

A DIALOGUE WITH THOREAU

'I wish to speak a word for Nature'

Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), often referred to as the father of modern environmentalism, understood the intricacies of nature and humankind's relationship with the environment far before the environmental movement of the mid-to-late twentieth century. Born in Concord, Massachusetts, Thoreau spent his life observing and writing about the natural world in which he lived, publishing numerous writings including his most famous, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*.

Walden Woods is the site of his two-year, two-month and two-day experiment in simple living and communion with nature while living in a small self-made house on the shore of Walden Pond. On the basis of observations made within Walden Woods, Thoreau asserted the principle of land preservation, which ultimately became a model for our national park system. As he watched the land of his Massachusetts home being cleared to make way for agriculture and the trees used for fuel and building materials, he saw a future where conservation would become manda-

tory. He wrote, "Each town should have a park, or rather a primitive forest, of 500 or a thousand acres, where a stick should never be cut for fuel, a common possession forever, for instruction and recreation.

Of course, Thoreau was more than just an environmentalist. He supported free markets (which he called commerce) and opposed government regulation. He resisted taxes when those taxes went for activities that he considered immoral. The term "civil disobedient" was the title of one of his famous essays. He opposed slavery and advocated a government that recognize[s] the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly.

The excerpts for this dialogue session is from an essay titled "Walking" that Thoreau presented in his later years but only published after his death. It's best known quote, "In wildness is the preservation of the world," has become one of the rallying cries of the environmental movement. This essay is considered as one of the *Please see DIALOGUE, p. 6*

BASIC TOOLS || PART NINE {COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY III}

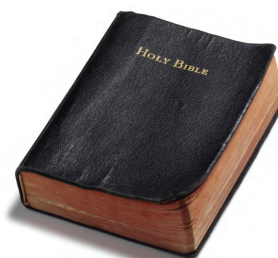
Using Community Bible Study in different settings

By Eric H. F. Law

In 1996, I began my ministry as the Congregational Development Officer of the Diocese of New Westminster (located in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, and its environs). On any given week, I would have one to three meetings with local church communities. As a discipline, I started each meeting with Community Bible Study because I believed that it was the best way to invite God into our midst before we entered into the work of the gatherings. After practicing this discipline for a few months, I began to hear complaints about the Bible Study process taking up too much time. The complaints usually came from larger groups. When I kept the process within half an hour, there usually was no complaint.

As a result of my experience, I decided to find ways to limit the Community Bible Study process to 30 minutes even when the group was large. Once I figured out how to do that, when I met with groups, I promised the participants that the Bible Study would only take 30 minutes, which would leave plenty of time for other business. There are two keys to keeping this promise:

1. Divide participants in to groups of five or six, making sure that each group has someone to facilitate the process.
2. Keep the first round of sharing brief. Remind participants that the first opportunity to share in the process is like a first *Please see BIBLE STUDY, p. 2*



Bible Study: Using it in different settings

Continued from page 1

impression on the text. There is no need to share more than the word, phrase or image that stands out for them. There will be more time for in-depth sharing after the second and third readings of the text. The first round of sharing should take no more than five minutes.

Determining How Much Time the Process Will Take

In general, each person takes about five minutes to share through the three rounds of Mutual Invitation. A simple way to determine how much the CBS will take is to multiply the number of participants by five minutes. For example, for a group of six people, the process will take 30 minutes. For a group of 12 people, if the group stays together, the process will take 60 minutes.

Community Bible Study as the Main Event

When the Community Bible Study is the main purpose of the gathering, there can be more flexibility in terms of time and

content. For a full description of a 2-hour Community Bible Study, see Appendix C from *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*. In this process, there are two added features:

1. Before the second reading, there is an opportunity for scholarly input. A facilitator can choose to do no more than an hour of research on the text and create a half page summary of Biblical scholarship that might include:

a. Word study – a certain word or phrase that participants will not be able to understand just by listening to the text.

b. Contextual information about the location of this text in the context of the book from which it came—that is, what goes before and what goes after.

c. Historical information about the text that participants will not have noticed by reading the text.

2. Another added feature is a time for sharing concerns after the third sharing and before the Circle prayers. This is a time

for participants to share their concerns for their personal lives, families, community, work and ministries. This is also a time to invite people to share specific prayer requests. This sharing will enhance the Circle Prayer in which participants usually cover all the requests without being specifically instructed to do so.

