

CareNet Counseling
Congregational Mental Health Literacy
Fall 2013

In 2008, CareNet, Inc. received a grant from The Duke Endowment to “develop and implement a counseling and professional services program for clergy and congregations to address issues that impact mental health.” From that initial grant support, CareNet now provides wellness opportunities, education, and counseling services to clergy and congregations across the state of North Carolina. During the next 12 months, we will provide approximately 40,000 hours of counseling services to people of faith in our state. We have developed formal and cooperative relationships as faith-integrated behavioral health providers with 5 denominations and countless local congregations across the state.

CareNet is also embedded in the Division of FaithHealth at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and actively connects congregations to the medical center and local hospitals to improve the health of congregants and communities.

This resource is one of the results of our collaborations with The Duke Endowment and FaithHealth. It is our third edition of **Congregational Mental Health Literacy** and is **designed to provide clergy and congregational leaders with resources to use in worship/preaching, education, spiritual practices, and pastoral care in and through congregations.**

The foundational scripture, 2 Timothy 1:7, used by our writers for this version align with our Million Acts of Kindness campaign, which began with a large community rally last fall and has been continued through the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools as a way to reduce incidents of bullying among youth and children in our community.

We invite you to read the resources, find creative ways to utilize them in your congregations and communicate with us about the conversations that are created. You can email us through carenet@wakehealth.edu.



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“God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.” 2 Timothy 1:7

Educational Resource by Lori Walke

2 Timothy 1:7 "God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline."

The author of the second letter to Timothy and his community was very focused on building up and encouraging those who read the letter. He wanted to remind them that they were loved and appreciated. In the verses just before our passage, he notes their sincerity and faithfulness. But the author knows that something isn't quite right in Timothy's community. When we read between the lines, we see that this early church was struggling with, among other things, self-doubt.

Take time to reflect individually or to discuss as a group the following questions:

- Think of a time when you felt alone in the midst of doubt or just discouraged.
- What is it like to be in that situation with no one else with you?

Many times in our own lives we need others to remind us not only that we have gifts and strengths that help others, but also that we are simply appreciated.

Take time to reflect individually or to discuss as a group the following:

- Make a list of the times you were encouraged by someone else.
- In what form did their encouragement take shape?
Through a letter, face-to-face, an email?
- How did their encouragement make a difference to you?



The passage reminds us of the great need we have for each other as human beings. Even if we are not struggling with self-doubt, depression, etc., a simple word of appreciation can make a big difference. We need others to remind us of our own gifts and value. The author

of this passage expresses how the community has encouraged him and is returning the favor. In turn, we are reminded of our responsibility to do to do the same for people who make a difference in our lives.

Take time to reflect individually or to discuss as a group the following questions:

- How do you show appreciation for others and remind them of their gifts and strengths?
- Reflect on the people who make a difference in your life, no matter how great or small. Your family? The janitor at work? The person behind the counter at the grocery store/drycleaners/restaurant?
- Make a list of ways you can encourage these people or communicate appreciation for them.

Pastoral Care by Samuel Stevenson

2 Timothy 1:7 "For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline." (NRSV)



Early in my ministry, an older minister, whom I had never met, sat quietly as other members of his committee examined me on my readiness to practice pastoral ministry in their presbytery. As the committee was approaching closure, the older minister broke silence and, with a deeply penetrating gaze, said to me, "Young man, I don't know what kind of Christian you are, but those trousers you have on, you may as well go and buy a new pair because you're going to wear those out on your knees." Then

he burst into great laughter. I found myself laughing nearly as heartily with him. Then everybody began laughing, seemingly confirming the wisdom of the moment that reminded us of our common dependence upon God's grace. I came before the committee full of fear and trembling, but the older minister's statement and approving laugh made me feel like his son. I was enormously encouraged.

