drop-outs led us to believe that a substantial number of them decided, through their initial participation in the course, that they were not yet ready to marry or were not well suited to one another. Other couples decided that their commitment to a “church wedding” had more of a social than a spiritual basis and chose to be married elsewhere. (We must hasten to interject that the goal of the program is not to discourage couples from marrying nor to police inappropriate motives.) Others doubtlessly leave because they find no benefit in attending, are bored, or disinterested.

Future Directions

We intend to continue as well as to upgrade and improve the content and presentation of the Marriage Preparation Course at Ft. Lewis. We are moving specifically in the following directions:

1. To expand the multiple resource base for the program. We want to provide more intensive training for interested chaplains and to continue calling upon other social service agencies for their assistance. We have already begun to train and utilize chaplain assistants in paraprofessional roles.

2. To provide follow-up opportunities for course graduates. This would involve six-month and yearly checkups in the form of weekend workshops which provide continuing exposure to educational and therapeutic content relevant to growth-oriented relationships. The motto of the course is that “marriage preparation begins when you plan to marry, and should never end.”

Conclusion

The Marriage Preparation Course at Ft. Lewis has proven to be of great value in our pastoral ministry to young couples. Its success is dependent upon a broad resource base and active chaplain support post-wide. It is a viable and effective supplement to premarital counseling by individual chaplains.