Again, be aware of the time required for all participants to share within the time set aside for the Bible Study. For a 2-hour gathering, the optimal number is 8–15 people. If the group is larger than 15, the facilitator can divide participants into two groups for the Bible Study portion of the gathering. Another option is to start a new group by commissioning half the group with a facilitator to go forth and begin meeting in a different time or location.

In next month's newsletter, we will explore how to use the Community Bible Study process as a tool for organizing, nurturing and growing a spiritual and caring spiritual community.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2007

Community Bible Study

NOVEMBER 18: *Luke 21:5–19*

✦ How does this passage help you deal with your fear?

NOVEMBER 25: *Luke 23:33–43*

✦ What did you learn about forgiveness in this passage?

DECEMBER 2 (beginning Year A): *Matthew 24:37–44*

✦ What does it mean for you to be ready for the coming of Son of Man?

DECEMBER 9: *Matthew 3:1–12*

✦ How does John the Baptist challenge your understanding of salvation?

DECEMBER 16: *Matthew 11:2–11*

✦ What does this passage tell you about the relationship between John and Jesus?

DECEMBER 23: *Matthew 1:18–25*

✦ What does Joseph's dealing with Mary help you receive Christ in your life?

We suggest that you study the Gospel passage one week ahead. For example, for the week of November 5–10, study the text for November 11. This way, the participants will go to church on Sunday having already listened and reflected on the Gospel for that Sunday.

These questions are suggestions only. As a leader of the Community Bible Study process, you need to keep the theme of the biblical text and the context of the participants in mind as you determine what is the most appropriate reflection question for your group.

(Go to our website at www.ladiocese.org/ki to download the Community Bible Study process.)

—Eric H.F. Law

Summer Institute set for July 21 to August 1, 2008

Put the dates down in your calendar for our Summer Training Institutes in Los Angeles. In 2008, in addition to offering the basic training courses for the first week, we are offering a new course on audio-visual and electronic media and how we can use them to build respectful, inclusive community. The details of the second week will be forthcoming in terms of leadership and cost.

PLACE: Cathedral Center of St. Paul • 840 Echo Park Ave., Los Angeles

JULY
21–23

Monday at 9 a.m.–
Wednesday at 12 noon

Fundamental Skills for Building Inclusive Community

JULY
23–25

Wednesday at 5 p.m.–
Friday at 5 p.m.

Models and Processes for Community Transformation

JULY / AUG.
28–1

Monday at 9 a.m.–
Friday at 5 p.m.

Creating Audio Visual and Electronic Media to Build Respectful Inclusive Communities:

- ✦ Understanding Visual Language and Its Impact in Interpersonal Communication
- ✦ Music for Building Inclusive Community
- ✦ Using Dramas to Foster Dialogue
- ✦ Creating Group Media
- ✦ Photolanguage
- ✦ PowerPoint Slideshow
- ✦ Video
- ✦ Making Room for Grace in the World Wide Web

Your contribution helps support this newsletter

⊕ CONTRIBUTION FORM to support the Kaleidoscope Institute's newsletter

NAME _____ MY CHURCH COMMUNITY _____

MY MINISTRY _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (DAY) _____ (EVENING) _____

E-MAIL _____

I would like to contribute the following amount to support the ministry of the Kaleidoscope Institute Newsletter:

AMOUNT \$ _____

Please make checks payable to the Kaleidoscope Institute.

Please send this completed contribution form to: Kaleidoscope Institute, Diocese of Los Angeles, P.O. Box 512164, Los Angeles CA 90051-0164

Kaleidoscope Winter Institute 2008

From Feb. 25–29, learn fundamental skills and ways to transform your community.

Next year's Winter institute consists of 2 courses, held at the Cathedral Center of St. Paul's Retreat Center (840 Echo Park Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90026).

FIRST COURSE

Fundamental Skills for Building Inclusive Community

In a fast-changing and diverse world, what skills do leaders need to practice in order to create a more inclusive environment in which people of diverse backgrounds and experiences are welcome and no one person or group is disadvantaged? In this foundational workshop, the Rev. Eric H. F. Law will guide participants through a practical and spiritual journey toward becoming competent leaders in a diverse changing world.