Paul is that older minister for Timothy. Paul refers to Timothy as his own dear son, his beloved child. Paul was Timothy's mentor and role model. There is a genuine sense of inseparable togetherness. One can feel the depth of membership that each has in the other. Paul is the seasoned father figure in Christ. He knows the doubts and fears that cling so closely. He knows the road to life is hard and narrow. He knows that mortals forget the power inherent in their spiritual roots and need to be reminded of the gift within them. He knows that cowardice can hold sway when one forgets that the work is the Lord's. *For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.*

What Paul does in his pastoral ministry to Timothy is useful for ministering to people with a variety of human problems, including victims of bullying.

- We can take time with people and get to know them in a more personal way, that with better understanding our practice of pastoral ministry may have greater meaning and relevancy.
- We can show a concern for the hurting in our prayers, worship, fellowship, and community partnerships.

- We can build on family strengths by calling upon the spiritual resources of ancestors to remind those who are hurting that they are descendants of a great crowd of witnesses in Christ, and that they are God's children too.
- We can be mentors and role models to those who may be abandoned, rejected, and bullied, identifying with them and assuring them that somebody genuinely cares and will walk with them along life's treacherous paths.
- We can ask the Holy Spirit to help us keep the hurting constantly in our prayers so that all of our pastoral ministry will be by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Practice by Jane Litzinger

2 Timothy 1:6-7 "For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self discipline." (NRSV)

"Wake Up..."

We are the receivers of a wonderful gift. St. Paul's letters abound with images of the gift of God's saving love that has been given to us in the mystery of Christ. I never tire of recalling these words about our giftedness from John Shea, a favorite teacher for me about things spiritual. He says:

Although the spiritual is always present, people are not aware of it. If we think of this in terms of images, we can say we have a vintage wine cellar, and we rarely drink from it. We have an interior castle, and we seldom visit it. There is a treasure buried in our field, and we do not know how to unearth it. (See, *Spirituality and Health*, pp.94-95)



For Shea, our spiritual "problem" is that we live unaware of the wonderful gift of love that God has given to us. He uses familiar biblical images to explain our problem further: we are asleep, and we need to awake; we are blind, and we need to see; we are deaf, and we need to hear.

The author of our current text reminds Timothy (2 Timothy 1:6) to rekindle the gift of God that is **already** within him. This gift of God's love brings a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. Timothy is challenged to remember this great gift of God within and relying on that gift to be finished with cowardice and timidity.

The purpose of all spiritual practice is to help us wake up to God's gift already given to us. Simply, we practice paying attention to God's gift of love already within us. In the last year or so, a practice that has helped me to wake up, to pay attention, indeed to rekindle the gift of God's love within goes something like this. I say Psalm 23 very slowly, paying attention to each phrase, letting it be not a quick recitation to get through but a real declaration of

the truth of God's love and God's way with me. Now and then I visit Psalm 23 (or better Psalm 23 visits me) as I do laps at the gym or as I go to sleep or as I wake up in the morning. I encourage you to choose some psalm or prayer that you love and slow down as you pray it, pay attention, let it be a place where you can rest your heart and your mind, where you can find a moment of faith and hope in a too busy day.

Bishop Desmond Tutu has this wonderful idea that remembering God's gift of love within enables us to become what he calls a "center of love," an "oasis of peace," "a pool of serenity" with ripples going out to God's other loves, the brothers and sisters that are part of our lives. Listen to his words as he instructs us in those spiritual practices that help us wake up to ways we pass on the love God has given within us. Note that I took the liberty of underlining the spiritual practices that he suggests. I hope that his very concrete ideas will be a starting place for you as you wake up to the ways you are called to love those you engage in everyday living.

