



Creating Consensus on Vision and Strategy

EMERGING MODELS OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP **SOUTH REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM REPORT**

OCTOBER 3-5, 2006

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>SECTION</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
I. OVERVIEW.....	3
II. FUTURE OF PARISH LEADERSHIP ROLES.....	6
III. PARISH BEST PRACTICES	43
IV. PARISH 2025 EXERCISE	65
V. MARKS OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP	79
VI. CONCLUDING ASSESSMENT	96
VII. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	102

I. OVERVIEW:

Six national ministerial organizations within the Catholic community have made an unprecedented commitment to collaborate on a Lilly Foundation Grant for Pastoral Excellence. The grant entitled "Developing and Sustaining the Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership in the Catholic Church and the United States" is intended to be a four-year study completed in three phases between January 2004 and April 2008.

Sponsoring organizations of the Emerging Models Project include:

- **National Association for Lay Ministry (NALM)**
- **Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development (CPPCD)**
- **National Association for Church Personnel Administrators (NACPA)**
- **National Association of Deaconate Directors (NADD)**
- **National Catholic Young Adult Ministry Association (NCYAMA)**
- **National Federation of Priests Councils (NFPC)**

These organizations have committed to a comprehensive plan, including several mini-projects intended to identify the trends, resources, and priorities needed for pastoral leadership in the 21st century. The following mini-projects will be included as part of the overall Emerging Models effort:

- **Parish Vitality Study**
- **Study of Parish Life Coordinators by CARA**
- **Regional Conferences**
- **Next Generation of Leaders Study**
- **Young Adult Focus Groups**
- **Symposia**
- **Study of Mega-parishes**
- **Diocesan Consultations**
- **Publication of Findings**
- **Concluding Ministry Summit**

Marti Jewell, formerly of the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky, has been named Project Coordinator to lead the entire effort. Strategic Leadership Associates (hereinafter known as SLA) has provided its expertise in symposium development by assisting with the development of a format for the first round of eight regional conferences to be held in total, including:

- **Pacific Northwest**
- **Upper Midwest**
- **Northeast**
- **Southeast**
- **Mid-Atlantic**
- **South**
- **North Central**
- **Southwest**

A total of 57 participants attended the South Emerging Models Symposium on October 3-5, 2006. The symposium was held at the T Bar M Ranch and Conference Center in New Braunsfels, Texas.

Of the 57 participants in the South Symposium, a total of 53 participants completed individual reflection guides with their responses to the symposium questions. These written responses have been used to formulate the following report.

Comments from symposium participants appearing in this report can be identified by the following codes:

- P = Pastor**
- PLC = Parish Life Coordinator**
- D = Deacon**
- PA = Pastoral Associate**
- PC = Parish Council Representative**
- DR = Diocesan Representative**
- O = Other**

The following tables represent a profile of participants who attended the South Leadership Symposium:

Table 1
South Leadership Symposium
(Total Respondents = 53)

Respondents	No.	%
a. Pastors	12	23%
b. Parish Life Coordinators	4	8%
c. Deacons	4	8%
d. Pastoral Associates	3	5%
e. Parish Pastoral Council Representatives	2	4%
f. Diocesan Representatives	16	30%
g. Others	8	15%
h. Left Blank	4	8%

Table 2
Gender
(Total Respondents = 53)

Gender	No.	%
a. Male	28	53%
b. Female	21	40%
Left Blank	4	7%

Table 3
Age Range of Respondents
(Total Respondents = 53)

Respondent Age Range	No.	%
a. Under 29 years of age	2	4%
b. 30 to 39 years of age	2	4%
c. 40 to 49 years of age	7	13%
d. 50 to 59 years of age	14	26%
e. 60 to 69 years of age	18	34%
f. 70 or above	6	11%
Left Blank	4	8%

Table 4
Size of Parish Households
(Total Respondents = 53)

Size of Parish Households	No.	%
a. Under 500 households	11	21%
b. 501 to 1200 households	6	11%
c. 1201 to 2000 households	14	26%
d. Over 2001 households	14	26%
Left Blank	8	15%

Table 5
Highest Level of Education
(Total Respondents = 53)

Level of Education	No.	%
a. High School	3	6%
b. Associates Degree	3	6%
c. Bachelor's Degree	7	13%
d. Master's Degree	30	57%
e. Doctoral Degree	3	6%
f. Left Blank	7	13%

Table 6
Diocese in which you Serve
(Total Respondents = 53)

Diocese	No.	%
a. Alexandria	4	8%
b. Amarillo	1	2%
c. Austin	2	4%
d. Baton Rouge	2	4%
e. Corpus Christi	3	6%
f. Dallas	4	8%
g. Ft. Worth	1	2%
h. Houma-Thibodaux	3	6%
i. Jackson	3	6%
k. Lake Charles	1	2%
l. Laredo	1	2%
m. Las Cruces	1	2%
n. New Orleans	4	8%
o. Oklahoma City	1	2%
p. San Angelo	1	2%
q. San Antonio	6	11%
r. Shreveport	3	6%
s. Victoria	1	2%
t. Left Blank	11	21%

II. FUTURE OF PARISH LEADERSHIP ROLES:

Participants in the South Symposium listened to case study presentations given by their peers describing their experiences of parish life and leadership. Following these presentations and small group discussions, individuals shared their views on the vitality of their particular parishes both in small groups and on reflection guides. They were asked to evaluate their current parish communities on a number of factors, including a spiritually alive and healthy community; a visible commitment to building the life of the faith community; and a total ministering community, including the leadership of pastors, staff, and councils working together.

A. A Spiritually Alive and Healthy Community

A number of symposium participants identified their parishes as spiritually alive and healthy. Many link this vitality to the quality of their worship, as well as the outreach in their parishes. Still others describe their situations as spiritually alive, but struggling to improve. Others indicate their struggles overwhelm their ability to realize their potential.

Spiritually Alive and Healthy (through their liturgy, worship, and strong community identity)

The following comments by pastoral leaders reflect a belief that current parish life as experienced is alive and healthy:

*“Through worship, community, ministry, and community outreach”
(P)*

“Our community is spiritually alive and healthy in a very traditional understanding. The parish enjoys a strong devotional life because of the location of the National Shrine in honor of St. Ann. Two semi-annual novenas contribute to this spiritual health and devotion. We have a traditional format with Mass and Confession before and after with a priest, director, or preacher. Recruiting preachers or homilists who will expand the people’s spirituality is a challenge to move them beyond a pietistic, individual faith life.” (P)

“I am happy to answer ‘very well’. We have a good open pastoral council, a detailed 5-year plan, strong views on evangelization, a great desire to invite those who do not attend church to return to church, a lot of parish visitation, high hopes for the 50th anniversary 2008, and strong collaborative tendencies.” (P)

*“My parish is alive and well. It is a parish of small church communities. We are a parish of consensus and discernment.”
(P)*

“During Eucharistic celebrations, people participate and knowledge they come together to vive God worship and praise. This worship and praise is expressed through song and acted out in being Jesus to others in their families and ministries.” (P)

“The community is spiritually alive and healthy. 50 to 100 attend daily Mass – weekend attendance percentage, the highest I’ve ever seen. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is around the clock.” (P)

“Yes, very much alive and healthy” (P)

“Our community is very spiritually alive – with very active laity who take part in all aspects of parish life.” (PLC)

“Very well – must keep working well or otherwise we will start moving backward.” (D)

“Our parish is both spiritually alive and a very healthy community. The founding pastor has turned over day-to-day operations to the Deacon who is also the Parish Administrator. The Parish Administrator has empowered the Parish Council to do strategic planning, make major decisions on parish ministries, and recruit and develop lay leadership within the community.” (D)

“Yes, very spiritually alive and healthy – reflected in overflow liturgies, vibrancy of liturgies, sacraments celebrated in Sunday liturgies (First Communion, Baptisms, Communal Anointing of the Sick, etc.). Many liturgical ministers and several choirs with diverse music styles; active social justice, etc.” (PA)

“We have a vibrant worship, extensive ministry involvement, strong community, and outreach to the larger community. Mass attendance fluctuates and people are uncertain about their future due to the hurricane.” (PA)

“Parish is alive and healthy. Many members are involved and dedicated to ministry. Many have a deep sense of ownership without taking control. Comments we receive from visitors indicate people feel welcome, people are friendly, etc.” (PA)

“Healthy, yes. 75% of community is under 60. Baptisms average 60 per month. Boundary is huge. 32 blocks N/S by 100 blocks E/W. 2,000 families/500 registered (those who are not registered fear immigration repercussions. It could improve spiritually.” (PC)

“We are spiritually alive and healthy based on these facts. New building in progress, Sunday Mass is bilingual, our cultures merge well, and a new generation is stepping into the spotlight of parish life.” (PC)

“Many devotions embraced by individuals and groups – perpetual adoration chapel” (DR)

“Most are healthy.” (DR)

“Numbers of participants are high; development of new leaders for local needs; those who move away serve as leaders there; number of organizations; new initiatives; things that aren’t working are developed or dropped; positive comments from visitors” (DR)

“We have multiple ministries and a diversity of parishioners between Hispanic and Anglo. There are some undercurrents of tension, but overall, we are a Holy and energetic community.” (DR)

“Pastors are involved and that is most important. My pastor believes in delegating the leadership, therefore, the people are alive in ministry. There are many programs going on. There is a lot of initiative among parishioners.” (DR)

“Very spiritually alive. Several programs and ministries to feed and support the community” (DR)

“A collaborative, consensus-building model has been in place for many years. Leadership is spread out among many commissions and committees. Leadership is also changing on a scheduled basis. We have just over 100 ministries and our lay people are empowered to use their gifts in many diverse areas.” (O)

“To all appearances, both alive and spiritually healthy. Although not directly affected by Katrina, the outpouring of the community welcoming folk from the Louisiana and Mississippi coasts was amazing. We opened our personal homes, as well as our parish and school plants.” (O)

“I feel that our parish is spiritually alive and healthy, but there is always room for growth.” (O)

Spiritually Alive and Struggling to Improve

A number of participants describe a significant degree of struggle in demonstrating spiritual vitality. Since the symposium was conducted in the South, a number of parishes have been deeply affected by Hurricane Katrina. Not surprisingly, this has had a dramatic impact on the life of their communities as reflected in some of the following comments:

“We are spiritually alive, but not integrated with great liturgy and great outreach.” (P)

“It is spiritually alive with a great diversity of spiritualities. The challenge is to get the different groups to understand one another’s viewpoints and work together. Sometimes the groups are so narrow in their vision that it is not particularly healthy.” (P)

“It’s spiritually alive, but not healthy. I have a lot of parishes that have ego problems.” (P)

“My community is spiritually alive, but working on the healthy part. Prior to my coming, there was a divorce between spirituality and social justice which is not healthy. Since Katrina and a lot of awareness building, they are beginning to understand that healthy spirituality/faith life must manifest itself in active social justice/works.” (P)

Very well, although not true of all individuals within” (PLC)

“The spirituality is very much alive, but is in need of some healthy maintenance and upgrading.” (D)

“Spiritually, but not a healthy community based on the sexual abuse in the parish. Something is still missing in healing – not part of the grief process (anger and denial). Something more to do with crisis and using the community resources as in pre-Katrina and post-Katrina” (DR)

“I think our parish is spiritually alive, but there is much room for improvement. I am particularly concerned about adult religious education which I think will drive all other ministries.” (DR)

“This describes my parish very well. Our diocese, however, could not be described this way. We have parishes that are poor and whose needs are not being met by the diocese, according to the pastors of those parishes.” (DR)

“Very spiritually alive, building upon much community involvement, but there are many people still falling through the cracks.” (O)

“Our parish is fairly creative and attendance at Mass is stable and fairly attended. There seems to be a need for spiritual revival and renewal, as many parishioners seem to attend out of a sense of duty and not out of a sense of love – at least for the most part. There are, however, pockets of very strong spiritual life and vibrant ministries.” (O)

Struggling to Realize their Full Potential

A few participants indicated that the vitality of their parishes is overshadowed by their struggles to realize their full potential. While they acknowledge some spiritual vitality, they indicate a significant degree of uncertainty and challenge in their efforts to build vibrant faith communities as indicated below:

“Attendance fluctuates; uncertainty” (P)

“Fairly good, but we focus efforts on reacting, sometimes too late, not being proactive.” (P)

“On a scale of 1-10, we are about a 3 due to declining membership caused by demographic shifts in the neighborhood which have probably dealt a fatal blow to the future of the parish.” (D)

“Not very well – My parish needs a lot of education on the Catholic church and the Catholic faith. Spirituality is not something that they understand. They think money should be a part of all things. It is not healthy to think this way.” (PC)

“Have to overcome the negatives – anger-crossed purposes – defenders of the faith – quality, not quantity of ministries – awareness – acceptance – let things die if they are no longer effective.” (DR)

“Parish community knows who are not there and moves to reach out to them, but do not allow the negative minority to be heard. This affects parish life disproportionately. Need to know when to say ‘the time for this is over’.” (DR)

“My parish is both. We are somewhat alive and healthy, but could definitely be much more alive and healthy.” (O)

“Fundamental spirituality more than community consciousness; the mission of the church is less developed than their personal priorities” (O)

“Knows who is not there; allows programs to die when people don’t come forward to run them; are angry” (O)

B. A Visible Commitment to Building the Life of the Faith Community (Word, Worship, and Service)

Symposium participants were asked to identify their concrete expression of commitment to building parish life and the faith community through Word, Worship, and Service. The majority of participants identified their commitment as visible and balanced in building the life of the faith community, yet others indicate signs of a visible commitment, but experiencing substantial roadblocks. Still others indicate a diminished sense of community or lack of visible commitment due to their struggles.

Visible and Balanced Commitment

A number of participants indicate that their efforts to build the faith community are a balanced approach of Word, Worship, and Service. This emphasis is evident in the following positive expressions of parish vitality:

“Investment in a parish DRE and school CRE; director of liturgical music; well-organized RCIA; creation of small church communities; regular support of three missions; active St. Vincent DePaul Society; commitment to the vision of the National Alliance of Parishes Restructuring into Communities (NAPRC); strong, vibrant SAC’s accredited elementary school” (P)

“Our 3400 member parish has some 350 volunteers covering Word, Worship and Service. We are seeking to double that number in the next three to five years.” (P)

“As pastor, I constantly remind the parish that we are the Body of Christ. Christ is counting on us to build the Kingdom of God. My parishioners, for the most part, have accepted their calling.” (P)

“People are taking roles of leadership in different aspects of administration and pastoral concerns.” (P)

“Yes, we have a visible and obvious commitment because of the variety of worship services – Rosary, Devotions Daily Mass, Perpetual Adoration” (P)

“We are building on a pre-existing and strong word and worship to include service. All faith formation from 6th grade through high school have a strong component of necessary service (not just those preparing for Confirmation). This includes RCIA and family catechesis – we cannot teach the faith apart from the lived reality of faith. We teach it and do it in smaller scale for K-5 as well.” (P)

“Word, Worship, and Service are all included in our 3-year plan. We have a strong commitment to youth ministry, a strong belief in centrality of the weekend liturgy, and have a welcoming factor.” (P)

Very well, although not true of all individuals within” (PLC)

“All parishioners work to build up the church. They are proud of their church.” (PLC)

“Through family-based catechesis, there are signs that the parish is becoming more active in Word, Worship, and Service.” (D)

“The parish sees its mission as one of meeting the needs of both parishioners and the surrounding community. We are open seven days a week, conduct over 100 courses for adults over 50 years old three days a week, we have provided rent-free and utility-free space to groups who meet community needs. We serve 200-300 families on Family Dinner Night (preparing, serving, and cleaning up all done by members of our parish); an active youth group; work with other denominations in running a food bank; provide free on-site psychological and pastoral counseling; and much more.” (D)

“Yes – total stewardship (prayer, ministry and offering) for almost 20 years. Tithes to social justice ministry 10% of offering. Over 100 active ministries and a sense of community of disciples going forth to build the kingdom. Many parishioners are active in ministry beyond the parish – non-profits, etc.” (PA)

“Liturgies are life-giving. Homilies are well prepared and geared to reach the diverse congregation (age, interests, and socio-economic status). Music is well planned and varies from Mass to Mass because of the congregation present.” (PA)

“The most visible commitment is our new building is in progress. It is a sign that life is happening, that we are growing, and we have a plan for the future.” (PC)

“We have wonderful liturgies on Sunday. Greeters are so important – hospitality is great! Habitat for Humanity is very important to the parish. There are many who volunteer. ACTS retreats are ongoing. There are many meaningful programs in English and Spanish.” (DR)

“By the good participation in all our ministries, I think we show commitment. We continue to try to involve more people.” (DR)

“Spread the leadership and workload beyond the ‘faithful few’. All sacraments are celebrated communally with sensitivity to language and culture.” (DR)

“Cooperation versus competition; keep the ‘I’ in it – identify, invite, and involve.” (DR)

“Remind people you are in the mainstream. Make everyone feel they are a part of the community.” (DR)

“Sacraments in the context of Mass and the community” (DR)

“Strength of minorities – sensitivity to culture, education, and language” (DR)

“Parish social ministry; high commitment to liturgical training; lots of teaching; commissions; speakers and missions; RCIA; leaders getting Masters on pastoral theology” (DR)

“Use of bi-lingual celebrations at the diocesan level, being sensitive to the cultures of the community” (DR)

“Sensitivity to language and culture; reminding people you are in the mainstream; celebrating sacraments as a community; identify, invite, and involve” (O)

“We are better at Word, Worship, and Outreach than co-existence, dialogue, and ongoing exchange of gifts – material and spiritual.” (O)

“Renewed emphasis on adult formation in liturgies and theology; growing use of the media and technology” (O)

“This is done very well as our mission statement articulates who we are called to be and our many programs allow for the diverse gifts of our parishioners to build God’s kingdom through Word, Service, and Worship.” (O)