TOPICS TO EXPLORE:

- ✦ What is Culture and why are there cultural differences?
- ✦ Cultural Differences and their Impacts on our leadership
- ✦ Theological Reflection on multicultural leadership
- ✦ Skill, models and processes for building inclusive community
- ✦ Developing a spirituality for leadership in a diverse, changing world
- ✦ Training Modules I-VII of the Kaleidoscope Institute basic training (See website: www.ladiocese.org/ki)

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- ✦ People involved in small group ministries – bible study, youth ministry, adult forums, discussion groups.
- ✦ Chairs of committees and commissions
- ✦ Religious educators
- ✦ People who have read Eric Law's books and want to get a hands-on, in-depth experience in putting the theory, method, spirituality to practice.

FEBRUARY
25–27

Monday at 9 a.m.–Wednesday at noon

\$300 (includes meals beginning Monday through Wednesday lunch at the Retreat Center at the Cathedral Center of St. Paul).

Housing costs at the Retreat Center are \$45 per night.

SECOND COURSE

Model and Processes for Community Transformation

The Rev. Eric H. F. Law will share from his experiences in working intensively with over 300 churches in the U.S. and Canada over the last 10 years. What methods and processes work and what do not work for churches that find themselves in diverse fast-changing communities? He will discuss the impacts of cultural differences, specifically in communication and power perception, on church planting, revitalization, shared facility, cross-racial appointments, and cluster ministry development. How we can enable local churches to analyze their situations (their church culture, local community and social contexts) and move toward faithful and constructive change?

TOPICS TO EXPLORE:

- ✦ Impact of fast-changing community on community redevelopment
 - ✦ Impact of cultural diversity on church revitalization and new church development
 - ✦ Tools to enable local community leaders to analyze their organizational culture, local community and social contexts
 - ✦ A process for faithful transformation
 - ✦ Theological reflection on faithful transformation
- Training Module VIII-X of the Kaleidoscope Institute basic training (See website: www.ladiocese.org/ki)

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- ✦ Church leaders interested in church revitalization and congregational development from a multicultural perspective
- ✦ People involved in Interim Ministry
- ✦ Consultant and facilitators for communities in transition
- ✦ People involved in leadership development in local community

FEBRUARY
27–29

Wednesday at noon–Friday at 5 p.m.

\$300 (includes all meals beginning with Wednesday's lunch) at the Retreat Center at the Cathedral Center of St. Paul. Housing costs at

the Retreat Center are \$45 per night.

Kaleidoscope Winter Institute 2008

We recommend that you plan on arriving on Sunday, Feb. 25 and leave on Saturday, March 1. You will want to stay until 5 p.m. on Friday in order for us to cover all the course material.

The program will be more intense than the Summer Institute, without a one-day break in between the two courses. There will be evening classes on Monday and Tuesday. Therefore, do not plan any personal outings on those two nights. The evenings of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday are free.

Please inform us as soon as possible via e-mail if you are planning to come to this training at kscopeinstitute@aol.com. We will only hold the event when we have at least 12 participants.

I read *The Wolf Shall Dwell With The Lamb* a number of years ago and while I found it enlightening, I never put anything specific into practice. After attending an Eric Law workshop last fall, I have returned again and again to using 2 specific techniques in a variety of situations. These are the Community Bible Study and the concept of Mutual Invitation. I also gained new understanding of myself and the way I relate and work in groups. That has been helpful. What a gift his workshops are! Bottom-line—I learned more usable, put-into-practice concepts from him than just about any workshop (and that's been many!!) I have ever attended."

—RHODA PITTMAN MARKUS
RPM Consulting
(Consultant in Christian Nurture)



⊕ REGISTRATION FORM *Kaleidoscope Winter Institute*

NAME _____ MY CHURCH COMMUNITY _____

MY MINISTRY _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (DAY) _____ (EVENING) _____

E-MAIL _____

I would like to register for the Kaleidoscope Winter Institute, February 25–29, 2008

Course I: Fundamental Skills for Building Inclusive Community: Feb. 25-27, 2008 **\$300**

Course II: Model and Processes for Community Transformation: Feb. 27-29, 2008..... **\$300**

I will need overnight accommodations on: (please circle the dates): 2/24 2/25 2/26 2/27 2/28 2/29
 _____ nights x \$45 per night.....\$

Total.....\$

Enclosed is the **registration fee** in the amount of _____ payable to the Kaleidoscope Institute.

Please send completed registration form to: Kaleidoscope Institute, Diocese of Los Angeles, P.O. Box 512164, Los Angeles CA 90051-0164

Dialogue

Continued from page 1

three seminal works of the environmental movement, the other two being Emerson's *Nature* and George Perkins Marsh's *Man and Nature*.