If more of us could serve as centers of love and oases of peace, we might just be able to turn around a great deal of the conflict, the hatred, the jealousies, and the violence. This is a way that we can take on the suffering and transform it. **Let us watch our tongues.** We can so easily hurt one another. Our harsh words can extinguish a weak, flickering light. It is far too easy to discourage, all too easy to criticize, to complain, to rebuke. **Let us try instead to see even a small amount of good in a person and concentrate on that. Let us be quicker to praise than to find fault. Let us be quicker to thank others than to complain. Let us be gentle with all God's children.** (See, *God Has A Dream*, p.80)

Preaching Resource by Rosa Miranda

2 Timothy 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." RVR 95

"For the Spirit God gave us is not of fear but of power, love and self-control." Pilgrim's Bible

"Because we the Lord gave us a spirit not of timidity, but of power and love and self-control." Jerusalem Bible

Throughout the Bible we see that at the end of their lives, many leaders leave a legacy of final instructions. And in the Epistles to Timothy, the apostle Paul from prison in Rome (or someone writing in his name) directs final words of encouragement and challenge about the complex situation "his beloved son Timothy" will face; and with him, men and women of his time, followers of Jesus Christ.

And although it is clear that the situation faced by Timothy in his ministry is different from the issue of bullying faced by our young people today, both situations have in common that they require certain values for personal and community life, as well as the construction of one's own resources to face adversity and injustice that inevitably will be part of life experience. (2:22)

And this exercise is done in the pastoral epistles to contextualize the teachings of Jesus to the reality of life in the community of faith, so that they bear meaning and relevance in the lives of believers in their own time and circumstances; we have done the same for young men and women faced with the reality of being young and a disciple of Jesus Christ here and now, in times of globalization and post modernity.



Because it takes the courage that comes from commitment to the living Savior to accept the tension between faith and daily life, to have the strength not to give in to peer pressure, to leave behind the fear of not belonging or being isolated, while choosing to be a positive influence.

Timothy had the influence and example of people who left positive imprints in the early years of his life, like his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. (3:14-15) And this brings us to the subject of the family - a concept very diverse and complex, but still the core where human beings learn and internalize their values, and their faith, through their experiences. (Deut. 6:4 to 9) It's important to note that values are observed and mimicked, and this is how we learn. What is our influence as parents? How do we prepare our kids for life?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches us the values of the Kingdom. Each of them involves responsibility and initiative and the realization that our actions have consequences, such as: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (Matt. 7:12)

The Kingdom values he teaches- justice, equality, dignity, solidarity and inclusion, among others - calls us to be a community of faith that is a safe and welcoming space in which it is possible to recognize and acknowledge the other as a person of value and dignity in Christ Jesus, with responsibility and respect.

He calls us to be a community of belonging in which it is possible to dialogue and discover that everyone can be part of the solution, to learn to listen and observe, to empathize but also, when necessary, to confront and resolve conflicts with wisdom, love and self-control that the Holy Spirit gives us. (2:25)

Self-control is possible from youth, through identity in Jesus Christ. (1 Tim. 4: 12; 2 Tim 2:22) One is learning to be an example - not a perfect one - but growing and building toward a full life - without bending, honestly before God and one's faith community. A mistake is an opportunity to learn and grow. What is our influence as a faith community? How do we support the participation of youth in the work for justice?

We do not like to talk about adversity and suffering - but even though we don't, both take place in our lives. We are sent by Jesus Christ to the world with the truth of His Word and His protection (John 17: 13 to 19). In his own context, Timothy is again and again alerted and challenged to focus his faith and hope in Christ Jesus in times of suffering, while being encouraged to choose and fight his battles wisely (2:15 -17; 3: 1 to 5). Following the parallel, let's open spaces at home and in the community of faith to raise awareness of what harassment (bullying) is and to explore how we can confront together. Let's affirm that it is unacceptable and share resources to learn to "fight the battles with wisdom and trust" if the situation arises.

Finally, Paul had Timothy, his ministry partner, but also a mentor and maybe even a father figure who had great influence in his life. He was someone Timothy respected and trusted. He was someone who in his most vulnerable moments was present with Timothy sharing

meaningful experiences to encourage him to continue living in the tension between faith and the reality of his life and ministry. How many of our young men and women need leaders that give them affection and trust, who will listen and pray for them? How are we preparing our leaders to identify and address bullying behaviors?