“There are many community-building ministries in the parish. Liturgies meet the needs of the people and are alive and prayerful. Bible study groups are very active. The ACTS retreats are viable.”
(O)

“Good and meaningful liturgy, including breaking open the Word is well appreciated and participatory. Service includes much effort at social justice, although it is a very affluent parish fully capable of paying for all its needs, the community values hands-on maintenance.” (O)

“There is a visible commitment to building the life of the faith community, and there is much hope that this will be achieved.” (O)

“There is a visible commitment to building the life of the faith community through the various offerings at all levels of the parish.”
(O)

Signs of Visible Commitment, but Encountering Various Roadblocks

A number of participants indicate that their parish communities have active expressions of a commitment to building parish vitality. However, these participants also express a number of roadblocks that compound their efforts. Once again, the impact of Hurricane Katrina is evident in a few of these responses:

“Worship ministries: new recruits, musicians, developing choir, community outreach; vulnerability and suffering; increased community bond. Lack of adult education, spirituality program, and personal support” (P)

“The number of people that are involved in ministry is outstanding, but the involvement of welcoming new parishioners to ministry is in need of improvement.” (P)

“We have grown in service, especially since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We are still rather poor evangelizers and there are a lot of outreach needs in our own neighborhood which are still not tended to.” (P)

“Multiple Masses and prayer services daily; multiple Bible study classes weekly” (D)

“Religious education for both children and adults; training for liturgical and other ministries; development of a choir; community outreach (the church is the center of the neighborhood organization and hurricane ministries). There is inadequate personal spiritual discernment and support for hurricane victims.”
(PA)

“In Word, we need to evangelize at the grass roots. In Worship, liturgies need to confirm to approved norms, but yet are vibrant and welcoming. Good liturgies = happy people. Happy people come back. In Service, serving the justice needs is an area we lack in.” (PC)

“Some are very good, especially in Word and Worship. Fewer are excellent in service; much less justice. Some are showing the way, but mostly people respond compassionately when the need presents itself.” (DR)

“Need to incorporate all ages into various ministries and parish/liturgical events. Communicating who to contact for services available (parish bulletin).” (DR)

“There is, but it’s uneven” (DR)

Struggling to Express a Visible Commitment

A few participants identified numerous struggles they are facing in their commitment to building a parish faith community. These struggles relate to a wide range of factors, including parish demographics, parish locations, and the physical conditions of parish life as indicated below:

“Being very rural, we seldom get to see a vision of the larger church.” (P)

“We have a challenge in that we have, historically, had only one Mass. With the addition of a second Mass and rapid growth in the community, we need to be sure that our parish family continues to grow in their faith and the sharing and living of that faith.” (PLC)

“The pastor’s leadership has provided a greater focus on the reality of the parish’s condition: finances, deteriorating physical plant, very few children, a single Sunday Liturgy, no ministries beyond concern for the sick and dying.” (D)

“They need to learn how to proclaim the Word and not just read it. They need to understand what they are reading. They cannot move past regular worship and what they have been taught over the years about worship.” (PC)

C. A Total Ministering Community (including the Leadership of Pastors, Staff, and Councils Together)

Participants were asked to indicate how their parishes reflect a total ministering community of pastors, staff, and councils working together. Many pastoral leaders express optimism about this collaboration. Others indicate they are making steady progress, while a few indicate they are consumed with struggles for various reasons.

Collaborative Effort among Pastors, Staff, and Parishioners

A number of pastoral leaders in the South believe their parishes are effective in their collaborative efforts among pastors, staff, and parishioners. The following comments reflect this movement toward a total ministering community:

“It is a total ministering community with everyone working together – pastor, pastoral staff, pastoral council, and ministry outreach.” (P)

“Yes, we believe in the power for the good of the ‘Big 3’ and how vital it is for them to be in unity.” (P)

“We are working toward a trickle down ministry: Pastors as servant leaders who empower staff and council, who in turn empower ministries and volunteers in leadership roles. We use a lot of collaborative and networking ministry and try for consensus rather than democracy.” (P)

“In our parish, we minister to each other. We walk with each other into the Kingdom of God.” (P)

“Yes, we encourage and involve people who wish to participate.” (P)

“We, as a mission, have always had to work together: leadership, laity, and sacramental minister. As a parish with that model so instilled in us, we continue to work together.” (PLC)

“All work together, sometimes better than others” (D)

“The parish works together to create a warm and welcoming religious experience. People from all over the city attend Mass at our parish. Outreach efforts involve members of our community and other denominations in meeting the needs of the broader community. Lay leadership is empowered to run RCIA, Confirmation, Baptismal Preparation, and numerous church programs.” (D)

“Pastor, council, and six commissions sharing responsibility for areas of ministry, parish staff, all leaders’ gatherings, collaborative structures, discernment, and consensus, community building, and a shared responsibility for mission. The principal of our large school (1000+) is a member of the parish staff. There is no school board. The school is a ministry of the parish and as such is on the Education Commission.” (PA)

“Yes, to a great extent. Pastor and paid professional staff meet on a weekly basis to plan and orchestrate the various celebrations and activities for the coming week, month, etc. Parish council is quite involved, but not much communication with parish staff except with the pastor.” (PA)

“We strive to meet the goals we set so that as a community we grow together. We need to work together to grow together.” (PC)

“The Council, including the pastor sees to the needs of our people and our church.” (PC)

“Three priests; multi-talented staff; eager and anxious PPC directing the pastoral concerns of the parish; filling a need to focus on discipleship and service” (DR)

“An attitude of service, willingness to answer the call – of leadership of the situation” (DR)

“Active pastoral council and commissions; lots of lay staff and leaders; young adults in leadership structure – stated priorities; strategic planning” (DR)

“This characterizes the parish. Leadership with pastor and staff is effective. Pastoral Council is undergoing a better understanding of their roles. There is a good working relationship among leadership persons.” (DR)

“I think we are a total ministering community in that the pastor and leaders work together to minister to the people. I think more could be done to minister to those outside the church.” (DR)

“People on all levels of ministry and not just staff. All feel ownership in and of ministry within the parish. Leadership and collaboration in advisory boards within the parish. Youth involved in main liturgies” (DR)

“The Council of Ministries, the pastor, the professional lay staff, the six commissions and the many ministries are all linked together, each sharing a role in our common mission as church. Through these structures, we call forth and form a community of disciples who then go forth as signs of God’s presence in the world.” (O)

“PC members are assigned as liaisons to each of the parish ministers, so there is a communication thread back and forth. Staff meetings provide for seeing each ministry in the light of the whole, not as separate entities.” (O)

“Growing sense of collaboration between parishes encouraged and supported through diocesan personnel” (O)

“The model uses the Council of Ministries in which all staff participates – not necessarily as the leaders. Pastor and lay staff meet weekly, but also monthly as part of the Council of Ministries.” (O)

Making Steady Progress

While other participants acknowledge various challenges in creating a total ministering community, they express a degree of progress or optimism based upon their ability to either change directions or institute a new plan for the future. The following comments reflect a sense of steady progress in creating total ministering communities in their parishes:

“Community looks to its leaders for vision, inspiration, and permission. Often leaders are passionate about certain agendas, so our vision may be tainted or slanted.” (P)

“Assessing the needs of the community and allowing leaders to come forward to be trained through leadership skills and spiritual formation. Because there is a need to minister, we tend to accept leaders without these skills and this causes concern.” (P)

“From 1971-1996 all authority and leadership was vested in the founding pastor. Everything depended on what ‘he’ accomplished. From 1996-2001, personal problems and issues limited his successor’s effective leadership and founding pastor’s resentment over his forced retirement. From the fall of 2001 to present we are in the developmental stage of collaboration among these leadership and consultative bodies. The vision of creating small communities calls for a pastoral facilitator to meet monthly with the pastor.” (P)

“The concept is there. There is only one advisory body (no separate pastoral council, justice council, liturgy committee, etc.)” (P)

“We are growing in this area. We have a lot more lay involvement than we had three years ago, but a majority of the parishioners are still content to sit back and let someone else lead and serve.” (P)

“We are completing and tweaking our five-year pastoral plan. Our goal is to have everyone on board, going in the same direction, and working as harmoniously and collaboratively as possible in building the kingdom.” (P)

“Not there yet” (PLC)

“We have a resident pastor, a deacon, and a part-time DRE. The pastoral council is beginning to realize and grasp the matter at hand.” (D)

“This will take time. Pastors will have to let go of some things they do so that lay leaders can take up the slack.” (D)

“On the surface, my parish is ideal: 1200-1500 families, strong finances, dozens of active ministry options, we look good on paper and we are. Yet, something is missing. I wouldn’t describe us as a total ministering community in part because we’re so homogeneous and we tend to thrive in our little bubble. For being such a prominent parish, I think we could be doing more.” (DR)

“Our parish is strong in that the formation staff collaborates to join forces, exchange ideas and models, work toward whole community catechesis models, but there are often other staff members who can impede ministry by subtly maintaining power through avenues, such as facility use. The four pastoral advisory bodies truly do have a great deal of ‘say’ in the parish life and the pastor is personally involved with each of them. We need more lay leadership from within the Hispanic immigrant population.” (O)

“We are on a track to building a total ministering community and the church body is receptive to this and is beginning to accept this role for themselves.” (O)

“We are not a total ministering community, but we are certainly working together to achieve that. There is much communication and collaboration among the various leaders, but that can be improved even more.” (O)

Struggling or Hurting to Realize This Reality

A few participants indicate that their parishes are struggling or hurting to realize the reality of a total ministering community. Once again, the impact of Hurricane Katrina in the South, particularly the New Orleans area, is a significant factor in reshaping the mission, direction, and existence of parish life as reflected in the following comments:

“Individuals and some ministry leaders are growing into practice of communicating and collaborating with parish leader and council together. Others are still having difficulty. The parish had a 20-year history of no named leader on site and individualism along with self-direction only flourished.” (PLC)

“Pre-Katrina this was true. However, post-Katrina we are struggling to redevelop a total ministering community.” (PA)

“There needs to be more communication between the leaders, pastors, staff, and the council. There needs to be more respect for each other, especially for the priest. He should be the first to know about what is going on instead of the last.” (PC)

“As a church, we don’t have a system in place to move people who have had conversion experiences through cursillos and other retreats to provide formation for them and invite them to contribute their gifts in a form of ministry to the faith communities. We have groups becoming cliques which exclude others and also don’t receive continuing formation and support.” (DR)

“Very few parishes are here; only some are.” (DR)

D. Current Parish Leadership Models

Symposium participants were asked to describe the leadership models which best capture their current approach to parish leadership. Some pastoral leaders indicate a collaborative or shared ministry based on their baptismal call. A few indicate that their leadership models are centered on a core team of professional staff, while a few reflect a traditional or hierarchical model of leadership based upon the preferences of the pastor.

Collaborative with Shared Ministry; Living Out Baptismal Call

The following comments reflect an approach to shared ministry based on empowering people to realize their baptismal calls. It is striking that in the South a many participants reflect this reality in their approaches to pastoral leadership as indicated below:

“Pastor is a source of vitality that energizes and empowers his staff and the pastoral council. It’s all modeled on Gospel value: Christ goes to show the way, he sends out the 72 and the 12 to do as he has done.” (P)

“We are working hard to build collaboration and consensus. Some still want Father to do everything, and Father struggles to find a balance between taking proper responsibility and letting go. The staff, too, is working to get more parishioners involved as volunteers.” (P)

“Pastor and school principal believe in delegation of authority and responsibility. All pastoral staff members model good leadership skills. Councils, committees, and organizations are effective in fulfilling functions and responsibilities. Individual parishioners take initiative for parish events, etc. We are developing collaboration, but some still look to the pastor.” (P)

“Intentional to a balanced degree; servant; very collaborative and inclusive; a deep hunger to better serve the people of God; a deep belief that the religion and faith are not out on their own, but about people’s real life.” (P)

“Pastor and staff empowering the community to live out its baptismal call” (P)

“Servant/Relational” (P)

“Servant leadership; style is determined by the needs of the people and the situation.” (P)

“Pastoral minister and sacramental working as ‘team’ and as servant leaders (collaboration)” (PLC)

“Participatory! Servant, Discipleship; we believe that the laity must assume a greater and greater role in worship and service of God. They must be fed with the Word of God and participation in this Sacraments, but ultimately the outreach and vitality of God’s presence in the world is seen in the laity and in God’s work.” (D)

“Collaborative; subsidiarity; relational; servant” (PLC)

“Collaborative structures; shared responsibility; servant leaders; total stewardship; community of disciples” (PA)

“Collaborative – servant leadership. Pastor and staff exist to answer the needs of the community and to empower and call forth the gifts of the membership.” (PA)

“Servant leadership; collaboration; consensus decision-making; five basic leadership roles: Congregation, Visioning, parish assembly – goals/pastoral council – objectives/staff and ministries – programs with pastor and staff facilitating.” (PA)

“Collaboration, dialogical, not micro-manager; allows you to develop; visionary – work with what talents, gifts, and facilities you have; servant leadership” (DR)

“Pastoral councils in every parish; pastor with lay/religious pastoral staff is very common. Pastor with all volunteer pastoral team; pastor with paid, professional pastoral team” (DR)

“Collaboration; teams; trainers training new leaders; stewardship as a way of life; Awakening Retreat: conversion and opportunity for initial experiences of leadership” (DR)

“Networking within the parish organizations; no micro-managing, rather respect for ‘on-site management’ in the various ministries. Focus on serving spiritual, physical, emotional, and social needs.” (DR)

“Collaborative” (DR)

“The diocesan congregational development process; the purpose is the formation of a group of leaders who have looked deeply together into the role of the parish and church; developed key concepts and skills necessary to begin services systematic and ongoing planning and leaders who accept responsibility to reach out to others who will help form the congregation as a community” (DR)

“Ministry through commissions” (DR)

“Our leadership is all volunteers. The parish council tends to be more involved with parish operations than many others might be.” (DR)

“Collaborative; council of ministers; consensus” (O)

“Leadership is participatory – authority and responsibilities are delegated. There is freedom for creative adaptability.” (O)

Largely self-directed at parish level with diocesan support; collaboration and cooperation growing; voluntary rather than mandated participation in diocesan-sponsored initiatives” (O)

“Lay leadership is beginning and has been hopeful. I believe that once the parish community realizes their call that this will grow further. Small church communities are forming and becoming an integral part of the parish life. Pastoral leadership is supportive of this movement.” (O)

“I feel that we have an eclectic model of leadership, taking several and adjusting them to the various aspects of the parish. Some are the servant leader style; others are rather self-sufficient; others are staff-led. We use the model that works at the time, remaining open to change.” (O)

Centralized Staff Leadership

A few participants indicate a stronger, centralized approach to leadership, including the staff, pastor, and a highly-structured approach to councils or committees. The following comments reflect positively on this more centralized approach to coordinating ministries:

“Pastor being assisted by staff, pastoral council, finance council, and stewardship council with 1/3 of parishioners involved in ministry.” (P)

“Collaborative with staff members who have clear job descriptions and areas of responsibility” (P)

“Our parish council is the core group in our community. Religious Education teachers and other leaders are invited and listen during our regular meetings.” (PC)

“Pastor; associate pastor; director of religious education; coordinator of volunteers; volunteer leads of ministries” (DR)

“Advisory boards and in leadership positions; use ‘pew’ people to set visions and invite people who are gifted to leadership roles. Paid staff calls forth leadership from the parish. All volunteer models in parish that call forth leadership. Use five-year plan model to emerge leadership. Have sectors in parish with staff appointed to each sector.” (DR)

“Pastoral Council, Parish Formation Committee, Youth Advisory Board, Hispanic Advisory Board, Finance Committee that consists of lay parishioners who collaborate with first staff members and/or pastor. They serve as advisory bodies that advise Father. They serve limited terms and are thinking/doing bodies that often consist of that core of parish volunteers. In my Hispanic community, the leadership model expected is a top/down clerical model where the priest makes all the decisions.” (O)

“Council of Ministries is chosen by the various ministerial groups, but also includes the pastor, parish staff, school principal, and chair of the Finance Council.” (O)

Traditional, Hierarchical Model of Leadership

A few participants indicate that their parishes are still struggling with a traditional, hierarchical model of leadership centered on the preferences of the pastor. The following comments reflect this reality:

“We are structured with traditional hierarchy – trying to work as much as possible as a team and trying to make important decisions through consensus.” (P)

“Empowering, but really doesn’t want to let go. (Pastor) He lets you do what you have to, but he always has to change something so that it is his, not yours.” (D)

“Pastor wants and keeps control by his doing the administration of the parish. Some lay ministers think they ‘own’ their ministry and will not allow others to share in it with others.” (D)

“Hierarchy – tribunal – The priest as the leader with ‘yes men’” (PC)

“Dictatorship, it sometimes seems...It’s hard to tell. I often feel that unless you’re on the Pastoral or Finance Council, you are not really let in on the decision-making process. The bulletin (and the website to some extent) are the main means of communication.” (DR)

“Pastor oversees everything.” (O)

E. Leadership of the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator

Symposium participants were asked to describe the model of leadership provided by their pastors or parish life coordinators. Some describe these leaders as servant leaders providing a strong model of guidance and leadership for others. The majority of participants focus on their pastor/parish life coordinators as empowering and calling forth the gifts of others. Others refer to their efforts to engage parishioners in leadership, yet hindered by the struggle to do this effectively.

