

WWME Vision & Direction, 2004

Bob & Joy Hernandez and Fr. Chuck Kosanke

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?” “Here I am”, I said, “send me!” This verse from Isaiah 6 illustrates how God calls many leaders. When Isaiah receives a vision from God, the Lord lays out a need for someone to speak for Him. God has a message and is looking for a messenger. God issued a call and Isaiah took it personally. He did so because of **three factors** that make up a divine call to lead: Opportunity, Ability and Desire. **Opportunity:** We see a specific need where we can make a difference. **Ability:** We recognize that we have the God-given gifts to do something about the need. **Desire:** We want to step out and address the need; our hunger pushes us. This has to do with our **passion**.

We in our WWME movement have a divine call to lead. We have a hunger—a passion to renew our Catholic Church and to change the world. That mission fuels our vision.

As leaders, we are not satisfied with the “status quo”. Leaders see what is, but also have a vision for what could be. To be leading, by definition, is to be in front, breaking new ground, conquering new worlds, moving away from the status quo.

We need to nurture more support from the U.S. bishops. They, too, share a concern about marriage and family life as well as the priesthood. We not only need to solicit their help for us, BUT clearly articulate how we can help them and the church. We need to demonstrate how collaboration can produce a win/win solution for everybody.

We believe that a better relationship with the bishops can lead to better cooperation with the Family Life Office of the diocese. Again, collaboration and not competition produces a win/win for everybody.

More Areas can initiate “romancing” seminarians from their respective diocese so that they have a positive experience and knowledge of WWME by the time of their ordination. Wouldn’t it be great if there would be some seminarians who couldn’t wait to make a Weekend after ordination?

Pastors can be supportive without necessarily getting directly involved in the movement. We need to help them see how the movement benefits them and their parish.

At the Leading Through Relationship training given to all Section and Local Area Leaders, we tell all our leadership couples and priests they have **four primary responsibilities** as leaders for our movement: **(1) put more couples and priests on our Weekends, (2) present high quality Weekends, (3) provide committed follow up, and (4) provide responsible and responsive structure.** Each responsibility relates to one of the four Pillars that supports our movement and advances our mission.

Perhaps we also need to change our paradigm about how we define “successful” inviting efforts. We have often heard couples become discouraged after they presented a Pulpit Talk at four Sunday Masses and didn’t have anyone register for a Weekend. They blame themselves, or they blame the people, or even society in general. How much more encouraging and motivating to say, “Wow! We gave four Pulpit Talks and over **600 people** heard our message about Marriage Encounter!”

We have many familiar and effective inviting tools — Pulpit Talks, J-Blast bulletin announcements, romantic dinners, brochures posted in every Catholic Church, bumper stickers, and even yard signs. But how **visible** are we as a movement to our neighbors,

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to our town, community and to the public at large? Basic visibility is five families in Marriage Encounter T-shirts offering a car wash for a worthy cause on Main Street. Or we could be visible as several couples and priests working together to clean up a neighborhood park.

Credibility precedes effective communication. Believe in what you say. Then, live what you say. There is no greater credibility than conviction in action.

Our movement is in a covenant partnership with God to help his Kingdom come. That means we, as Presenting Teams, **gift** God with our honesty, openness, vulnerability, and the truth of who we are as persons in relationship, particularly when we bring His vision to life on the Weekend. No one should need to tell us to refresh our Weekend presentations or to offer our talks for workshop review. And can we ever be satisfied that what we said a year ago is still “good enough” this year? Do we dare to give God a “hand-me-down” gift? Couples and priests on our Weekend need and deserve our BEST —**B-E-S-T**— that’s an acronym to remind us to **B**elieve in them, **E**ncourage them, **S**hare with them, and **T**rust them. Knowing this, we should remind all of our Presenting Teams that weekend couples and priests deserve the BEST they can possibly offer on every weekend.

Our movement is about relationship. The important tool for deepening relationship is dialogue. We tell our people that daily dialogue is a non-negotiable tenet for presenting teams and priests. As leaders we must strive to be models to the others. We know that the most effective way of motivating our sections and areas is to have a strong daily dialogue. We know that the most effective way to recruit for the weekend is for people to see what a difference daily dialogue makes in our relationships.

We commission you to be the instruments of a paradigm change for your people. On every Weekend, each Presenting Team should discern two couples for Community service and **connect** with them, **invest themselves** in their lives, and **empower** them to reach their God-given potential. This is the definition and action of committed follow up, which is our responsibility as leaders in our movement.

Our last primary responsibility is to **Provide Responsible and Responsive Structure: Interdependence** allows us to maintain our structure and is one of the non-negotiable tenets of WWME at all levels of our movement. Although it can be difficult, leaders must take the appropriate steps to remove those who block God’s blessing and work. When any couple or priest chooses to compromise a core value of our movement, the ripple effect of their action can hurt many others. We, as responsible leaders, must stop the trickle before it becomes a flood.

As we work toward meeting our 2004 inviting goals, we’ve asked the Weekend Pillar to gather all of the Section Inviting Goals for 2004 and begin to track them for us on a quarterly basis.

To strive for significance, we must, as a movement, realize our potential. Potential is a force or power that is possible, but not yet actual. In WWME, our potential is probably our greatest untapped resource. To help WWME grow toward our potential, we ask you to commit to four actions in 2004:

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1. Concentrate on **one main goal** — **Inviting**. Reaching our potential requires focus and consistent effort.
2. Concentrate on **continual improvement**. Commitment to continual improvement of our inviting efforts is the key to reaching our potential as a movement.
3. **Forget the past**. We can't gain any momentum moving toward tomorrow if we are dragging the past behind us. We are not the Marriage Encounter of the 1970's and we will no longer measure ourselves against that standard. We are a movement of the 21st century and we must seek to address the needs of couples and priests in 2004. We need to set achievable inviting goals for this year and then work together to make them happen.
4. **Focus on the future**. We can become better tomorrow than we are today when we strive for significance in pursuit of our mission to renew our Church and change the world.

God has promised his guidance in Isaiah 42: *"I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them and crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, and not forsake them."* Let us trust in God's guidance and promises and follow Him as we lead our people by our example!