The dialogue process

1. Read the Respectful Communication Guidelines and invite members of the group to affirm them for their time together:
2. Inform participants that they will listen to excerpts from one of the great American writers, Henry David Thoreau concerning the environment. After each reading, participants will be invited to share their reflections using the Mutual Invitation. If participants have not been introduced to the Mutual Invitation process, describe it clearly.
3. Invite participants capture a word, phrase or image that stands out for them as they listen to the text.
4. Invite someone to read the excerpts from "Walking."
5. Observe a moment of silence to reflect on the question.
6. Using Mutual Invitation, invite each person to share.
7. Invite participants to consider the following question as the text is read again.
What is Thoreau's understanding of the relationship between nature and humankind?
8. Invite someone to read the excerpts again.
9. Observe a moment of silence to reflect on the question.
10. Using Mutual Invitation, invite each person to share his or his reflection.
11. Invite participants to consider the following question, as the text is being read a 3rd time.

How might Thoreau's writing relevant to our awareness of struggle with environmental issues today?

12. Observe a few minutes of silence.
13. Using Mutual Invitation, invite each person to share his or her reflection.
14. End the session in a circle:
Invite participants to join hands in a circle. Invite each person to mentally complete these sentences:

*Excerpts from 'Walking,'
by Henry David Thoreau*

I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness, as contrasted with a freedom and culture merely civil—to regard man as an inhabitant, or a part and parcel of Nature, rather than a member of society. I wish to make an extreme statement, if so I may make an emphatic one, for there are enough champions of civilization: the minister and the school committee and every one of you will take care of that.

[...]

... what I have been preparing to say is, that in Wildness is the preservation of the World. Every tree sends its fibers forth in search of the Wild. The cities import it at any price. Men plow and sail for it. From the forest and wilderness come the tonics and barks which brace mankind. . . .

I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which the corn grows. We require an infusion of hemlock, spruce or arbor vitae in our tea. There is a difference between eating and drinking for strength and from mere gluttony.

FOR A NON-RELIGIOUS
COMMUNITY:

*I am thankful for...
My hopes are...*

FOR A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY:

*I thank God today...
I ask God today...*

The leader will begin by sharing his or her prayers. After he or she has shared, the leader then squeezes the

hand of the person to the right. That will be the signal for the next person to share his or her prayers. If the person does not want to share, he or she can simply pass the pulse to the next person. When the pulse comes back to the leader, he or she can end the dialogue with a closing thought, or (for Christian group) start the Lord's Prayer and invite everyone to join in.

Achieving competent leadership in an audio-visual world

Many of our readers are familiar with the six qualities that we strive to train and develop in a competent leader for a diverse changing world. The six points are in our website and on the first page of all our training handouts. Since the beginning of this year, a number of forces have caused me to finally add one more point to what is required of a competent leadership in a diverse, changing world.

✦ Knowledge and skills in using audio, visual and electronic media to enhance interpersonal communication and to build respectful inclusive community.

In the Kaleidoscope Institute training, we utilize a category of tools called “group media.” They are media that enhances interpersonal communication and build more inclusive group process. I have described this basic concept in my first book, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb*. A group-medium is a medium that invites a person to transfer their ideas, feelings, perspectives, into a tangible forms – a photo, a worksheet, a drawing, an object, a role-play -- so that they can articulate and share their thoughts in more wholistic and concrete ways with others. For example, the simplest form of group media is a worksheet. Instead of asking a group to share on a topic, we would create a worksheet with a few pointed ques-

tions or sentence completions. Participants are given time to reflect and to write down their answers to the questions. Then they are invited to share from what they have written. The piece of paper becomes a medium that enables a participant to organize her/his ideas and feelings before they share them.

Other forms of group-media that Kaleidoscope Institute consistently utilizes are:

✦ CHART PAPER—Instead of asking a group to discuss a topic and report back to the large group of their discussion, a facilitator can invite the group to discuss the topic and write down three important things that they would share to the larger group. This group medium helps the group members to focus and to articulate their shared reflection concretely.

✦ PHOTOLANGUAGE—This is a principle tool that we used to facilitate a more in-depth discussion on an often emotional topic, such as racism. Participants are invited to select photos that expresses what is racism for them and how has racism affected their lives.

✦ DRAMAS— Drama, through fictional characters, can say things that participants were not able to readily articulate. Once the fictional characters say them, they are on the table for further exploration.

✦ ROLE-PLAYS—we use role-play to invite participants

to play a role other than their “normal self.” The experience often reviews certain aspect of the participants that might not have been conscious or readily articulated.