Servant Leadership

A number of participants describe their pastors or parish life coordinators as exercising a type of servant leadership. This is often characterized by inspiration and delegation, strong leadership skills, and those who are an example of leadership to others. The following observations reflect this view of the leadership of the pastors and parish life coordinators:

“Pastor never asks others to do what he doesn’t do. If he asks the community to tithe, he tithes first. His leadership inspires others to leadership.” (P)

“Inspiration and delegation without abdication; modeling transparency (as much as possible); trying to walk the walk; being serious, yet joyful, keeping a sense of humor – all those goodies!” (P)

“Working as a team and as servant leaders” (PLC)

“Facilitator and vision director for those who are committed to leadership and involvement” (D)

“The PLC works to demonstrate a servant/leader style at all times.” (D)

“Pastor – very open and sensitive to meeting the needs of the congregation. He is a very good listener and considers all involved before making a decision. He seeks input and acts upon it.” (PA)

“The pastor provides us with good leadership skills. Our new pastor is more of a servant leader.” (PC)

“Visible spiritual guide of community; sacraments; we have a full-time pastor who is very involved – he does everything. He does have an associate pastor and large staff to help.” (DR)

“Pastor who delegates” (DR)

“The pastor provides general oversight with parish life coordination split among several volunteers to different ministries.” (DR)

“The pastor acts as the cornerstone for parish ministries.” (DR)

“Pastor provides program for staff to develop leadership. He calls forth volunteers in conjunction with him. Makes personal contact with each family.” (DR)

“Pastor’s leadership is one of openness, collaboration, delegation, and empowerment of others. It’s a ‘we’ approach, not an ‘I’ approach.” (O)

“Non-micromanager (pastor) places trust in his ministries to do what needs to be done. He asks to be informed if there are ‘wrinkles’ or help is needed for clarification and/or decision-making. When a ‘complaint’ or comment comes up from a parishioner, the pastor sends the person/problem to the staff member of responsibility. He does not get involved until or unless something cannot be resolved.” (O)

“Four successive pastors over the past 35 years have intentionally enabled parishioners to develop needed ministries – theological, scriptural, and moral guidance in all ministerial efforts.” (O)

“Oversees everything, but does not micromanage.” (O)

“Our pastor is replacing a history of a very autocratic controlling founding pastor and is trying to overcome this in a pastoral way. He is trying to broaden the scope of understanding the role of the laity and is open to allowing laity the opportunities and flexibility to do this.” (O)

Empowering and Calling Forth the Gifts of Others

A number of participants describe their pastors and parish life coordinators as highly engaged in empowering and calling forth the gifts of others. The following comments reflect this perspective:

“I allow staff members, organization heads, and ministries the freedom to perform ministries and be creative. They appreciate my liturgical leadership and preaching. I try to model collaboration.” (P)

“Organized short-term and long-term assessments from parishioners to develop a purpose for our community along with goals and objectives using the consensus model” (P)

“Pastor empowers the parish to a deeper awareness that they are the church.” (P)

“Intentional – use of openness and collaboration with parish council and parish leaders; a continuing effort at being open to the mission of Christ” (P)

“Working to bring all people to work for the betterment of the church” (PC)

“The pastor empowers, challenges, invites, and provides ‘Holy Order’. Pastors believe in the model (collaboration through discernment and consensus) and supports fully the vision of church as a people of God.” (PA)

“Pastor is young, spiritual, delegates, dialogues, and empowers both his staff and community leaders. He calls forth the gifts and talents of the community.” (DR)

“Pass on the power to work.” (DR)

“Empowerment and collaboration” (DR)

“Calling forth from the community; modeling of service, especially hospitality presence; managing and cultivating the network” (DR)

“Enactment of pastoring role is building community relationships, communicating a vision oriented toward mission of Jesus, empowerment and nurturing of lay leadership, serving as symbolic center, tied to role at liturgy – paying for the theological and practical education of ministry leaders – recognizing and appreciating gifts and limitations (including own) and collaborating.” (DR)

“Empowers the leadership and ministers to minister to the people and to the community” (O)

Attempting to Engage Parishioners in Leadership (but struggling at times)

A number of participants describe their pastors and parish life coordinators as attempting to engage parishioners, but hesitant or struggling to make the transition to a participative leadership model. The following comments reflect this viewpoint:

“Need more encouraging and supportive leadership with a presentation of new ideas” (P)

“Vision and imagination and an office where change is validated; the parish and staff talk about revisioning, but the pastor must focus and structure it.” (P)

“Attempts, but in crisis of event or time availability, I revert to ‘I’ll do it!’ (Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa!)” (PLC)

“The pastor gives very little guidance or support. He expects you to take your ministry and do the best you can with it.” (D)

“Empowers, but still controls; example, all minutes of the meeting are written by him as he sees it!” (D)

“Our pastor shows some good leadership at times. Other times he feels because he is the administrator and not the pastor, he does not make changes in the parish.” (PC)

“Sometimes not enough; this person must be willing to become involved in conflict to preach the gospel. But overall his influence trickles down through the staff members he mentors. However, other staff who represent his authority do not always communicate his same pastoral attitude to the parishioners.” (O)

“Varies greatly depending on pastor; many intentional priests come from more hierarchical experience” (O)

F. Staff Leadership

Symposium participants were asked to describe the type of leadership provided by staff in their parishes. A majority describe their staff as empowering, facilitating, and engaging the gifts of others. Other participants describe their staff in a more planning, program implementation, and training role. Still others indicate their staff is very limited, and in many cases, they are understaffed for the challenges they face.

Empowering, Facilitating, and Allowing Gifts to Emerge

The comments below reflect a dynamic view of parish staff in their efforts to engage and empower others in acknowledging and realizing their baptismal call to ministry:

“The staff exists to minister and to empower others in ministry. They have a servant typestyle. They are also intentional in their leadership when the time is right. They strive to follow the call of Christ and Gospel values.” (P)

“They see themselves as enablers and servants to the parish.” (P)

“Constantly supporting the individuals who strive to live out their baptismal commitments in their particular ministries” (P)

“They try to engage as many as possible in cooperative efforts toward selected goals and within the purview of their responsibilities often taking the initiative to lead in areas that for a variety of reasons are being neglected.” (P)

“Image of servant leaders – help call forth, form, and empower lay leaders and a variety of ministries. Staff members are members of one of the six commissions based on area of mission/ministry. Pastoral Associate helps guide and mentor the Council and Staff (and Commissions as needed) and is now mentoring another staff member.” (PA)

“Collaborative – Leadership has much input and is there to meet the needs, whatever they may be at the present time. They are there to serve, not to be served.” (PA)

“Facilitation of lay ministers” (D)

*“Service to others – They will do everything possible to help you.”
(D)*

“Hospitality; networking; service; organizing” (DR)

“Empower members of the community.” (DR)

“The leadership is working toward education that leads to transformation. People are reminded that through their baptismal call, they aspire to be servants.” (DR)

“Coordinating ministries while inviting others into the ministries of the parish” (DR)

“Our parish staff is supportive of the movement of the pastor toward collaborative leadership and is working to empower the laity to rise to the level of leadership and service.” (O)

“The staff serves as guides, mentors, support, liaisons, again empowering others to take the ball and run, knowing that others are there for encouragement and support. Often the staff is the ones who provide the personal invitation to parishioners to become leaders.” (O)

“Reasonable involvement depending on specific needs and resources” (O)

Team Planning, Program Implementation, and Training (planning, executing, and engaging)

The following comments reflect an orientation of staff toward a more program management and training role in their parish leadership:

“Staff serves on commissions that are under the pastoral council as experts, resources, and to offer encouragement.” (P)

“Service centers and training others to do service” (P)

*“Direction, innovation, and handling various responsibilities well”
(P)*

“Contact with the parish, a vision for the community, and especially their own ministries and challenge. They are effective in responding to volunteers and beginning leadership training.” (P)

“Through the ministries and programs that the staff directs, parishioners are brought into a deeper participation in the life of the church.” (P)

“The staff should always acknowledge their assisting role while appropriately executing their assigned tasks.” (D)

“The staff is the Director of Religious Education, church secretary, and youth ministers. We try to lead the parish in the right direction, especially about church doctrine, faith, and sacraments.” (PC)

“Business officer, lay ecclesial ministers, liturgy directors, life ministry, event coordinator, bulletin editors, director of outreach, school principal, DRE’s, youth minister – all servant leaders” (DR)

“Working closely with all ministry leaders, collaborating with pastor on unifying parish efforts, doing training of ministers, recruiting for ministry, doing days of spiritual reflection; business managers provide leadership in use and maintenance of facilities and supervision of building projects.” (DR)

“The staff works with each other and the parish ministry leaders to insure programs work and reach the intended people.” (O)

“Staff assumes responsibility and the authority to guide the ministries. Staff is also accountable for what is happening.” (O)

“Staff is well trained with continuing education provided by parish and diocese. Three members have Masters of Religion from the Lymex program (an extension service of Loyola University).” (O)

“Structure, support, resource; the correct language that fosters the idea of ministry, stewardship, and true faith community” (O)

“They are the liaison between the pastor and the organizations.” (O)

Few Staff, No Paid Staff, or Understaffed (mostly volunteer leaders)

A number of participants indicate that staff leadership is very scarce within their local communities or is challenged in some way to fully exercise their leadership roles in guiding the parish communities as indicated below:

“There is no staff as such. Our leaders are volunteer ministers, but provide great example to those they serve.” (PLC)

“As the PLC I am the only staff person; I seek to coordinate. I try to expand insights through education and suggestions.” (PLC)

“Not much of a parish staff. Mainly the different ministers meet and share with others events that will happen in the future.” (D)

“Little to none – Staff will not interfere with a decision unless the pastor is there or has instructed them to.” (PC)

“Most parishes that use the diocesan congregational development do not have paid staff.” (DR)

“Pastor answers some general administrative questions; leads some training (POC comes to mind); RCIA direction, social concerns, religious education, adult faith formation – paid and volunteer staff make these happen.” (DR)

“We need to develop more Hispanics to assume parish and diocesan leadership roles to serve the total church. We are lagging behind.” (DR)

“We have only a secretary/bookkeeper as paid staff. She is excellent in all that she does, but really doesn’t normally make ministry decisions.” (DR)

“The staff is divided. Some members, like me, are new. Others, like many of the administrative staff members, have been in the parish for decades. On the part of the three members of the ‘Formation Staff’, there is a high level of collaboration, cooperation, and communication. We are often, however, stifled by the business leaders of the staff to the degree that the staff reflects this division. The volunteers reflect similar challenges and disagreements. The staff must reflect the kind of empowered leadership we want to be reflected in the parishioners.” (O)

“Varies depending on the size of our resources of the parish; many are small.” (O)

G. Leadership of the Community

Pastoral leaders were asked to describe ways their communities and members are involved in the overall ministries of the parish. In the mainstream, symposium participants identify their parish communities as active and engaged communities of leadership. In many instances, they also mention that the engagement of parishioners is largely through their parish councils and structured ministries within parish life as indicated below:

Active and Engaged Communities of Leadership (Engaged in Visioning of the Parish)

The following comments reflect a spirit of community involvement in leadership where lay members are invited and engaged to become active in the ministry of local parishes:

“The Archbishop’s expectation that every parish have a pastoral plan has been helpful for our goal setting process as a parish community. Parish participates in the ‘Parish Assembly’. We have a selection/discernment process for pastoral councilors, not an election.” (P)

“Community takes on a particular ministry and commit themselves and fulfill their ministries.” (P)

“We have had a handful of members come forward to be very involved in ministry leadership in addition to full-time jobs and families. These individuals are hungry to be involved.” (P)

“The community is actively involved in the ongoing life of the parish.” (P)

“All leadership resides in the community. Without their assistance and cooperation, nothing can happen. The people are those who will affirm or deny the directions of the pastor, the staff, and they will provide the manpower to make the programs and plans work (or not).” (P)

“Intentional as they do good works when possible; strong prayer support; good stewardship of time, talent, and treasure.” (P)

“We have excellent community members giving a living example of service to one another, as well as the greater community.” (PLC)

“Some try to lead by example of how they live their lives within the church and outside the church” (PLC)

“Surfaces ideas generated by own relationships; personal interests and life experiences; general community discussion ensues which tests interest.” (PLC)

“Very active community leaders – you ask and you get more than what you ask for.” (D)

“Self-directed within the bounds of the Mission Statement and overall parish planning” (D)

“The community has the responsibility of clearly articulating its needs and desires, especially being attentive to the ways in which they, as individuals and even as families, can actively contribute to the uplifting of the parish.” (D)

“The fruits are there, but the church needs to reap what is sown, but in my case a very skillful and energetic parish.” (PC)

“Expression of needs and service” (DR)

“Committed and formed leaders” (DR)

“The community provides almost all the leadership.” (DR)

“Answering the call to leadership positions within the parish when invitation and recognition of gifts is given” (DR)

“Community of communities; hospitality is lived by people in the parish; inviting” (DR)

Ministry trainings (lay people training other lay people). The community plays a big part in the integration of new Catholics after RCIA. They are encouraged and expected to help get them acclimated and welcomed.” (DR)

“Alpha Program was used for about five years. The program invites people to hear more about their faith. Leadership training is offered for people who want to be involved in assisting the parish services.” (DR)

“The community helps to determine the leadership they provide.” (O)

“Great leadership that is catechetical, visionary, empowered, and committed” (O)

“People get involved and are often willing to assume leadership or co-leadership. They also identify others with leadership skills.” (O)

Strong Engagement through Parish Councils and Ministries

A number of participants indicate that their formal parish structures of leadership, especially pastoral councils and ministry commissions are an effective way to engage parishioners in the leadership of parish life and service to others. The following comments reflect this structured approach to pastoral leadership:

“Participation by heading various councils and ministries and offering their time and talents” (P)

“Pastoral and finance councils; heads of liturgical ministries; service organizations; school council” (P)

“The community members are invited and encouraged to participate in the various activities and ministries. Many are participating in ministries through our parish commissions: Spiritual Formation Commission which provides and facilitates religious opportunities and spiritual growth from youth to adult. Great emphasis is placed on liturgy and the teaching and value of the Catholic Church. Parish Ministries Commission identifies the needs for ministry and social opportunities for all parishioners oversee social justice issues. Stewardship and Pastoral Administration Commission have their own chair person. Each commission has a staff member who is not the Chair.” (PA)

“Huge participation in parish-wide surveys, stewardship of ministry, stewardship of offering (78% identified givens), stewardship of prayer, goal setting, naming priorities, and problem solving. Our community is vocal, active, and does not hesitate to question.” (PA)

“Articulation of broad directions that can be picked up by pastoral councils and translated into goals” (DR)

“Head of Eucharist ministers, fundraisers, leads lectors, ushers, in parish hospitality, school council, PPC, PFC, volunteerism – recruiting and managing volunteers. Education level, community involvement level, gifts of talents and treasure dictate – stewardship of ministries” (DR)

“Our community is eager and willing to volunteer to become leaders within the community. This is evident in the pastoral council, parish assemblies, and other committees within the parish.” (O)

“By our model and its structure, the community provides a huge leadership role. We have an extremely large percentage of parishioners who are active in over 100 ministries. The number of ministries demands that we have a great deal of leadership at many levels.” (O)

“Most ministries are staffed by lay volunteers supported by parish staff members. The DRE is responsible.” (O)

“They provide the leadership within their own organizations. If a particular need is not being met, there is the possibility of starting a new ministry.” (O)

H. Intentionality of the Parish Leadership Model

Symposium participants were asked why their parish leadership models work the way they do. In addition, they were asked how intentional their parish leadership models are in their approaches to building parish communities.

A number of participants indicate that the tone and direction of the parish and parish staff are part of the reason for their current leadership models. Still other participants indicate that necessity and present needs often direct the approach to parish leadership which is emerging.

Other participants also indicate that their leadership models are driven by some vision of parish life or an intentional model they are trying to create in collaboration with parishioners. Others believe the overall sense of openness and involvement in the parish provides a way for the community to embrace a new sense of ministry together in realizing their baptismal call.

