterian CREDO has held a total of 27 conferences, six of which took place in 2010.

Fresh Start fosters healthy relationships among clergy and their congregations and dioceses during critical periods of transition in clergy leadership. In 2010, CREDO completed its fourth year as the lead agency of this Churchwide program that has 64 participating dioceses and performs the day-to-day management on behalf of the three sponsoring organizations—the Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Church Foundation, and CREDO Institute, Inc.

CREDO provides financial and administrative assistance to the College for Bishops, and works with the College's managing director, the Rt. Rev. F. Clayton Matthews, to oversee and manage seven different programs designed to support bishops from their election to their retirement. Eleven newly elected bishops and their spouses attended the New Bishops' and Spouses' Conference in January. Twenty-five bishop peer coaches attended a semi-annual Coaches' Meeting in March. Thirty-four bishops (elected in 2007, 2008 and 2009) attended the Living Our Vows Residency in May.

CREDO participated in the Church Pension Group Health and Wellness Task Force during 2010. The project continues to explore the feasibility of a comprehensive Health and Wellness strategy for the Episcopal Church.

CREDO Research

CREDO Institute, Inc. continued to work with other organizations and agencies, both within and outside of the Episcopal Church, in several key areas of research during 2010.



CREDO hosted a meeting in Memphis in December 2010 of Health and Wellness researchers

- CREDO partnered with the Church Pension Group and offices of the Episcopal Church Center to conduct research on the Emotional Health of Clergy and Issues of Ordained Women. A combined comprehensive and historical survey, “Called to Serve: A Study of Episcopal Clergy and Their Ministries,” was published in 2010.

- The Rev. Joseph Stewart-Sicking, Ed.D., and Dr. Matthew Price, Ph.D., presented data and analysis of the Called to Serve study to the biennial CREDO Convocation enabling faculty members to better serve clergy during CREDO conferences regarding issues of both emotional health of clergy and ordained women.

- In collaboration with the College for Bishops and the University of Cincinnati, CREDO Institute, Inc. continues the Emotional Health and Wellness of Bishops and Bishop Spouses Project. This multi-method study investigates the role and career transitions, role adaptation/ innovation, and wellness in Episcopal bishops and their spouses.

“Outside the congregation, our analysis shows that family dynamics play a major part in both constraining opportunities clergy have to further their careers and in affecting their sense of wellness.”

—“Called to Serve:
A Study of Episcopal Clergy
and Their Ministries”

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