✦ MUSIC—We use music to gather participants, and to build community. Sometimes, a well-chosen piece of music can assist participants to connect to a deeper part of themselves and to connect with others.

With the advance of electronic technologies and the World-Wide Web, our ability to create effective audio-visual group media becomes a essential component for becoming a competent leader in our diverse, changing and electronically enhanced world. Why now? One reason is that the cost of the technologies needed to create audio-visual media had dramatically decreased.

In 1980, I was studying audio-visual media production at the Catholic University of Lyons, France. To produce a slide show required taking photos with a film camera, and then I had to send the film out to be developed, which took at least two days. Once I got the slides back, I selected the ones I was going to use, chose the background music, wrote the script, and went to a studio to mix a sound track with the music and voiceover. Then I had to synchronize the soundtrack and the slides. The whole project usually took at least a week, not to

mention the cost of the equipments and material. With the technologies available today, I can create a slide show using the PowerPoint program in 1 hour with no equipment or material cost.

In the 1980s, the cost of a professional video recorder and editing equipments were so high that even though I had learned how to create videos, I was not able to afford it as an individual. Today, I can get a digital video camcorder and the editing computer software for around \$600 and I am ready to create videos to be shared with friends, used in workshops and most amazingly in the World Wide Web, like YouTube.com. The low cost of electronic technology today has truly made technology an extension of individuals, allowing us to express ourselves in more holistic ways and to reach further than we have ever imagined.

There are however media that isolate us further from other and are not helpful to building community. For example, I am writing this article on an airplane, with my noise-reduction headphones on, listening to meditative music. The signal I give my neighbor sitting next me is that I am not in the mood to talk. Granted, I need the time to focus and write this article; but, if I have my headphones on all the time, listening to my own collections of music, I would consistently isolate

Please see AUDIO/VISUAL, p. 8

Audio/visual: It's part of today's skill set

Continued from page 7

myself from others. The danger in using technologies to cut ourselves off from making connections with others is great. The ability to choose what goes into our ears and what I prefer to see further isolates us from the occasional, accidental encounters of things and people who are different from us. In Internet communication, since people don't have to face each other in person, they can say the most disrespectful things to each other and often misinterpret what others are saying.

Since we now have the capacity to use affordable technologies to create audio-visual media, I propose that a competent leader in today's world needs to know how to create media that connect people and to create inclusive community. How can worship be enhanced by audio-visual group media? How can an inter-group dialogue session use electronic group media effectively? How can we create audio-visual media that encourage respectful dialogue on hot issues? How can we enter the World-Wide Web with audio-visual pieces that invite the viewers not to

What is competent leadership in a diverse, changing world?

- ✦ Self-awareness: Deep understanding of one's cultural values, strengths and weaknesses, and privilege and power that come with one's roles and cultural background
- ✦ Appreciations of differences as opportunities, rather than as problems
- ✦ Commitment to pluralistic understanding of issues while being able to make faithful decisions
- ✦ Active theological reflection on diversity issues as they relate to oneself, others, one's community and creation.
- ✦ Discipline in applying appropriately skills, models and theories that will increase the inclusiveness of various situations.
- ✦ Ability to guide and support a community to move toward change faithfully in response to its changing environment.
- ✦ **Knowledge and skills in using audio, visual and electronic media to enhance interpersonal communication and to build respectful inclusive community.**

isolate themselves from others but to reach out and create human-to-human community? How can we be the presence of grace in cyberspace?

In addition to adding one more point as to what makes a competent leader in a diverse changing world, the Kaleidoscope Institute will put on a conference in the summer of 2008 to address the need to increase our competency in creating audio-visual and electronic media to enhance

inter-personal community and build inclusive community. The dates are July 28–August 1, 2008 in Los Angeles. The conference will include:

- ✦ Understanding Visual Language and Its Impact in Interpersonal Communication
- ✦ Music for Building Inclusive Community
- ✦ Using Dramas to Foster Dialogue
- ✦ Creating Group Media

- ☐ Photolanguage
- ☐ Powerpoint Slideshow
- ☐ Video

We are in the process of getting the expertise to commit to be presenters and workshop providers. More will be announced in future newsletters. If you are interested in attending this conference, please email us immediately. Knowing your interests in this conference will help us better plan this project.

The Kaleidoscope Institute is a not-for-profit organization, a subsidiary of the Corporation Sole of the Diocese of Los Angeles.

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