Leadership of the Pastor and Staff (derived from the style of pastor or parish administration)

A number of participants indicate that their current parish leadership models are encouraged, supported, and in some cases derived from the direction and tone set by the pastor and parish staff. The following comments reflect this more directional approach to leadership:

“The pastor believes in it and allows it (collaboration and delegation). There is a belief in stewardship as a disciple’s response – striving to become a total stewardship parish. Laity is beginning to understand the call they are always hearing – an invitation to participate.” (P)

“The model of collaborative leadership because the pastor is most at ease with it; the greatest challenge is to get the people to rise up and respond to it; to accept the ownership and the authenticity of the ministry of the parish.” (P)

“In all modesty and humility, it is because I have been trained over the years to work collaboratively – a very hard working staff, and many intelligent and dedicated lay people responded positively to the new approach. I pray daily to empower people and correct any blind spots.” (P)

“We are building participation in ministry commissions and trying to cultivate a feeling of ownership of parish life on the part of the parishioners.” (P)

“I strive to be open to all possibilities for the future. I trust the pastoral council and parish leadership to continue to be a gift to me and the parish. Also to be open to ideas from everyone inside and outside the parish.” (P)

“Because we (pastor and staff) recognize that this is OUR parish. This includes the parish as a whole. We use collective wisdom in decision-making giving responsibility and authority to those in charge of the various ministries.” (P)

“We have to get things done. We have freedoms, but not totally.” (D)

“Training all parish leaders in this model; sending and financing 10 parish leaders to study for Masters in Pastoral Ministry” (PA)

“The pastor allows leadership of the laity and encourages it. Strong staff and council support; directing Catechesis; demographics particular to each parish; strong support of pastors, staff, and parish council; laity are begging to understand their roles; repeated call for laity to step up; catechesis is directed toward this model.” (DR)

“Pastors leadership of the laity with guidance and training of leaders; intentional decision to follow the model of servant leadership based on the example of Jesus and affirmed by the people” (DR)

“The pastor believes that parishioners have gifts to be used in the parish.” (DR)

“Empowering new leaders – The pastor effects the intentionality in how he manages. Pastor delegates authority to laity. Defines mission and that fleshes out the objectives. Changing model can be detrimental. Does the issue dictate the model?” (DR)

“Pastor’s leadership and expectation; mutual respect among staff; consistent staff meeting schedules; trust in God and one another.” (DR)

“The pastor’s management style – empowering through training, education and communication” (O)

“The intentional model seems to come from the pastor and his sense of collaboration that permeates all that happens. Mutual trust between the pastor and staff; the staff and the people have a strong sense of identifying the church as the people of God, not the priest and the people.” (O)

“Strong support of pastor and parish staff – laity is beginning to understand their role. Repetitive call for laity to step up – catechesis directed toward this model.” (O)

“The call of the pastor to lay leadership – participation in various organizations to raise the knowledge and expertise of lay persons. The continued spiritual and theological formation of laity” (O)

“Primarily because the pastor 35 years ago was a great enabler with a collaborative vision and the three pastors following him bought into his vision and added their expertise or passion for lay ministry responsibility. The pastors drew lay leaders into their confidence and challenged them.” (O)

“We have to take the lead from our pastor to empower others and to step up to use their gifts. I think some of it has evolved, but because it works, we have become more intentional in our way of parish leadership.” (O)

Necessity and Present Needs (based on local needs)

A number of participants indicate that the necessity of their current circumstances and present needs are often the determinant in selecting a parish leadership direction or approach. The following comments reflect this perspective:

“Over the years, we have seen the many needs of the church and sought to listen to the voice of the people. The question of what makes up a good parish is an often asked question. It confronts us often and we cannot escape striving to answer its challenge. For example, the challenge right now is Hispanic ministry.” (P)

“It’s worked this way for so many years and there is not a willingness to change models. I allow this model because I am a part-time pastor.” (P)

“We are only 60 families and we have a general parish meeting monthly.” (PLC)

“It is a natural progression of our historical experience of our mission church. As we grow, we continue to have our members serve.” (PLC)

“Out of necessity – Conditions now require a very close collaboration between the pastor and the parish council in best proposing a plan for the future life of the parish.” (D)

“Necessity – in response to the needs of the local community” (DR)

“Because of necessity; because it’s working and people are involved and it’s intentional” (DR)

“It has always been this way at our parish, not that it has really worked; hence, we have begun to change roles.” (PC)

“Our model is one of necessity. We are a mission parish with about 140 families. We do not have sufficient resources to pay staff a ‘living wage’. To do these jobs, we must rely on volunteers. It works for us because we try to put the good of the parish first in all things.” (DR)

We’re a parish of professionals so you have a lot of people who are used to positions of leadership and training. We’re so large that parishioners must step up or some ministries couldn’t survive. Just recently, we cancelled Children’s church at the Saturday Vigil due to a lack of volunteers.” (DR)

“This process is different from a training program in that in a training situation, someone else has decided what a group should know. The group reacts passively as trainer force-feeds knowledge and skills. In the development process, the group recognizes a challenge or problem and wants to work together to do something about it.” (DR)

“Necessity; theology; gospel” (O)

“This is the way it’s always been done. However, it works great for some, but then there are some organizations that this does not work for.” (O)

Intentional Model for Parish Life (vision for an intentional faith community)

Still other participants believe that their parish leadership model is driven by a sense of intentionality and careful attempts to guide and call forth a vision for parish life involving parishioners more fully in their call to holiness and ministry. This is reflected in the comments below:

“The pastor and staff intentionally call the parish to live the Gospel.” (P)

“Being intentional by participating in workshops, such as this symposium, by what I read, whom I associate with in ministry, and other support structures.” (P)

“Because it is Gospel impelled taking Christ’s earthly ministry as its model. The servant leader who calls forth other servant leaders. You can’t be more intentional than take the Gospel and Christ as model.” (P)

“Because it is moving so slowly toward consensus and a shared and discovered vision; previous leadership was ‘giver of vision’ rather than collaborator in discovering a vision. Building trust now takes so much time.” (P)

“By allowing dreams to be verbalized and heard” (P)

“Very carefully trying to lead and encourage participation, but not be democratic or autocratic.” (PLC)

“By being available, by being attentive for signs of need, and by being responsive to requests for assistance by the pastor, staff, and parishioners” (D)

“It is intentional, works well, and has been very successful in bringing about numerous volunteers and has empowered them to become leaders. It has also brought about among the laity a consciousness and realization of their Baptismal Call.” (PA)

“Intentional based on Jesus’ teaching and example and affirmed by the people” (PA)

“Absolutely – we are intentional. From a parish mission in December 1980 to participation in renewal process and small prayer groups to PEP process. Old parish council voted itself out of existence. Staff and former council and other parish leaders spent two years forming (on paper) and council of ministries and commission. First council selected in 1984.” (PA)

“Theologically Gospel-driven – intentional building of collaborative structures to nurture our becoming more fully ‘a community of disciples.’ Discernment – We are the Body of Christ, but Christ is the head and we must discern. Consensus – Each person has a piece of the wisdom and spirit will guide us.” (PA)

“Gospel driven and intentional – intentional in empowering the laity in leadership; theologically driven as well. Necessity, but with ownership of parish and support of pastoral leadership to help laity recognize and accept the roles.” (DR)

“The intentional, theoretical basis is the mission of Jesus in parishes that are vibrant. In those that are not, pastors are acting out of a personal mindset that is not developmental, but more reflective of priestly caste role of preaching personal holiness.” (DR)

“Intentional - I work on the diocesan level supporting priests in their efforts to create vibrant parish communities.” (DR)

“The Hispanic Advisory Board is intentional in the sense it is comprised of young people, older people, transplants to the parish, parish founders, staff members, and immigrants from different countries. Every time there is an issue that pertains to the Hispanic community, Father tells me to take it to the Board. He almost never makes decisions that the Board did not advise. As the leader of this group, I need to ensure that the leadership itself is constantly receiving theological/spiritual formation. I plan to provide monthly catechetical sessions intended for adults throughout the next year, as well as devote ½ hour of the ‘nuts and bolts’ meeting of the board also to ongoing catechesis and formation.” (O)

“Our structure and our language help to form and maintain our model. But our model exists and functions to promote ministry, express diversity, and strengthen collaboration and consensus-building. Limits for leadership positions – no voting, but decision-by-consensus, openness to new ministries are all intentional ways we maintain our model.” (O)

Openness and Involvement in Parish Life (Embraced by the Community)

Still other participants indicate that their parish exhibits a sense of openness and involvement. This openness and involvement is a spirit of belonging and mutuality which encourages people to be more fully involved in the leadership of the parish. The following observations reflect this spirit of openness and involvement which engages parishioners in greater efforts of mutual ministry:

“A lot more ministry gets done when people are involved. Parishioners are starting to notice that the parish seems more alive in some ways. New parishioners are looking for ways to be involved.” (P)

“Beginning new programs and small groups; using the talents that are present, especially when new people arrive who have new abilities. It is also important that the voices from the invisible margins are heard and recognized -- heard not only by the pastor, but also by the staff and the rest of the parish.” (P)

“I try not to force acceptance of lay pastoral leadership, but try to let the people come to accept it naturally – more by example.” (PLC)

“Because that is what we believe true servant discipleship is all about. The future of the church, as always, rests with the people of God. It is their willingness to accept the call to discipleship and participate in the spreading of the good news which ensures its ultimate survival. God did not challenge us to create a ‘smaller’ more ‘obedient’ church, but rather one which engages the world and by example brings them to Christ and his love and compassion.” (D)

“We have designed and implemented strategic plans, procedures, and benchmarks to insure full implementation of our goals. The only stumbling block to future success would be the assignment of a new pastor or parish administrator who would be controlling or unwilling to delegate.” (D)

“Total stewardship; collaborative structures; community building; calling forth gifts; ongoing formation; SCC and renews; sacramental celebrations in Mass; focus on prayer and scripture; help pay 50% of registration fees for continuing education and adult theological formation; host diocesan courses” (PA)

“By actively recruiting every person in the pews for ministry, there is a strong message that by our baptismal call we are required to do more than just show up to Mass on weekends and Holy Days.” (DR)

“People feel like they belong and are welcomed. They feel important to the community. There is mutual respect among leaders. Leaders understand that they are to serve.” (DR)

“By continually calling parishioners to a level of service – a vibrant parish brings new life to ministry when needed. The Holy Spirit inspires the church – we are never alone!” (DR)

“Because we are blessed to be in a wealthy, diverse, multi-cultural, mega, suburban area and have a huge, educated, professional staff that each works with smaller groups of empowered parishioners.” (O)

“Catalyst and motivator for pastor and diocesan staff – let people use their gifts and imagination and assist with resources” (O)

I. Future Models of Pastoral Leadership

Participants were asked to identify the future models of pastoral leadership that are emerging in their faith communities. Overwhelmingly, they describe increased lay involvement, dependence on the laity, and inclusive models of leadership as the preferred mode for moving into the future.

Increased Lay Involvement and Dependency on Laity (baptismal call to leadership)

Overwhelmingly, participants describe lay involvement, dependence on the laity, and collaboration as their preferred mode for parish leadership in the future. The following comments reflect this high priority among participants in the South Symposium:

“The acceptance of lay people/couples to initiate the ministry that they identify as most pressing and necessary for their circumstances. They have to be given the acknowledgement opportunities necessary to overcome questions about legitimacy that inevitably surface. In company with this are those who recognize and put into practice models of leadership they see and find out about in other parts of the diocese which they then put into practice in their own places whether they have been invited to or not.” (P)

“Presently we are interested in a leadership style similar to what we heard in the presentations. The vision of leadership that we are moving toward is a servant model based on the belief that the church exists to evangelize.” (P)

“The hope is one of total parish involvement in ministries, in or out of our parish structures, but outcomes are never automatically assured.” (P)

“Stronger sense of the need for cultural diversity in leadership. Greater use of discernment and consensus, laity empowerment, consultative leadership.” (P)

“Small faith communities are an important part of the parish. Parish leadership is emerging from these groups.” (P)

“There will be more deacons. The young adult ministry will grow and middle school children’s programs and opportunities will increase.” (P)

“No longer can leadership in a parish reside in just one person (pastor). Faith formation and education is the key for leadership. Using the movements to promote and recruit leadership.” (P)

“Distributing work around to all the faithful so they feel part of the church” (PLC)

“More participative; subsidiarity is coming slowly because of lay leaders (some) tendency to micro-manage.” (PLC)

“The model of close collaboration between lay pastoral minister and sacramental minister.” (PLC)

“It is moving in the right direction toward true empowerment and delegation.” (D)

“A sharing of leadership is emerging.” (D)

“Leaders are coming to staff and council saying what our parish needs and we will organize and coordinate if the council agrees its needed, (i.e., Working Interfaith Network, Young Adult Core Team – over 20 young adults age 23-28 forming a team with the Director of Youth Ministry to facilitate high school youth group active meetings, and a senior ministry for 65 and older.” (PA)

“Parish Ministry Leadership Team composed of leaders of 40 parish ministries” (PA)

“We are seeing more and more lay people put into roles of prominence or maybe ministries of prominence. Roles that used to only go to religious sisters or the ordained are now going to lay people. Plus, one parish very much supports the educational development of potential lay leaders. They help pay for it!” (PA)

“Servant leaders” (PC)

“Discipleship is the key word. Servant leadership must prevail for a parish that is effective and life giving.” (DR)

“Building on the Diocesan congregational development process, leadership takes ownership not only in the congregation, but in the community they live.” (DR)

“The call from within the parish community to leadership roles. The recognition of the baptized faithful as called by duty of priest, prophet, and rule” (DR)

“I think in the future as our community grows, many of these jobs will be taken over by trained paid professionals. It is possible that we will have a paid parish life coordinator and volunteers in many of the directors’ spots reporting to that person.” (DR)

“More inclusive, more participatory, more complex situations (Katrina); more cultural diversity is dictating direction and vision and future leadership models. The church will become the model for other segments of society – servant leadership.” (DR)

“Adults and young adults working together (a community of communities – Koreans, Hispanics, college students, older adults, etc.)” (DR)

“Indigenous leadership – that is, members of ethnic communities that minister to others in that community and are more effective because of understanding cultural issues from the inside.” (DR)

“The Hispanic young adult group is emerging as a network that operates within the parish, but is unified as a body of groups on the Diocesan level. These groups develop their own leadership teams that work closely with me, but direct their group catechetical plan according to the method they feel will work best with their peers. The leadership takes the initiative to be formed by Diocesan efforts as well. This group is a model of a lay group which takes responsibility for ongoing evangelization for both the leaders themselves and the members of the group. The fact that these young adults also build up a larger network within the Diocese enables collaboration, common retreats, sharing of resources, formation, etc. This model may work for all young adult ministries, if done well.” (O)

“More lay leadership; more collaboration between pastoral council and various ministries” (O)

“Collaborators with deliberate efforts, communication, and coordination; less limited by boundaries and specific jobs” (O)

“Collaborative leadership that support contemporary movements of parish life with a somewhat Protestant mentality of ‘church’” (O)

“Many people want to learn more about their faith, so there is an urge for faith formation that comes directly from them. Often things happen at the grassroots level rather than from the top.” (O)

None or No Change at this Time (frustration with the process of change)

Only two participants indicate that their current emerging model is not moving forward with a high degree of frustration and crisis in their parish communities:

“This model will remain until they get a full-time pastor and the 83-year-old pastor retires.” (P)

“I am serving a parish that has entered a crisis of substantive proportions – financially and in the number of individuals who continue despite radical demographic change. Leadership must now be attentive to actions that may lead to the curtailment of even more parish programs and activities.” (D)

III. PARISH BEST PRACTICES:

After hearing a series of case studies outlining individual examples from local parishes, participants discussed the best practices that are evident in their parish communities. In debriefing these best practices, participants were asked to reflect on their own experiences of best practices in parish leadership.

A. Relationship of Total Ministering Community to Healthy Parishes

Overwhelmingly, participants indicate an essential link and strong connection between a total ministering community and healthy parishes. The grassroots nature of many small rural communities in the South makes this direction a compelling priority for participants in the South Regional Symposium. The following comments reflect this essential link between a total ministering community and healthy parishes:

Essential Link between a Total Ministering Community and Healthy Parishes

“100% - depends on training of Brothers, Priests, Deacons, and Laity.” (P)

“Is there any other way for the future? This is what it means to be ‘church’ for one another.” (P)

“To the extent that they pray, persevere, and are patient.” (P)

Collaboration and consistency is important to have with every person in leadership.” (P)

“Totally – it’s the way to go.” (P)

“It totally depends upon a total ministering community of pastors, staff, and parishioners working together.” (P)

“The total ministering community is an essential condition of any healthy, functioning community.” (P)

“The health of parishes of the future will depend very much on a total ministering community. The complexities of church and parish life demand it.” (P)

“Through collaboration and consensus” (P)

“It is absolutely essential to have collaborative and listening pastors and staff that empower lay leadership open to collective wisdom and a greater emphasis on discipleship and volunteerism.” (P)

“Totally” (PLC)

“Train people in their ministries and allow them to train and teach others.” (PLC)

“It will be vital for the growth and life of parishes for the laity to assume their baptismal roles in the ministry.” (PLC)

“For us to survive, we will have to all be able to support each other.” (D)

“100% to 110%” (PA)

“Total ministry will and can be healthy if each one knows and understand his/her role. Training will be very important and necessary not only for the laity, but also for bishop, priests, and deacons.” (PA)

“Totally” (PC)

“The parishioners will take a much greater role in taking care of their parish in all respects.” (PC)

“Delegation, revisit vision; don’t plan a project to death. Everyone has a value. The pastor needs to say yes. Need good line of communication from bottom to top; job descriptions” (PC)

“They have no choice. If they don’t work together, they will not be around in a few years.” (D)

“All agree that it will be important.” (DR)

“It is almost completely dependent on this total ministering concept.” (DR)

“To a great extent – it will be impossible otherwise.” (DR)

“Healthy parishes will totally depend upon total ministering community model. The problem is that too many of our parishes are not healthy and do not possess the vision to engage in healthier models of ministry.” (DR)

“Collaboration; consensus; totality of ministry” (DR)

“Through greater involvement of laity in parish leadership, but emphasized distinction between the priesthood and laity” (DR)

“Covenant making with leadership; offer conflict management to solve leadership concerns; faith-sharing as leaders is helpful; collaboration and respect – two terms for effectiveness” (DR)

“More cooperation and collaboration; the more open the parish can be to identify the needs and issues and matching the ministry based upon the reality of resources” (DR)

“To the extent to which people are properly trained: teach management and leadership courses; pastors train staff and parishioners; Vatican train bishops with the specific goal in mind” (DR)

“Very, very dependent” (O)

“This will be vital to the health of a parish. Total ministry by using the many gifts of the parishioners will continue to be a greater need in the future. Roles may have to change. Clergy will have to give up responsibilities in some areas, such as finance, facilities, and administration in order to focus on pastoral duties.” (O)

“More and more with each passing year in our rapidly changing and shrinking world” (O)

“100% - the reality is the extent to which we will practice total ministering itself depends upon the extent of training received by pastors, staff, and parishioners along with their bishops.” (O)

“To the extent that Dioceses/National Ministry Organizations actively recruit/adapt to a lay, working class, Hispanic leadership. To the degree that more parishioners/lay people are challenged to be formed in the faith and challenged to act on that formation.” (O)

“It will depend a lot on working together as a team.” (O)

“Realization that one person can’t do it alone to the extent that leaders are willing to be risk takers; priest leader allows himself to be changed; redefinition of pastor” (O)

“The only way, to a very large extent, is we need to open parishes with a parish life coordinator.” (O)

B. Best Practices of Parish Leadership

Pastoral leaders were asked to identify the best practices they experience in building vibrant faith communities. These best practices include a commitment to collaboration and shared ministry, a visioning and affirming leadership with strong skills in pastoral planning, and an emphasis on prayer, spirituality, and faith formation.

