

Summit Meeting Of The Emerging Models Project / Summary Notes

ACTION GROUP #3: NEXT GENERATION OF PASTORAL LEADERS LED BY DEAN HOGE AND KATE DEVRIES

April 21-22, 2008

This workshop begins with a review of research on young adults' views of lay ministry, then discusses experiences at the diocesan level. The main new research is an online survey of Catholic college students and an online survey of non-student young adults. Both were done in spring 2007. The students surveyed were from lists compiled by Catholic campus ministries in 19 colleges nationwide (average age: 23). The names of non-student young adults were gathered by diocesan staff persons (averaged age: 29). Both samples are composed of Catholics much more active than average. The research team also carried out interviews and focus groups.

Young Adults are Interested in Ecclesial Lay Ministry

- “Have you ever seriously considered becoming a professional lay minister, such as director of religious education, youth minister, campus minister, or pastoral associate?” College sample: 1/3 said “Yes.” Diocesan sample: ½ said “Yes.”
- Asked if they have taken steps to explore working for the Church: the majority were interested enough to speak to friends and to a priest, a religious, or a lay minister.
- A student's level of involvement in the campus ministry is a strong predictor of interest in future lay ministry.
- What type of ministry interested them? Mainly: ministry directed to children, youth, and young adults.
- Their motivation for wanting to work for the Church:
 1. feeling a calling from God
 2. desire to help other people
 3. desire to teach and pass along the faith
 4. wanting to live out one's faith.
- What prevents someone from wanting to work for the Church?
The main response of the college students: “I have a different occupation in mind.”
Responses from the diocesan young adults:
 1. “The wages are too low.”
 2. “I have a different occupation in mind.”
 3. “It does not utilize my gifts and talents.”
 4. “I am committed to home and children.”
- Other issues that get in the way:
 1. Lack of information. Many young adults have not been told of opportunities to work for the Church.
 2. Misinformation (e.g., a belief among a few that all ministry requires celibacy or special living arrangements)

- Latinos were more interested in future lay ministry than other Catholics.

Experiences of Young Adult Lay Ministers Already Working Full-Time

- When asked to name sources of good morale:
 1. “I’m living my vocations; following God’s call.”
 2. Opportunities to share the faith and evangelize.
 3. An opportunity to follow my passion.
 4. Opportunity to use my gifts to serve the Church.
 5. My gifts and talents are well matched for the work.
- Sources of poor morale:
 1. Low pay for the work I do.
 2. It’s hard to balance work and personal time.
 3. Little job security (a new pastor could cost you your job)
 4. Poor benefits (e.g., insurance, maternity leave, etc.)
 5. Unclear boundaries (e.g., work hours, expectations, etc.)
 6. Difficult pastors (e.g., tendency to micromanage; poor leadership skills)
 7. Lack of respect of young adult lay ministers by older persons.
 8. Lack of respect for the profession (“Ministry is not a *real* job!”)
 9. “Concrete ceiling.” No advancement after years of a job well done.
 10. The ratio of income to education is poor.
 11. Poor workers are often maintained (that is, very few performance reviews).
- Young adults’ recommendations for strengthening lay ministry:
 1. Better appreciation and support for lay ministry.
 2. More opportunities for spiritual development.
 3. More financial support.
 4. More credentialing.
 5. Create a mentoring process for lay ministers.
 6. Recruit, train, professional development, form, and educate for ministry.
 7. Create a ritual to initiate a new person in the position – formal introduction, welcome, blessing. When leaving, a sending forth.

Report from Leaders of Institutions Training Lay Ministers: Six administrators of programs from around the country agreed on the following:

- In general, there is an adequate supply of candidates for available lay ministry jobs (except, perhaps, youth ministry).
- The profession of lay ministry needs more young people; the average age is too high now.
- Over the past 4 years there has been a trend toward a more conservative ecclesiology among students. Characterized by: pre-Vatican traditionalism. When asked “Who are you reading” the answer was “Scott Hahn,” not Lonergan or Rahner. An apologetic standpoint with set answers.

Additional Useful Facts:

- In a 1985 survey of college students, interest in part-time ministerial jobs was about 20% or 30% higher than in full-time lay ministry (Hoge 1987). 2007 findings confirm this.
- A 2005 Gallup poll asked Catholic whether or not they favor married men priests and women priests. Their results were similar to those of the current study. Nationwide:
74% of all Catholics 18-39 favored married diocesan priests.
68% favored ordaining celibate women as priests.
56% favored ordaining married women as priests.

Reflections for Leadership:

- The task of leadership is to carry out the Church's mission with human resources different from anything we have had in the past. We need to...
 1. recruit priests, brothers, sisters, and lay ministers.
 2. open jobs to lay ecclesial ministers.
 3. provide all levels of training.
 4. facilitate collaboration of priests and lay ministers.
- Given that there will be enough candidates in the future, the goal should be:
 1. To recruit and train the most talented and devoted lay ministers possible.
 2. To raise salaries.
 3. To strengthen institutional support of all kinds.
 4. Communicate with seminaries and priest organizations to avoid misunderstandings
 5. Dispel cultural assumptions that are not true (e.g., ministry is women's work, or young adults are best suited for youth ministry or music ministry rather than being pastoral associates, or the diaconate is for older men).
- Young adults have strong views about how to strengthen the faith and the Catholic community. When researchers asked their recommendations, they said:
 1. Pay more attention to youth and young adults.
 2. Empower lay people in the parish.
 3. Some stressed holding firm to the core tradition, while others stressed adjusting parish programs to fit today's conditions.

In preparation for the summit, please consider the following in light of the data:

- How can we be more effective in recruiting, training and retaining the next generation (20s & 30s) of pastoral leaders?
- How can leaders support existing motivations and remove deterrents for working for the Church among those in their 20s and 30s?
- Considering the experiences of Young Adult Lay Ministers, the sources of good morale and poor morale they name, and their recommendations for strengthening Lay Ministry, what recommendations can we propose?
- What other recommendations can we make for further development of excellence in pastoral leadership?