Commitment to Collaboration and Shared Ministry (Living the Baptismal Call; Calling Forth the Gifts of Others)

Overwhelmingly, participants indicate that best practices for building vibrant faith communities begin with a commitment to collaboration and shared ministry by living out one’s baptismal call and calling forth the gifts of others. The following comments reflect this compelling priority among symposium participants:

“Eucharist-centered, lived-out discipleship, responding to the Baptismal Call and mission. Service that extends beyond the church community into the greater world. Call out, support/encourage, form, educate, empower, and nourish. Also shared leadership, delegation/subsidiarity, networking and open dialogue.” (P)

“Collaboration; communication – pastors and bishops who are willing to see things happen; active pastoral council with dialoguing leadership; pastor is the leader, but people have to be able to respond and not be afraid to fail.” (P)

“Collaborative; welcoming; inclusive (education). Prophetic – Eucharistic-centered collective decision-making – good communication. All the aspects stated in the symposium; hope and faith; delegation; nourish leaders” (P)

“Collaboration – recognition of all gifts; openness to new ways of ministry; ownership by a cross-section of people” (P)

“Collaboration; delegation; total involvement” (P)

“The more people are consulted and involved, the more they will be committed.” (P)

“Building relationships of trust and collaboration; inform, communicate with personally, and educate regarding Catholic teaching.” (PLC)

“Shared leadership (collaboration); inclusion; consensus decision-making; solid, comprehensive formation and training program – education and action for justice” (PA)

“Collaboration, empowerment, and involvement; clear and defined job descriptions; inclusiveness in all ministries” (PA)

“Pastor/priest as key leader; support, empowerment; faith life; invitation with a call; unity and life; quality control; nourishment” (PC)

“A parish empowered to take care of the needs of their people giving a sense of ownership and responsibility.” (PC)

“Collaboration, delegation, and education; openness to new ideas, especially what it means to be pastor; mixture of volunteer and paid people; building community through social gatherings; seeing the people as greater resources” (DR)

“Collaboration; good conflict resolution; build networks between cultural groups” (DR)

“Collaboration between pastor and laity for a shared leadership approach; we should be empowering the people. We need more faith formation from pastors through pre-K. Use many different mediums to keep parishioners informed.” (DR)

“Collaborative; involvement of young, Hispanic voices; foster dialogue among traditionalists/progressives; build up smaller communities within larger ones; well-formed theologically (models will differ); flexible; creative; diverse and pastoral” (O)

“Diffused leadership among the parishioners; openness and flexibility; a model which lays out the structure for all to understand. Awareness made known to all parishioners that we all have gifts to share; fostering a sense of ownership and stewardship.” (O)

“Delegation; communication; collaboration; dialogue; everyone at the table has a piece of the truth; take risks and do not fear failure.” (O)

“Creativity; shared wisdom and decision-making; creating a trusting environment; life-giving liturgies” (O)

“People empowerment; communication” (O)

“Develop a pastoral council that is not a rubber stamp for the pastor. Strategic planning in every parish; collaboration and communication expects that every parish and mission has a full-time, on-site pastoral presence.” (O)

Visionary and Affirming Leadership (need for pastoral planning)

Consistent with their emphasis on collaboration and shared ministry, participants often describe a visioning and affirming leadership with a high degree of skill in pastoral planning and the development of collaborative structures. The following comments reflect this commitment to a visioning leadership rooted in strong planning and leadership skills:

“Pastoral council and strategic pastoral planning; collaboration and delegation; renewal programs; support of laity; empowerment and nourishment; openness to new ideas and making use of resources of people; finance council; mission statement; networking; ability to take risks; subsidiarity; clear job description and goals; justice orientation” (P)

“Continuing faith formation for leadership; written covenants for staff; conflict resolution; collaboration and communication; faith sharing among leadership to avoid ministry as functionary; subsidiarity; position descriptions and annual performance evaluations” (P)

“Good parish committees and pastoral plans; willing to take a risk without fear of failure.” (D)

“(Collaboration) - Lay leaders meet and share with other leaders what they are doing.” (D)

“Development of strategic plans and vision of the future must be the shared product of the community. Celebration, delegation, support, and formation are key to leadership. Teamwork and empowerment between the pastor, deacon, parish administrator, and laity are essential. Open invitation to serve and a willingness to listen to where the Holy Spirit is directing the many voices called by God. Along with delegation comes accountability and responsibility.” (D)

“Understanding the mission of the church; sound strategic planning; evangelization; collaboration; resident pastoral leader; using the resources of individuals; respect for the principle of subsidiarity” (D)

“Parish with a vision for the future; pastor that supports lay persons; perseverance; structured vision; train the next person for the role of leadership” (PC)

“A living mission statement and its flexibility; active relationship between PPC and PFC and their boundaries; dialogue maintained by pastor at all levels; everyone has a gift – each one has a piece of the truth. Be not afraid to fail – clarity of roles.” (DR)

“Shared leadership in all sharing in the gifts to build up the body” (DR)

“Common vision created and owned by the community; meaningful formation and skills building of ministers; flexible leadership; ability to manage conflict effectively; consensus-building; periodic evaluation regarding effectiveness of ministries” (DR)

“Use the pastoral council in strategic pastoral planning, stewardship education; renewal programs like Cursillo, training for leadership. Designated pastoral leaders should be full time and on site. Collaboration, delegation, communication, empowering the people” (DR)

“Attitude: Everyone has a piece of the truth and a gift to offer. The pastor must be willing. Active councils and committees with clear job descriptions, jurisdictions, and boundaries; clear sense of mission and a basic plan. Collaboration, delegation, accountability, dialogue/ communication, networking, conflict management, willingness to risk ‘failure’, flexibility; personal contact and recognition; hospitality” (DR)

“Visioning as a team; subsidiarity is a principle to endorse on all levels. Stress the importance of ‘How can it be done?’ Not, ‘Can we do it?’ Use positive assurance.” (DR)

“Leadership by example and openness” (O)

“Active pastoral council; active finance committee; be mission-driven; collaborate; and communicate; pastor’s leadership; everyone has a piece of the wisdom; 2-way dialogue; not being afraid to fail” (O)

“Each parish should have a pastoral leader whose primary focus is the leadership of that parishes’ lay parish administrators with priests focusing on sacramental and spiritual duties. Collaboration of may leadership; management training for priests and parish administrators; better focus on what the goal is for the parish; bottom-up approach for good of the parish; communication, evangelization, delegation, inclusion, and also challenging leadership” (O)

“Collaboration; openness; inclusion so that people have ownership of the parish and thus want to become responsible for it, having a vision for the parish, empowering and training the leaders, nourishing people spiritually, being invitational” (O)

Emphasis on Prayer, Spirituality, and Faith Formation

Clearly, participants in the South Symposium, as in other symposiums, place a strong emphasis on prayer, spirituality, and faith formation as anchors to their best practices of pastoral leadership. This is reflected in the following comments:

“Eucharistic communities; we are a church centered on Eucharist; a vibrant faith community must be based on Eucharist.” (P)

“Generations of faith Catechetical, family-based programs; systematic integral new evangelization program (bi-lingual); shared leadership” (P)

“Formation; education; empowerment; collaboration; strong liturgies and focus on the Eucharist” (PLC)

“Welcoming committees letting parishioners know they are part of the church; vacation bible school” (PLC)

“True faith sharing around the Liturgy of the Eucharist” (D)

“Spiritual formation – discipleship, sacramental preparation, SCC, missions, total community catechesis. Inclusive language; total stewardship (prayer, ministry, and offerings); discernment and consensus, collaboration, and structures that facilitate those elements. Openness of pastor, staff, and parish; formation and education; centrality of Eucharist; ecumenism; social justice; intentional forming community of disciples” (PA)

“Faith formation and education; sharing spirituality and training for ministry” (DR)

“Greater reverence for the Eucharistic celebration; empowering qualified lay leadership in important ministry roles” (DR)

“Helping people know themselves as disciples and ministers through ongoing formation, collaboration, consensus-building, attitude/stance of humility among pastoral leaders, training in collaborative ministry, training in pastoring provided for those named to pastor, outward orientation, drawing in resources from environment, theologically-based planning” (DR)

C. Challenges for Leadership in Building a Vibrant Faith Community

Participants were asked to identify the challenges they face in building vibrant faith communities. Symposium participants identified a great need for training, education, and personnel resources. Overcoming parochialism and resistance to change was also identified. In addition, participants identified issues of theological, multi-cultural, and cultural diversity, as well as systemic and structural issues in the church as the major challenges face in building their faith communities.

Training, Education, and Personnel Resources

Due to the rural and sometimes remote nature of these parishes, South Symposium participants indicate that training, education, and personnel resources are major challenges in building vibrant faith communities. Often, these churches have very diminished resources due to their poverty or geographic remoteness. The following comments reflect the need for training, education, and personnel resources in these parish situations:

“Education of the parish as to the importance to collaborative ministry. The openness of the pastor to collaborative ministry; coping with enormity of growth; diversity of spirituality to know when it is time for a ministry to die.” (P)

“Passivity; limited size; absence of a resident pastor; absence of training; presence of human weakness; cultural dimensions; lay leaders relating effectively with non-collaborative” (D)

“Developing quality leadership skills in those who step forward” (D)

“Lack of education and training” (PA)

“Training; charismatic; not a competition; share; brief, debrief, and transfer” (PC)

“Adequate pay (salaries) that can support families; lack of resources; willingness to invest in preparation and training of leaders; burnout; language barriers; prejudice of parishioners” (DR)

“Lack of sufficient training in leadership; original sin – egotism and self-centeredness; past experience of parishioners accustomed to passivity” (DR)

“The differences in generations (pre-Vatican and post-Vatican) to provide appropriate required training for ministers who speak for the church; to balance responsibility with authority; to balance being organized with being open to the spirit; to welcome in the youth and young adults; to find the next generation of leaders. People really belong when they are allowed to contribute.” (DR)

“Lack of training; lack of religious culture; forming leaders; conflict model in church (i.e., young/old, liberal/conservative); ability to implement new models; acceptance of community for leadership coming from within.” (DR)

“Searching for the right people for ministries – ongoing formation is important. We can’t afford to have a stale approach. Mission Statements and goals are guiding principles. Stress the importance of discipleship in ministry.” (DR)

“Educate people about the changes in the parish/liturgy.” (O)

“Adequate fair market wages for laity employed commensurate with inflation” (O)

Overcoming Parochialism with a Resistance to Change

Participants identify overcoming parochialism and a resistance to change as significant challenges in building vibrant faith communities. Many participants spoke of the difficulties their parishes face in moving to a different paradigm or understanding the church of the future. The following comments reflect the complexities in overcoming parochialism and a resistance to change in their parishes:

“Complacency of leaders and parishioners; people pushing their personal agenda” (P)

“Obstinate pastors and parishioners; uneducated parishioners, priests, and deacons; tradition-bound individuals” (P)

“People who don’t want other people helping in church activities; divided cultures” (PLC)

“Laity accepting lay pastoral leaders; priests being open to sharing pastoral responsibilities; multi-cultural response to changing demographics; pay for the lay ministers” (PLC)

“Lack of comfort and trust in delegation, a shared vision for the future, and consensus about how to get there are significant challenges. Failure to recognize the need to adopt to changing demographics and environmental/economic impacts. Educating parishioners on the need for discipleships and stewardship. Cultural diversity in both the community and in its leadership” (D)

“Re-tooling one’s own leadership style and skill sets; deliberate prayer and faith sharing together” (PLC)

“Traditional, rigid thinking as opposed to open, progressive thinking” (PA)

“Threat to priest, religious and lay persons; threat to power and authority; unbelief in collaborative ministry; have to be empowered – to take risks and assure that it will be OK. Community is not on the same page with pastor or goals. No acceptance of a clear vision; overcoming the fear of being a leader. Formation and skills are needed to become leaders (investment).” (PC)

“To be able to let go and allow others to co-minister, especially with paid professionals.” (DR)

“Fear of the old guard which doesn’t want to let go. Fear of current paid staff of losing jobs to more volunteer-based staff. Conflicts between different demographic factions; implementation of new models in older traditional parishes” (DR)

“Create opportunities then allow the Holy Spirit to work – get out of the way – don’t be an obstacle.” (O)

“Collaborative leadership depends upon recognition of the paradigm shift; financial obstacles; egocentrism or selfishness in pastor or leaders; cultural differences” (O)

Emerging Issues of Theological, Cultural, and Multi-Cultural Diversity

Diversity emerged as a significant theme among parishes in the South in regard to challenges to building a vibrant faith community. These issues of diversity reflect theological differences, cultural differences, and the need to engage many cultures in a parish situation. Clearly, these cultural issues of diversity are substantial challenges as reflected by the following comments:

“Degree of openness by pastors to shared leadership, collaborative ministry, and openness to cultural diversity. Encourage ethnic leadership, diversity seen as a positive, not a negative – a richness. Avoid ‘cults of personality’ centered on pastors or specific lay leaders. Formation/ education must be open to everyone in the parish.” (P)

“People not knowing how to work with authority or power; lay people not empowering others; lack of formation; international priest not being inculturated hinders lay leadership” (P)

“Transference of consumer mentality to be parish – can the parish establish a ministerial program to meet every need? Busyness in people’s lives; burnout of leaders; small percentage of few putting on a parish for the many; individual devotional spirituality; individualism – loss of sense of common good; rotating leadership; cultural issues” (P)

“Shifting paradigms to collaborative leadership; financial obstacles; lack of sufficient training; selfishness; egocentrism; cultural differences; preparing lay leaders to respond effectively to non-collaborative new pastor. Like a jazz combo – leadership smoothly flows from one to another.” (P)

“Leadership must have an open attitude toward making room for the best ideas and working hard toward having the community implement them in a team effort approach.” (P)

“Selfishness; financial cost; giving up. To not believe ‘we are the ones we have been waiting for’ fundamentalism. Too little prayer. Fear as Jesus said fear is useless. The size of the problem – yesterday’s mediocrity.” (P)

“Use of the common language; willing to let go; help all learn English; provide education for all -- remember we are the Catholic Church not just the Catholic Church of the USA.” (D)

“Dealing with cultural, generational, and gender differences” (PA)

“Cultural differences; financial; lack of education/training of all involved. Tension between and because of the team approach to ministry. The human element is always involved. Change of pastors with different vision.” (PA)

“Coping with the enormity of growth in the Hispanic population of the church in the U.S. Raising up indigenous leadership, educating whole communities to discipleship and ministry, dioceses providing resources, bishops with one ecclesiology (e.g., hard conservative) running up against the prevailing ecclesiology of the local population (priests, people, pastoral ministers)” (DR)

“Balance between responsibility and authority; misunderstandings; non-understandings; discipleship; perspective; conflicts. Generational challenges (volunteers); cultural differences – respect for diversity; mainstream culture; true education and spirituality taught so that laity is properly trained and educated” (DR)

“Laity is too absorbed in living a consumeristic lifestyle. Church hierarchy is too absorbed in promoting and maintaining a limited vision of ordained ministry.” (DR)

“Our human failures” (DR)

“Differences in generations (age and faith); cultural differences (respect all cultures); what happens in society affects the church. Balance (authority, responsibility, accountability); handling conflict; leadership relinquish power; faith formation; openness of the pastor; cultural acceptance of women by foreign born priests” (O)

“Challenges of different generations; unmet hungers of certitude of truth; Bishops have not yet determined who and what requirements are necessary for someone who works for the church as a lay person. Balance between authority, responsibility, and accountability” (O)

“Past models of hierarchical authority; lack of formation and preparation of the laity; rapidly changing demographic; multicultural committee; unstable family situations” (O)

Systematic and Structural Issues in Church Leadership

Similar to other Symposiums, participants from the South acknowledge that systematic and structural issues in church leadership are often some of their key challenges to building vibrant faith communities. This reality is reflected in the following comments:

“Pastor not being able to select his team; a counsel and parishioners reluctant to change; elderly staff refusing to retire or die” (P)

“We have no set-up for individuals responding to new ministerial responsibilities and opportunities. Leaders don’t just happen, they need to be supported and invited. Having a program to help this happen is important. There are unmet needs that new generations of ministers will try to meet.” (P)

“Charge of pastors and bishops; different ecclesial visions; ethnic issues regarding priests of other cultures and world views; opening ‘closed’ systems – groups or leaders not moving on (e.g., we encourage maximum 3-year term as leader and have co-ordination the third year).” (PA)

“Theological/political differences – polarization; underpaid staff members; under-educated Hispanic immigrants; empowerment; stereotypes; women” (O)

“Parishioners who are not aware of their true role as disciples – lack of education. Structures not set in place to utilize the gifts of the community. Leaders who are not open to sharing the vision or the leading roles in a faith community.” (O)

“Paradigm shifts of bishops, priests, and parishioners; financial considerations; evangelization of church; training for leaders; overcoming sins of pride, selfishness, etc. Acceptance and ownership toward this good within the church” (O)

“Limitations set by priests or bishop; attitudes of parishioners who feel that ‘only the priest’ can do that.” (O)

D. Opportunities for Leadership in Building a Vibrant Faith Community

Pastoral leaders were asked to identify future opportunities they see for building vibrant faith communities. Participants describe these as calling forth the gifts of others and a need for ongoing formation, education, and evangelization.

Calling Forth the Gifts of Others (Empowerment)

Participants often describe opportunities for leadership as requiring a spirit of openness and investment. This sense of openness calls people to rediscover their baptismal call and to become part of vibrant faith communities. The following comments reflect this spirit of empowerment and openness as part of calling forth vibrant faith communities:

“Staff working to build up the body of the church; since we live in a changing world, the church must be open to change while celebrating our history and mystery. All people in the parish living their baptismal commitment” (P)

“Investing oneself in the community; openness; all are ‘owners’ of the community” (P)

“Opportunities are wide open to the risk-takers responding to Baptismal Call and Eucharistic empowerment. Needs to be strongly youth and family-oriented. Pastors and leaders must listen with ego turned off and the Holy Spirit allowed to speak.” (P)

“Giving confidence to lay ministers; make them qualified for ministry; emphasize the baptismal call to ministry” (P)

“The opportunities are endless. We are only limited by our imaginations.” (P)

“Bringing people to realize that we all need help; bringing all cultures and races together” (PLC)

“Current dialogue between the diocesan parish and lay leaders; youth; laity being willing to assume ministry positions” (PLC)

“Once the present leaders become comfortable with their roles, they encourage others to step forward.” (D)

“The laity is much better educated and far more diverse than in the past which allows for greater opportunities to draw on a broader range of skill sets. There is real hunger for participation and spiritual growth which can be tapped. If we are open to change and willing to listen, there are far more options than challenges.” (D)

“Unlimited” (PA)

“It enables very capable people to step forward. Talents and wisdom never tapped into before can be recognized.” (PC)

“Being open and honest so people hear and see the leadership opportunities; building confidence in lay ministry; called to minister by God. Leaders need to be trained. Invest in inviting people to come to church.” (PC)

“People’s thirst to ‘belong’ – be informed; growing U.S. Catholic Church emphasis on adult catechesis and whole faith community catechesis; team development as in many U.S. businesses; pastoral leader knowing and calling forth skills” (PLC)

“The opportunities for leadership are widespread within the community.” (DR)

“Rediscovery of baptismal call; rich gifts of more people in community; evangelization, especially of Catholics; ecumenical opportunities; highly education and competent laity; deepening of religious formation” (O)

“A vibrant faith community produces more leaders who feel called to ministry; thus, more can serve and service can be shared or rotated so that the leaders will experience less burnout.” (O)

“The Spirit is alive and well! Leadership is integral to community. People are getting involved. More priest leaders are opening to shared leadership. Growth of Spanish speaking population” (O)

Ongoing Formation, Education, and Evangelization

As in other regional gatherings, participants in the South identify formation, education, and evangelization as essential opportunities for building vibrant faith communities in the future:

“Excitement and energy of parish life coordinator; low number of priests; learning from Protestant neighbors; learning from business and academia; availability of theological training for laity, including the Internet’ developing cross-cultural understandings; large number of permanent deacons.” (P)

“Ongoing faith formation; support structures (e.g., national organizations); days of renewal; retreats; parish staff days of enrichment; spiritual direction; homily feedback; mentor program” (P)

“The need for a new spark in our ministry; the cry of the poor in body and spirit; this vital Hispanic moment; the fear of a pagan generation; a new acceptance of the team concept; new effective communication systems; the grace of God; the ebbing of the secular wave.” (P)

“Openness of pastor to new ideas; training youth well; strengthening of family life ministry; moving aside and let the Holy Spirit work; development of prayer services and devotions” (P)

“To get everyone in the parish to really know the Bible, Liturgies, and how to work together” (D)

“Theology of stewardship; development of youth ministry; world of business and academia; availability of theological training, including the internet; cross-cultural understandings; increasing availability of permanent deacons” (D)

“New ideas; more shared responsibility; freedom for spirit to work; personal and community balance and wholeness; increased hunger for God; collective wisdom will surface; more energy and passion” (PA)

“Shortage of priests doesn’t mean a lack of leadership. The availability of theological education, including the Internet develop cross-cultural opportunities and activities.” (PA)

“Speech therapy for new priests from foreign countries; ESL as 1st steps to building Hispanic leadership; embracing the cross-over between the various functions and ministries” (DR)

“Administration; catechesis; stewardship; liturgy” (DR)

“Ongoing faith formation - Archdiocesan retreat days for Chancery personnel and parish teams. Stress the need for holistic homilies. Good communication skills are necessary.” (DR)

“Young adult Hispanic ministry; lay ministry training; lay ministry positions opening in the church” (DR)

“It is integral to a real community. Opportunity for self-growth and to use my gifts. Opportunity to evangelize and be true disciples. Youth present an opportunity evangelize – to remain Christ-centered” (DR)

“Drawing on the Hispanic youth leaders emerging from Pastoral Juvenil Hispance; calling forth young, lay ecclesial ministers from university programs like Notre Dame’s ECHO program; forming leaders through theological programs like IRPS of the University of Dallas; catechizing ‘regular’ people through small, faith-sharing Bible study groups” (O)

“There are 1.2 billion Catholics who can change the world! Pastoral leadership of faith community; ministerial leadership (evangelization, faith formation, etc.); inclusive goal setting; Protestant or other non-Catholic models of learning; parish sharing of ideas/cultural sharing; secular models that transfer easily to church; availability of training of laity which includes the Internet.” (O)

“Low number of priests and religious is opportunity for emerging lay ministers. Protestant neighbors challenge and teach us (also Muslim, Hindu, and Jewish). Availability of theological training (including internet) for lay men and women; large number of permanent deacons; world of business and academia” (O)

E. Parish of the Future

Participants were asked to identify their expectations of the parish of the future. In the South, these expectations include increased lay leadership, inclusivity of diverse people, smaller faith-based communities, and clustered and changing physical structures of the church.

Increased Lay Leadership (rooted in the gifts exercised by its members)

Clearly, participants in the South, as in other regional symposiums, believe that the future will be characterized by increased lay leadership in the parishes of the future. The following comments reflect this expectation:

“There will be more lay leadership and fewer ordained leaders. Priests will be more balanced because they are not stressed out. Greater sense of equality by the ordained and the non-ordained; removal of clericalism; laity calling priests by their first names; laity responding to Baptismal responsibilities.” (P)

“To some degree this is dependent on the direction Rome and the USCCB takes in the next 10 years. If there is greater centralization of power on Rome and any from the Bishops, there will be some stronger parishes, but it will be a hard won battle. If there is a movement toward decentralization, there will be a potential renaissance in the church and incredibly dynamic, spirited parishes. Time will tell.” (P)

“All people living their baptismal commitment using their gifts to build the Body of Christ; all ministries being active; people open always to different models; parishioners all involved in evangelization.” (P)

“Churches led by laity; largely Hispanic” (P)

“Fewer priests; more lay participation and leadership; hope for enlarged sacramental ministry to married men and women” (P)

“Larger roles for lay leaders similar to the present in many ways - the clergy role will be important, but more like the priest said about it being like a jazz combo -- collaborative; inclusive; humbler; communal. Still seeking in its own way to follow the Call of Christ.” (P)

“More lay people with more roles in the church” (PLC)

“Eucharistic Liturgy is scheduled by the availability of a presider not by the wish or convenience of parishioners. This is happening to communities I serve now. More leadership is provided by lay ecclesial ministers and involved parishioners. Sacramental ministers are traveling more.” (PLC)

“The plant and many functions will be done by the lay people. The priest will have to be more willing to work with the deacon in the sacramental areas. If you want men to work for the church, you must pay them enough to raise a family without the wife working. The church tells everyone else to do it, why not them? It is wrong for the church to say ‘you do it’, but ‘I don’t have to’.” (D)

“One of two future parishes will evolve in the next 25 years: 70% of all bishops will reach retirement age within the next decade not counting deaths, illness, or incapacity. 50% of all parishes in this country are currently without a full-time resident pastor. In the next 20 years the ratios of priests to parishioners will expand from 8,000 to 1 (currently) to 18,000 to 1.” (D)

“Lay leaders will take a greater role in the parish with priests doing the sacraments.” (D)

“Ownership of the Baptismal Call to ministry; active worship and spiritual formation; active social justice; structures which enable collaboration, discernment, consensus, shared responsibility for ministry, visioning, goals, etc. Gifts of all called forth and nurtured” (PA)

“Priests will be more balanced persons. There will be fewer ordained ministers and more lay ministers. There will be greater ownership by the community members and acceptance of their unique gifts and Baptismal Call.” (PA)

“They will look the same. More information parishes; more lay ministers; more mega-parishes” (PC)

“Big or small, the parish of the future will realize that the people truly are the church, and what happens in their church is on their shoulders, good or bad, it is theirs.” (PC)

“More formally trained and certified lay leadership. Lots of lay involvement and fewer Catholic schools” (DR)

“It will function more out of recognition and discernment of gifts. More and advanced education offered at all levels in more areas, including global topics. Larger parishes spread further apart with fewer Masses.” (DR)

“Leadership called from within” (DR)

“It will be run by the people for the most part. The laity will take an ever-increasing role on all aspects of church life.” (DR)

“Ideally collaborative, laity-led with sacramental ministers, probably huge in the cities; far more impact because of growth of Hispanic Catholics; response to the widespread; practically – depends on bishops in each diocese, on actions of papacy, on preparation of priest/pastors or other leaders of parish communities, whether foreign priests continue to be imported” (DR)

“Eucharistic parish – one which calls all parishioners to be the Body of Christ” (DR)

“Vibrant, faith-filled, member involvement; laity taking on administrative aspects, allowing priest leader to be pastoral; parish will have a strong sense of our church, not just his or mine.” (O)

“Priest will have a life of his own so not so strung out. More lay leadership and less clerical leadership; a greater sense of equality of knowledge and mission between lay and ordained; removal of clericalism; recognition of baptismal responsibility.” (O)

“I see the parish with the idea of Jesus as center and model of service and ministry, where all parishioners are encouraged to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit within them, encouraged and empowered and supported by the priest and staff.” (O)

Inclusive of Diverse People and Forms of Leadership

Clearly, participants in the South believe more Hispanic leadership is an expectation of the future. In many instances, this church may be an immigrant church with substantial challenges for education. This multi-cultural reality is reflected in the following expectations:

“It may be primarily Hispanic in culture, origin, and roots. Hence it may not be as affluent. Hence it may be more centralized and economized.” (P)

“Priest will be only responsible for sacraments and meeting the spiritual formation needs of the people; multi-cultural and accepting” (P)

“More Hispanic leadership; more lay leaders” (DR)

“Maybe it will not exist. Maybe it will be old, white, conservative. Maybe it will be young, Hispanic, immigrant and undereducated. Maybe it will be the one sign of hope and home of truth in an increasingly relativistic, pluralistic, technological, impersonal, globalized, homogenized and economically interdependent world. I hope it will look more like the early church, like RICA communities around the country, and will foster unity, not uniformity.” (O)

“Impossible to foresee based on rapid changes already experienced; a community that has developed to tools and strategies to respond very quickly and effectively to ever-changing needs, technology, and population.” (O)

Smaller Faith-Based Communities for the Church and the World

A number of participants believe that the future of parishes will include small faith-based communities as the basic structure for parish life. The following comments reflect this expectation:

“It may have to depend on small faith-sharing communities or groups within the parish.” (P)

“Many will be larger in size due to geographic consolidations necessitating smaller groups organized by neighborhood, apostolate, and spiritual interests. Parish staffs will be larger, composed mainly of the pastor and a team that will have responsibilities for coordinating and facilitating the work of committees.” (D)

“If we look at statistical trends, parishes could or will be left without priests and bishops. I imagine going back to small neighborhood churches where there are lay leaders and where the Eucharist will be celebrated in Mass (stadiums, etc.).” (PC)

“A main ‘mother parish’ will be served by out stations. People won’t expect the priests to do everything. The priests will be more balanced people. Catechesis will be done at home or in neighborhoods. There will be lots of ongoing renewal programs, such as Cursillo, Marriage Encounter, etc.” (DR)

Clustered and Changing Physical Structure of the Church (mega-churches)

A number of participants also expect parishes to involve some clustering and changing in physical structures, including mega parishes as a means of organizing future parish life. This is indicated by the following comments:

“Parishes inevitably will be bigger. Ways will be found to divide these larger parishes into multiple units. Sunday Masses will be made up of many sub-communities comprising one large worshipping community.” (P)

“Larger clustered parishes” (DR)

“Mega-style only because of the lack of priestly vocations. This would not be a natural emerging model if we had sufficient vocations. Lay leaders are the lifeblood of parish life. However, parishes will be much larger in the future, much less personable in the worship setting. Best practices are much more difficult (if not impossible) to achieve in this style of parish.” (DR)

“Perhaps combined diocese operating through more technological control” (DR)

F. How Close or How Far from Your Parish Vision of the Future

To conclude the discussion on parish best practices, participants identified how close or how far their parishes are from realizing their preferred vision. Participants often describe their experiences as working toward a preferred vision, but not quite there yet or significantly far from the vision.

Working Toward a Preferred Vision (but not there yet)

A number of participants believe that their parishes are clearly making steady progress toward their preferred vision of the future. Many indicate they are active in parish plans and processes to realize a more inclusive vision of ministry. The following comments reflect this viewpoint:

“We are in the planning stages” (P)

This is a good question that brings me down to reality. For example, only 30% attend church on Sundays. My parish is as far ahead as seems reasonable at this time, but it has a long way to go to change its system to a new degree of effectiveness. Yet I think the people will be patient enough if they see an effort at being the best that we can be.” (P)

“We are moving in the right direction, but I’ve only had a year to work so far. Within five years, my parish will be an outstanding example of the potential of collaborative, responsive, and dynamic faith empowered community.” (P)

“Very close – need three more years to see our vision become a reality” (P)

“The parish is getting there. The mission is ready to move forward, but on members’ terms.” (PLC)

“We are working toward this.” (PLC)

“Very close and we’re getting there, but always will be a journey.” (PA)

“We are moving in this direction, but not quite there yet.” (PA)

“We are pretty much doing it on our own right now. Only when the time comes and there is no place else to go with all the responsibilities of a parish will its members know it is time.” (PC)

“We are on the road. We have planted the seed and we will be there to see the result.” (PC)

“75%” (DR)

“Pretty close on the education part; pretty far on the others” (DR)

“Moving ahead” (DR)

“Pretty close. We have been a mission parish for 109 years. We must do many things for ourselves to survive.” (DR)

“Have several deacons; lay ecclesial ministers; very large and updated plant; very sound financially high level of education” (DR)

“Parishes in our diocese are tending toward the ideal, but pastors and pastoral leaders feel caught between the people of God and bishops who are pulling the church backward in a direction away from the ecclesiology theology of Vatican II.” (DR)

“My parish is working toward the vision of a community of faith living out the Gospel as disciples of Jesus Christ. The ACTS retreats are an instrument of renewal throughout the Archdiocese. ACTS – Adoration, community, theology, and service” (DR)

“We are off to a good start.” (O)

“Most are in their infancy because the church is not accustomed to such situations. New processes and approaches must be discovered and put in place.” (O)

“I see us heading in that direction, but we still are on the journey. The goal is not yet in view, but we can see the shadow of that goal.” (O)

Significantly Far From This Vision

A few participants indicate they still have a long way to go in their vision of the future. The following comments reflect this stark reality for a limited number of participants in the South Symposium:

“We have a long way to go. Attending mass for many is still a matter of convenience. Mass is at this time in this parish.” (P)

“We are very far from this vision.” (D)

“58% of all priests are within 8 years of retirement and 45% of all deacons. California is now declared a ‘mission territory’ and 2/3 of the United States can claim an increase in either converts or Catholic population due to immigration. 60% of all evangelical Christians are former Catholics. All these challenges and many others will impact the future model of parishes. It is conceivable that we may be forced into a return to small neighborhood, home-based churches connected to mega-churches in central locations. The hope is that the church of the future will be one that recognizes the crisis of the present, one that sees the Eucharist and all the sacraments being celebrated by a return to a married priesthood, an expanded diaconate, and an empowered laity.” (D)

“We are dangerously far if the clergy doesn’t accept help from the laity.” (PC)

IV. PARISH 2025 EXERCISE:

South Symposium participants worked in small teams on a Parish 2025 Futuring Exercise. The purpose of this discussion was to identify the nature and structure of the parish which may exist in 20 years. Small group discussions and individual reflections focused on the following parish 2025 issues:

- **Parish Structures**
- **Models of Ordained and Lay Ecclesial Leadership**
- **Forms of Leadership by Parishioners**
- **Future Trends in Parish Worship Ministries**
- **Future Trends in Ministries of the Word**
- **Future Trends in Parish Ministries of Service**

A. Parish Structures of the Future

Symposium participants were asked how they believe parishes will be structured by the Year 2025. In the South, participants believe that parishes will more fully involve leadership of the laity and that there will be diverse parish structures often heavily influenced by the issues of cultural diversity. In addition, participants believe there will be larger clustered parishes with small intentional faith-sharing communities.

More Involvement and Leadership of the Laity

Clearly, the following comments reflect a belief among participants in the South that laity will be a major factor in the leadership of future parish life:

“Similar, but changed through extra lay ministers and a changed role for the priest.” (P)

“Laity in many leadership roles; a strong collaborative ministry between priest and laity; priests pastoring more than one parish” (P)

“Much as they are now. Lay ministry and lay leadership will be predominant in the country and inner cities. The suburbs will be less affected.” (P)

“Fewer priests and more visible and stronger lay leadership – consolidation of smaller parishes” (P)

“90% of leadership will be lay. Ordained priesthood will be relegated to strictly sacramental functions – at least in great part.” (P)

“Rural parishes will share a sacramental minister and be led by a lay ecclesial minister or parishioner. Faith communities will grow and be spirit-led.” (PLC)

“Increase in lay leadership; shaped by Hispanic population; more tech-oriented” (PLC)

“The deacons must be ordained priest or use them properly. Lay will have more control in more sacramental functions.” (D)

“Sacramental parishes of mega-proportions; neighborhood parishes with lay pastors who do communion services, outreach in their communities, and are culturally unique.” (D)

“Shared leadership; collaboration; consensus decision-making” (PA)

“Pastoral ministers will be a part of most parishes, hopefully working with a priest, even if he is not on site.” (PC)

“We will be working hand-in-hand, and it will be more important.” (PC)

“More lay leaders, such as PLC” (DR)

“More qualified lay leaders; sacramental ministers will be more like circuit coverage” (DR)

“Priests and deacons working with educated laity” (DR)

“They will likely be structured around lay leadership. They may have no priest. They will hopefully reflect collaborative leadership models propagated by social scientists. They will be mega-parishes with mini-communities within them.” (O)

“Fewer priests being ordained to offset the loss of those who die or retire; mega parishes – priests will move around; large parishes build on the ashes of the small, loss of sense of community; more well-trained lay ministers; priests as minister to the minister” (O)

“More collaborative and interdependent; more interactive and dynamic rather than pre-defined structures” (O)

“More lay people in charge of ministries and in decision-making” (O)

Diverse Parish Structures (with cultural diversity)

Participants in the South are acutely aware that the structures of the parishes of the future will be largely shaped by the challenges of the Hispanic majority which they are currently experiencing. Consequently, many structural adaptations are anticipated by participants to respond to this new cultural diversity imperative as indicated below:

“Effected by Hispanic population and their spirituality; more technological church; new process needed for church dynamic” (P)

“Mega-churches; shaped by Hispanic majority; communication systems” (PLC)

“The changes that will occur are occurring so fast now that it is difficult to anticipate the future. There must be a change in leadership from a ‘structure’ idea that takes time to react to a form that allows a process to develop for quick response to situations and events as they occur.” (D)

“Shaped by Hispanic majority; focus on meaning/spirituality; communication systems far more technological; explosion of lay leadership; mega-parishes, but with some structured adaptation for smaller units (satellites and subdivisions); led by non-priests; mission shaped by global awareness” (DR)

“We need to have processes to be ‘rangers’ rather than ‘garrisons’. Rangers react quickly and are empowered to make guidelines. The church structure needs to react much quicker to what’s happening. Solve sacramental issues in 2-4 years, not in 20 years.” (O)

“Impossible to foresee, but more important that processes be developed to respond quickly to changing needs and situations” (O)

“Shaped by increasing Spanish majority; focus on spirituality; less person-to-person; structure will be a process, not a structure.” (O)

Larger Clustered Parishes with Smaller, More Intentional Faith Communities

Similar to other regional symposiums, participants in the South believe that parishes of the future will be characterized by larger clustered parishes or mega-churches with smaller more intentional faith communities. The following comments reflect this expected reality:

“Lay ecclesial pastors in parishes with sacramental assistance or several parishes gathering at a large site like a civic center for Eucharists” (PA)

“More mega churches; personal prayer; small faith-based communities” (PC)

“Smaller faith sharing groups will provide the personal contact needed in a faith community because the parishes will be ‘mega-churches’.” (DR)

“Clustered parishes and missions; some parishes will close; leaders will not necessarily be priests.” (DR)

“Mega-parish with aging Anglo population with satellite places of worship. More Hispanic influence; leadership; ordained ministry; more Eucharistic influence. Church will be more sustainable, seeking more meaning and spirituality; youth and young adults more effective – more global influence” (DR)

“Mega-parishes with satellite communities” (O)

“Various. There will be some mega-churches with emphasis on small Christian communities – large growing cities; more frequently clusters of small parish communities with resident lay pastoral administrators and priest guidance” (O)

B. Models of Ordained and Lay Ecclesial Leadership

Symposium participants are optimistic regarding the models of ordained and lay ecclesial leadership in the future. Many envision an increased dependency on the leadership of the laity and deacons. In addition, a few expect more diverse forms of orders, including a married clergy.

Increased Dependency on Leadership of the Laity and Deacons

Clearly, a number of participants believe that the future leadership models will include greater dependency on the laity and the use of deacons as reflected by the following comments:

“More professional lay ministers; more of a lay role; further erosion of credibility of hierarchy; small groups of laity celebrating Eucharist” (P)

“It will be a blend of ordained and lay with lay being predominant.” (P)

“Lay pastoral leaders will be more than ordained pastor; greater number of parishioners served by the priest; redefine the role of deacons” (P)

“Lay leadership will be more involved in day-to-day activities and goal setting in the parish. There will be great potential for ongoing conflict in these arrangements.” (P)

“More lay leadership; priest as ‘circuit riders’, consolidated parishes; pastors will serve to a greater age.” (P)

“More parishes with ordained and lay people leading the parish; more mega-churches; all people will need to be better trained.” (PLC)

“More lay pastoral leadership; greater lay participation; more men are entering the seminaries now; priests may not be identified with only one parish; better formation programs” (PLC)

“More priests in the future; ordained married men; lay will take care of physical parish building; more active role to the deacons” (D)

“Increased, well-formed non-ordained leaders in parishes and diocese; role of clergy to shift to ‘pastoring’ the pastors and sacramental ministry and spiritual formation.” (PA)

“More parishes led by lay ecclesial ministers; priests and lay ministers working as teams” (PA)

“We will have lay pastoral leaders in residence in each of the parishes. The ordained will be responsible for clusters of parishes sacramentally.” (PA)

“Consolidation of parishes; many lay ministers; greater involvement of the laity” (PC)

“Increase in seminarians; more lay leadership brought on by mega-churches. Clearer definitions and more distinctive roles; priests taking care of more parishes” (DR)

“Many more lay people in charge of parishes – perhaps with or perhaps without sacramental leadership” (DR)

“More well-trained ecclesial ministries; good programs; more lay people in parish leadership and diocesan leadership; new parishes with lay ecclesial leaders; radical shifts in role of priest; priests will be relieved not to have to be saddled with administrative bureaucracy. Role of permanent deacons will be clarified. Priests will ‘pastor the pastors’.” (DR)

“Sacramental ministers as co-ministers with the PLC and other pastoral staff” (DR)

“More women in leadership” (DR)

“Better educated and intentional form of lay leadership; more sacramental leadership/ministry from the ordained” (O)

“Increase in professional lay ministers; prominence in lay roles; possibility of married clergy; Eucharistic churches will emerge due to priest shortage” (O)

“Well-trained and educated lay pastoral coordinators; continued decline of priests who will be supervisors and support lay pastors; deacons will have a clearer role.” (O)

“More lay people will emerge to take the different roles. Deacons will take on more duties.” (O)

More Diverse Forms of Orders

A few participants believe that more diverse forms of ordination will be available in the future as reflected by the following observations:

“Married priests” (D)

“A whole new and creative sharing in leadership; the emergence of a diocesan-wide bill of rights for the people, e.g., the right to a certain common standard or quality control for ministry in parishes.” (P)

“Hopefully, whatever emerges will be the result of real prayer and discernment for the good of the faith community and not just maintaining positions developed during medieval times and structures. Somewhere in here we need to recognize that God’s action is not always predictable.” (DR)

“Other forms of ordination are probable.” (DR)

“Women/married priests (just kidding – I wish!) (O)

“Older clergy; optional celibacy” (O)

“More deacons will be ordained and will be given more responsibilities in the parishes. Women will continue to be placed in key leadership positions.” (O)

C. Leadership of Parishioners

Symposium participants in the South indicate they believe that laity will increasingly accept responsibility for realizing their baptismal call to leadership which will further require more education and formation of leaders.

Realizing the Baptismal Call of the Laity; Empowering Leaders

As reflected in the following comments, symposium participants believe that greater co-responsibility and exercising lay leadership will be necessary for the future of parish life:

“Parishioners will take responsibility for global issues. Parishioners will actively live their baptismal call. Parishioners will be more educated in church.” (P)

“Leadership will be ever more empowering.” (P)

“More shared responsibility in leadership; unique new ways of using the gifts of the people at large” (P)

“Pastoral assistant; director of ministries; leader of Sunday celebration in the absence of a priest” (P)

“There will be more people living up to their baptismal call – to be servants of the people and lead more roles in the church” (PLC)

“Active response to their baptismal call; justice issues; take more ownership in their parishes” (PLC)

“Increased involvement of parishioners – in numbers and ministries. Many more will be comfortable and accepting of their Baptismal Call.” (PA)

“They (lay people) will be much more involved.” (PC)

“People in the pews; more justice issues; more community outreach and environment; plant operations; actively responding to baptismal call; more formal training; more ownership” (DR)

“Good stewardship; co-responsibility” (DR)

“More ownership of the baptismal call” (DR)

“What they are allowed to do by the ordained leadership and facilitated by the Holy Spirit...with more or less struggle depending on our listening to the Holy Spirit.” (DR)

“Laity taking on many of the duties of the ordained” (DR)

“More active response to baptismal call” (O)

“We (lay people) become responsible for all non-sacramental duties.” (O)

“They (lay) will be involved in all aspects, except in sacramental responsibilities.” (O)

More Education and Formation of Leaders (including all ethnic groups)

Participants in the South also indicate in the following comments that more education and formation of leaders will be important for the future, especially more ethnically diverse leaders:

“There will be larger numbers of men in the seminaries 20 years from now, but they will be very much focused on iconic and formational roles rather than administrative, parochial work.” (P)

“More education of the laity; more ownership of the parish; more involvement in all levels of justice” (D)

“Much greater role in community-building, discipleship, and social justice” (D)

“All areas of ministry in parishes, desiring formation and social justice in larger community” (PA)

“Well educated and trained to be responsible leaders of all ministries” (PA)

“They will be leading groups of small faith-based communities. They will be representative of the majority of the leadership.” (PC)

“Those called to leadership will require more education and formation. The number of parishioners in leadership positions will increase. Possibly married clergy (but still male); more education in general; more ethnically diverse (multi-cultural); more responsibility for church operation (facilities and fundraising); more ownership; more recruitment by one another; involvement in justice issues” (DR)

“More young adult leadership and parishes partnering with each other” (DR)

“Parishioners will be involved in justice issues, show more ownership – those called to leadership must be trained.” (O)

“Invite more leaders from among themselves; demand for more and better Christian training; more involved in justice issues” (O)

“They may have free reign to write their own gospel if we don’t get Hispanics into leadership and formation.” (O)

“Almost all – sacramental needs will need full attention of limited aging clergy.” (O)

D. Future Trends in Parish Worship Ministries

Symposium participants identify an expectation that there will be more diverse forms of worship in the future, as well as the increased use of technology and other media in worship services. As in other areas, they also identify an increased role of laity in worship services.

More Diverse Forms of Worship

Clearly, participants from the South Symposium expect more diversity and a variety of forms of worship based upon the needs of local communities. This is reflected in the following comments:

“There will be ultimately greater flexibility in execution of worship in spite of current trends of homogenizing worldwide details of worship.” (P)

“With the conservative tightening of control over the Mass by the Vatican, there will be a reaction toward a more creative and charismatic development of para-liturgy by the laity. Taize is a good example.” (P)

“Mega-churches; small faith-based communities (neighborhood church); all people participating in liturgy by singing; more technologies in use for worship” (P)

“Small communities that are more faith-filled and expressive; new Mass and Roman Missal; more structured (tighter) to safeguard the Liturgies.” (P)

“More music in the church; going to mega-churches; people come to worship at a centralized location leading to small-based communities.” (PLC)

“Mega parishes; small faith groups; more personal prayer; more technology” (D)

“Variety of forms besides Eucharist; increase in lay presiders and proclaimers of the Word; increase in worship in small groups and intentional communities” (PA)

“More liturgy of the word services due to the decrease in the ordained. Music will play a greater influence in the services. Small base community worship” (PA)

“Mega-churches, where we will gather in large quantities to celebrate the Eucharist; small faith-based communities; music in the worship environment will change.” (PC)

“Fewer masses will be available; maybe not a Sunday mass; and communion services” (PC)

“Fewer priests will mean dropping daily Mass completely. Liturgy of the Hours and Communion Services will be the daily liturgies. Deacons, Ministers of Liturgy and (Eucharistic) Communion Ministers will take more responsibility.” (DR)

“More para-liturgies” (DR)

“Non-Eucharistic prayer; Eucharist outside of Mass; praise and worship sessions” (DR)

“More theological understanding of the Word as true presence” (DR)

“Multi-lingual (a day when everyone will sing); mega-churches; more stimulating; more entertaining; different style of worship; new missal with more literal Latin translation” (DR)

“New Mass with a new missal; liturgy will be wordier, but more tightly controlled and more literally translated. This will give rise to different forms of worship outside the Mass in more small community-based centers.” (DR)

“Mega-churches – people will come in large groups for worship, but maintain small communities of faith; more stimulating and interactive” (O)

“Worship ministries that are dynamic and creative; retreats” (O)

“Growth of small church communities; enhanced RCIA the norm for converts; more bilingual catechetical material; more adult faith formation” (O)

“More prayer services and other forms of worship outside the Mass; more creative ways to worship together” (O)

“More pious; more Hispanic traditions; multi-lingual experiences” (O)

More Use of Technology and Other Media

As in other regions of the United States, a few participants believe that the future of worship will include increased use of technology and other media in worship services as indicated below:

“Major liturgical changes; decline in attendance; mega churches; small church communities; more clustering; more technology; PowerPoint homilies” (P)

“Much more emphasis on careful liturgical planning. After some experimentation with a few electronic additions as worship aids, the emphasis will return to the gathering experiences and the specific nature of Catholic worship.” (P)

“Some mega-churches; more inclusion; PowerPoint-type homilies; better preaching; better welcoming” (P)

“Technology explosion – PowerPoint for homilies, song lyrics, etc.” (P)

“Small faith communities; multi-lingual; more technology; new Mass and missal” (PLC)

“More use of emerging technology; multi-dimensional” (O)

Increased Role for the Laity

The following comments indicate that only a few participants from the South identify an increased role of the laity as an important characteristic of leadership of worship in the future:

“Laity taking a vibrant, active role in all worship ministries” (P)

“Participation of parishioners in all liturgical ministries (well-trained)” (PA)

“Education for all parishioners beyond sacramental preparation - We need an educated and well-informed parish to sustain life in a highly technological world.” (DR)

“Possibly the recruitment of the limited number of priests available; foster vocations; increase in parishioners responding to their baptismal call” (DR)

E. Future Trends in Ministries of the Word

Pastoral leaders from the South identify a greater reliance on ministries of the word through biblical studies, whole community catechesis, the increased use of technology, and increased opportunities for laity in worship and preaching.

More Biblical Studies and Whole Community Catechesis

Similar to other regions of the United States, participants from the South indicate the future will be characterized by an increased emphasis on the Word through biblical studies and various forms of catechesis of the laity as indicated below:

“Bible Studies (lectionary-based); more gathering for Liturgies of the Hour; web-based adult lay formation” (P)

“Greater emphasis on Word and Communion Services” (P)

“Multi-cultural and multi-lingual; Liturgy of the Hours; communion and Word services; scripture study in small faith groups; better formed laity to share faith; more electronics usage to spread the Word” (PLC)

“Revisit our understanding of a liturgical celebration; have lay people read the Gospel; more faith-based bible study” (PLC)

“Liturgy of the Word; Bible Studies; better study material; web-based studies” (D)

“Multicultural and multi-lingual; more liturgy of the hours; more interaction; Gospel-based liturgy without the Eucharist; communion services; more mainstream media; more scripture study groups” (DR)

“Thorough understanding of the Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of Hours as a true presence” (DR)

“Small group scripture sharing; scripture seminars; ecumenical services” (DR)

“More communion services of the Word” (O)

“More small Christian community faith-sharing and scripture study; more variants of Word-centered Liturgy, especially where Eucharist liturgy is infrequent” (O)

“More scripture-based studies and faith-sharing groups that include studies of the Word” (O)

“Word services will be vibrant and found everywhere.” (P)

More Use of Technology, Internet, and Media

Similar to their views on worship, a few participants believe that greater sophistication and use of technology will be evident in educational resources provided for catechesis. This is reflected in the comments below:

“More sophistication in the use of multi-media; more professionalism in proclaiming the Word” (P)

“Technology will become the norm. Scriptures will be used for worship and study.” (PA)

“That publishers will come out with better and fun books for Catechesis. That the young will be more active in the church. That the Word will be more a way of life.” (PC)

“It depends on the setting. Rural parishes and diocese without Catholic colleges will depend on internet opportunities for education. Faith sharing in small groups will grow on parish level. Sunday Eucharist will be used more effectively for catechetical opportunities.” (DR)

Lay preaching and internet ministries” (DR)

“Technology-based learning; trend toward more conservatism; strong effort to reclaim their faith; interesting and media-based; more scripture knowledge of Catholics” (O)

“Technology supported communication; embrace of medical and other breakthroughs for benefit of people; many more youth and young adult initiatives” (O)

“Technology will be a big factor.” (O)

“More and better high school catechetical material; more hunger of the Word by young adults (high school); innovative methods of faith formation (satellite learning; internet based); expanded evangelization efforts; better trained catechists and lay adult facilitators” (O)

Increased Opportunities for the Laity; Especially Preaching

Some symposium participants also indicate there will be increased opportunities for laity in ministries of the word, especially in preaching. This is reflected below:

“Fewer priests and more non-Eucharistic services and lay preaching; more small sharing groups for the Word; new community involvement.” (P)

*“More lay preaching and greater practice of non-Mass gatherings”
(P)*

“Lay homilies; scripture studies” (PA)

“Women preaching at Eucharist” (PA)

*“More lay people will be opening and sharing the Word within the
allowed context of Canon Law.” (PC)*

*“Gospel never changes, but preachers need to be well-informed
and educated.” (DR)*

*“Having meaningful services; services without communion;
develop small group-sharing communities; opening preaching to
the laity; revisiting understanding of the sacraments” (O)*

*“Greater involvement of youth and not just in youth liturgies; need
for youth as professionally-trained ministers” (O)*

F. Future Trends in Parish Ministries of Service

Participants were asked to identify future trends they expect in ministries of service. Clearly, participants believe there will be an expansion of outreach services, especially social justice ministries to the poor and marginal. The following comments reflect this expanded view of ministries of service and justice within local churches:

*“Prison ministries and ministry to marginal people; more parish mission
outreach and third world addressing more in the world arena; youth
involvement in global arena” (P)*

“Service outreach will be alive and well.” (P)

“More service ministries given the larger parishes” (P)

*“A whole new higher level of care in service to the elderly, sick, poor,
homeless; a care for global issues” (P)*

“Greater outreach to community at large” (P)

*“In the future, there will be a much greater need for parishes to stand
against societal trends. Service will break down into two principle areas:
service to those in need and service that witnesses to the position of
church teaching.” (P)*

*“Increase in social/service outreach; more youth and young adult service”
(PLC)*

*“Hopefully more work to help our shut-ins ministry, but for this to happen,
people will need to be more aware of our Catholic faith.” (PLC)*

“Increased focus and participation in ministry to the incarcerated and their families; ministry directly to the health needs of parishioners and neighbors; ministry addressing more complete support to married couples; greater emphasis on uniformity of catechetical instructional materials” (D)

“Much greater involvement in outreach by those who view the church as the instrument of evangelization in the world” (D)

“More service to the poor; rebuilding communities; jail ministry, etc.” (D)

“Parishes will be more involved in direct service, especially young people in issues such as ministry to prisoners, serving the homeless, etc. It seems that if things keep going as they are, the parishioners will not be involved in action for justice.” (PA)

“Outreach to the alienated and marginalized. Dignity of life in all its aspects will become the focus of ministry and education. Global poverty and consumerism will no longer be something that is merely talked about, but effectively addressed even at the parish level.” (PA)

“Direct service – expanded advocacy and community outreach expanded” (PA)

“It will be important because we the lay people will have to pick up the slack for charities, social justice, etc.” (PC)

“Increase in direct ministries; more attention to seniors; more prison ministries; dealing with issues offered by youth and young adults; more direction to poverty and homeless; more global involvement” (DR)

“Ministry to retired, assisted living, nursing homes; ministry to homeless, migrants and other social concerns” (DR)

“Option for the poor will always be in the forefront for parishioners if the Gospel is to be alive in mind and heart.” (DR)

“More care for the homeless; health initiatives; global awareness; collaboration between countries; care for children at all levels” (DR)

“More involvement of the laity and ‘pew people’ as an obligation as call to justice” (DR)

“More conscious of our Gospel duty to the impoverished around the world as immigrants become prosperous” (O)

“Services for the elderly and incarcerated; concern with life issues; young people today know the issues – they ‘get it’; emerging sense of stewardship” (O)

“More direct services for the elderly, the homeless, the incarcerated, community needs, the bereaved, etc.” (O)

V. MARKS OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP:

The sponsoring partners of the Emerging Models Projects identified a number of marks of pastoral leadership to be discussed during the symposiums. These marks of pastoral leadership are intended to identify behavioral practices of leaders which are emerging for the church of the future. Participants were asked to identify how they believe these marks of pastoral leadership will be evident in day-to-day parish life.

Participants worked in peer groups (i.e., priests, deacons, pastoral council representatives, parish life coordinators, pastoral associates, etc.) during this part of the symposium to prepare their reflections on this theme. The following section summarizes the reflections of participants on these marks of pastoral leadership.

A. Ethical Behaviors of Leadership

Pastoral leaders were asked to identify the ethical behaviors of leadership they believe will become important to the future of day-to-day parish life. Participants in the South indicate respect for the dignity of others and a greater sense of accountability, ethics, and integrity will be the marks of ethical leadership.

Accountability, Ethics, and Integrity

A significant number of symposium participants believe there will be greater accountability, ethics, and integrity among pastoral leaders in the future as reflected by the following comments:

“Priests must be faithful to the call and mission both personally and professionally. Be aware of boundaries.” (P)

“Honesty, transparency, joy, openness, sense of welcome and hospitality” (P)

“Codes of ethics for ordained and lay will be widely known. Boundaries will be clearly established. Violations will be much more quickly flagged.” (P)

“There will be an increased awareness of ethical behavior and a sense of justice.” (P)

“Being a person of integrity – up front and ‘in the open’” (P)

“We must be role models – our entire family. We must keep personal things told to us private.” (PLC)

“Boundary issues; financial accountability; confidentiality; justice minded” (PLC)

“As a deacon, my personal life and my total family (wife and children) are always being watched – our total life 24/7.” (D)

“Be open in all your dealings; be good role models; know your boundaries when counseling.” (D)

“Expected to be role models 24/7; the whole family is asked to be a role model; expect a higher standard of recordkeeping, confidentiality, boundaries, and skill sets; know when to refer people to those who are qualified to help – psychologist, doctors, abuse counselors, etc.” (D)

“Confidentiality; living Gospel” (PA)

“Aware of how the community views their lives personally and spiritually. Leaders are becoming more and more parish administrators. Boundary issues; counseling and pastoral counseling; confidentiality; being seen with women; preach on the Gospel and understand what the Gospel is saying.” (PC)

“Business ethics; prayerfulness; know your limitations in dealing with others where your gifts and charisms exist; your boundaries; confidentiality” (DR)

“Listening carefully, using basic manners; observe confidentiality; use proper business practices; observe appropriate boundaries in type and manner of relating service” (DR)

“Maintain proper boundaries.” (DR)

“Ethical leaders enable people to maintain their integrity through the struggles of change; name the ethical and moral issues when pastoral issues are being discussed and acted upon, whether by parish staffs, pastoral councils, or finance councils. Relate ethical/moral questions to Christian tradition/scripture; are transparent about the collection and use of communal funds” (DR)

“Leaders of the community being models and examples of justice, morality, spirituality. Do as I do! Stewardship of God’s goods both personal and church; confidentiality” (DR)

“Systems of checks and balances to monitor effectiveness and accountability” (DR)

“Educated; faith formation appropriate for the ministry; Gospel-oriented; discipleship is most important attitude; in love and the church” (DR)

“Realizing that ministry is not a job or task, but a way of life 24/7” (O)

“Confidentiality” (O)

Respect for the Dignity of Others (Be Inclusive, Fair, and Equitable)

Clearly, participants believe that inclusivity and a respect for the reverence and dignity of others will be a hallmark of ethics of pastoral leaders in the future. This is indicated in the comments below:

“A reverential respect for others; faithful adherence to moral principles and teaching of the Catholic faith” (P)

“A strong work ethic where the dignity of every person is noted and valued” (PC)

“Be open and caring in dealing with others; fair and equitable in dealing with parishioners” (DR)

“Respect for all” (DR)

“Respect for and appreciation of the many diverse gifts in the faith community; being role models that convey love, openness, and respect to all.” (O)

“Build a sense of mutual respect and trust; maintain healthy relationships with those with whom and from whom they minister. Place their action in the framework of the Gospel and the ministry of Jesus.” (O)

“Avoid egocentrism; try to be fair to all” (O)

B. Pastoral Behaviors of Leadership

Symposium participants were asked to identify pastoral behaviors of leadership which will be characteristic of faith communities in the future. They most frequently mention strong relational skills and a presence with people, as well as gospel-centered leadership and value as important priorities. In addition, they also reiterate an emphasis on a commitment to shared responsibility and empowerment with laity.

Strong Relational Presence with People (Affirming Presence)

As in other symposiums, participants from the South identify a strong relational presence with people as an important element of pastoral behaviors of leadership as indicated below:

“Make people aware they are important and that they matter. Be aware of who is not here.” (P)

“Must be welcoming and accepting of all, especially foreigners; be a good listener; take responsibility for ministry” (P)

“We must be open to people; we must have spirit of servant; we must have a sense of humor; we must know our limits. If we don’t know, then refer to someone who does know.” (PLC)

“Be good and faithful Catholics; humble; compassionate; sense of humor; spirit of service; good listening skills; be present in the community; accessible; openness; collaborative; communications with not to other people; willingness to admit you don’t have the answer; awareness of the issues in the community” (D)

“It is important to know the needs, hopes, and aspirations of the parishioners. Be present in the community, as well as in the parish. Seek ways to work with all those in the parish that are willing to work for the church and world.” (D)

“Be open to people and their opinions and the way they think. Have an awareness of issues in the church, community, and the world that impacts the lives of parishioners.” (D)

“Aware of limitations; know the needs of the people and the resources available.” (PA)

“Faithful to the church; true compassion; accessibility of the one in charge; pastoral presence; active prayer life; knowing our limits; affirmation of those we serve; openness to all situations including thoughts and opinions of others; spirit of service; open communication; humility” (PC)

“Good and faithfully Catholic; humble, compassionate, and a sense of humor; spirit of service, good listening skills, personal presence in the community; be accessible. Be open to people and their ideas; awareness of our own limitations and find help. Care for the overall community locally and globally.” (PC)

“Pursue a personal prayer life; share your presence; occasionally not only appear, but also participate in various projects and training/education events. Be aware of concerns and needs of community within and outside parish. Offer a variety of faith formation experiences for all the elements or populations of the parish.” (DR)

“Let people know that they matter. Remind the people about who is not there.” (DR)

“Listening without judging; give people options; inclusiveness; ask people for their ideas” (DR)

“Reach out to all no matter their cultural or economic differences” (O)

“Listening skills; be accessible and available; be aware of community; be compassionate; be humble; spirit of service” (O)

Gospel-Centered Leadership and Values (Servant Leadership)

In addition, participants from the South identify gospel-centered values and a deep spirituality as the core of pastoral behaviors as reflected in the following comments:

“Better following of the Word of God in the area of ministry and a ‘Bill of Rights’ for the community” (P)

“Joy, prayerfulness, openness, genuine concern for the welfare of others; mission-oriented” (P)

“A good listener; an individual of compassion who calls parishioners to live out their baptismal call; to always shepherd God’s people; to be a man of prayer.” (P)

“Be good, faithful Catholics; active, healthy personal life; humility, true compassion and sense of humor; service of people; affirmation and good listening skills; personal presence in the community; accessibility; openness, collaborative, communication; awareness of our own limitations; awareness of issues impacting people’s lives and larger community needs” (PLC)

“Good and faithful Catholic; active faith life – You can’t give what you don’t have yourself. Be open and a good listener.” (D)

“Active and healthy spiritualities” (PA)

“Good and faithful practicing Catholics; good spiritual foundation; be a servant leader with listening skills and a presence in the community; know and understand the mission and vision of the church; openness and understanding” (DR)

“Pastoral leaders should be good shepherds. As a shepherd leads the flock, so must a pastoral leader guide the church. All decisions should be made in light of how they will affect the life of the parish.” (DR)

“Pastoral leaders have the ability to ask for forgiveness and say they are sorry when they have made mistakes or caused great pain in the parish community. In caring for the overall welfare of the community, the leadership assures that the community resources are distributed to those most in need, not necessarily to the needs and wants of the largest financial givers.” (DR)

“Listening with heart and mind; sacramentally involved in ministry; remembering we are servant leaders; always exhibit a genuine sense of hope.” (DR)

“Compassion – use of gifts of the Holy Spirit for good of individual leader and community. Servant of servants through attitude and way of life. You are there because He has called and gifted you to

*be present for God's people, not for personal honor and glory.”
(DR)*

Commitment to Shared Responsibility and Empowerment

A few participants reiterate a commitment to shared responsibility and empowerment with the laity as important hallmarks of their pastoral leadership behaviors as indicated below:

“Allowing people to have input in parish life decisions; letting all the faithful know that they belong; allow people to express their time, talent, and treasure in a way that is fruitful.” (P)

“Building community – We are called by Baptism to be priest, prophet, and king. We need to work as a community that sees the needs of its members and nurtures them.” (PC)

“Build a sense of community among the ministers; express appreciation for what others do; be open, honest, and non-judgmental; be concerned for all people of the church community, not only those with whom the leader is most comfortable.” (O)

“A greater realization that all are called to be pastors of the people, not just functions in which others assist” (O)

C. Prophetic Behaviors of Leadership

Symposium participants were asked to identify the prophetic behaviors of leadership they expect to be evident in the future of parish life. They most frequently mention a faithful and prophetic stance on issues of justice and a fidelity to the gospels as high priorities. In addition, participants from the South often reference a willingness to make unpopular decisions as a key attribute of prophetic leadership in the future of parish life.

Faithful and Prophetic Stance toward Issues of Justice

Clearly, participants from the South are oriented to issues of justice and the larger social fabric in their comments concerning prophetic behaviors of leadership. The following reflects their sense of speaking out on issues of justice both within the church and in the larger society:

“Facilitating parish leadership and groups discerning the will and voice of God - Preach the prophetic words of the scriptures. Call Congress to work for justice and peace in the church and the world. Question whether as priests we are too hesitant to talk about current justice issues, e.g., the recent bill passed allowing torture in interrogation and terrorist suspects.” (P)

“A pastor and community that has a global vision of church; constantly preaching social justice when the occasion arises either in scripture or the situation in the community; community members who are willing to evangelize to neighbors; be Jesus; keep updated on theology; discern the will of God.” (P)

“Address the pathology that is present within the community. Be able to address unjust inconsistency within our own institution regarding our teachings and practices. Institutionalize the prophetic voice through preaching and self-examination. Leaders don’t wait for the institution and hierarchy to act and effect change. Prophetic voice also gives hope for the future. Speak the truth in love. May become unpopular because of convictions” (P)

Address the pathology of the community in structure and organization; speak truth in love; maintain health and balance; live the institutional church as the body of Christ; subsidiarity relationships” (P)

“Address ‘pathology’ in community (i.e., clericalism, anti-clericalism); institutionalize justice issues; regular examination of our own conscience; courage to be unpopular; speak the truth in love; speak a message of hope; Gospels call you to be prophet; be hospitable; open to debate” (PLC)

“Truthfully tell what God is about. Know what the church is teaching. Speak justice (good or bad), but also hope. Minister in the world not just the parishes. Preach the prophetic word.” (D)

“Be aware of the role of Jesus in the church and the world. Keep the vision of Christ’s ministry in the world. Be open to debate. Be open to change. Keep social justice in the world before the community and preach involvement in the world. Call for justice, peace, an end to hate, violence, and intolerance.” (D)

“What is the pathology of the community? Institutionalize the social justice issue - Courage to be unpopular while being prophetic. Love the people – speak in love; speak a message of hope.” (D)

“Address injustice issues with compassion; put aside preconceived ideas and notions.” (D)

“Connect the Scripture/Gospel with social justice teachings of the church and current events/developments in government. Address our own parish structures and practices that are unjust. Focus beyond parish structure to larger community. Speak the truth without a concern for alienating the rich patrons.” (DR)

“Prophetic leaders call people to change, relating the contemporary challenges to their tradition, especially the scriptural foundation. They interpret parish communal difficulties in light of Pascal mystery. They address pathologies like racism, militarism, materialism, tolerance for torture within the Catholic community. Keep global realities before the parishioners.” (DR)

“Know the issues. Be committed to servant leadership. Address the theology of the group or community. Adjust ministries to a more just and fair measure. Be hopeful and know the pathologies of the group.” (DR)

“Priests are too hesitant to speak out in the pulpit on current controversial issues. Be open to debate and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Speak truth and love. Have the courage to be unpopular in fidelity to principles.” (DR)

“Prophetic leaders speak the truth of the lived experiences of the least among us in their communities. Prophetic leaders call for the community of faith to be actively engaged in providing time and financial resources to help solve the social ills of their community. Prophetic leaders do not silence the message of the spirit made known in the voice of women faithful. Prophetic leaders are engaged in ongoing spiritual formation/direction.” (DR)

Fidelity to the Gospels/Shared Vision

A number of participants reference the fact that their prophetic stance in the future needs to be rooted in fidelity to the gospels and a gospel-driven witness to the world. The following comments reflect this important foundation:

“A desire to be a part of a faithful community; self-aware; willing to have a relationship which serves; through collaboration, come up with a process in bringing people to serve; enable others; be an example of Jesus’ attitude; allowing to shake things up” (P)

“To call the people to see the presence of God in the here and now; the Kingdom of God is here. Call people to conversion.” (P)

“Look beyond the external and the immediate; put pre-conceived notions and judgments aside; be welcoming, hospitable, and open to all; be open to new directions – ‘Where the Spirit Blows’; trust, have courage, and be a risk-taker seeing more than the present moment” (P)

“Gospel-driven – These behaviors to me demonstrate the Gospel – the Word, living and working through a person. In order to have that community fully church-ed, all the above mentioned must be brought together.” (PC)

“Call laity to their responsibility to witness to the world.” (D)

“Live life in a direction and manner that is consistent with Gospel and being faithful to the Gospel.” (DR)

“Ability to listen with the ears of the heart to the spirit and the wisdom of the spirit for the good of the whole” (DR)

“Keep people focused on mission plan and evaluate in light of Gospel values; not to waver in the face of confrontation, resistance, or rejection” (DR)

“Reaching out to the wider community; witnessing to others by providing the example of Christian living. We must remember at all times that our behavior and interaction with others even in our own church should reflect the love of God.” (DR)

Willingness to Make Unpopular Decisions (speak the truth, take risks)

In addition, participants from the South identify the willingness to make unpopular decisions by speaking the truth and taking risks is an important attribute of prophetic leaders as indicated below:

“Willingness to state the truth, state the obvious, get away from the desk, roll up sleeves, work alongside others, stay up to date, to be vulnerable, to be wrong rather than correctly silent, willingness to be an ‘Indian’ and not the ‘Chief.’” (P)

“The level of prophetic behavior will be conditioned to a large extent on the level of prophetic activity in the Bishops’ Conference. They will be setting the tone.” (P)

“We must look beyond at all times and be open to new directions. This area is often un-used and will be needed much more in the future. Intentionality will be needed. These servant leaders are called to be movers and directors of the ‘Holy Grail’ of building the kingdom. Be risk takers.” (P)

“Identify elephants in the room; lovingly raise the question” (PA)

“Have the courage to be unpopular and take risks. Speak the truth in love. Speak the message of hope. Be open to change. Be willing to make mistakes.” (PA)

“Address the pathology of the community. Structure our roles in ministry. Love the people we are addressing and helping. Speak a message of hope. Take a risk – put aside pre-existing notions and ideas; avoid judgment; be open to change; stay updated.” (PC)

“Courage; openness” (O)

“See/respond to situations in the light of justice and mercy – not as black/white or good/bad – right/wrong; Open to new ideas as they come from the community, able to ask questions, probe issues, discern as a servant leaders; speak out for the disenfranchised in the community; be welcoming to them” (O)

“A growing voice that the overall welfare of the community, especially in an age that is obsessed with individualization and self-serving attitudes” (O)

D. Collaborative Behaviors of Leadership

Participants were asked to illustrate the collaborative behaviors of leadership they believe are important to the future of their faith communities. In the South symposium, participants most frequently mention collaboration and a commitment to shared decision-making as an overwhelming priority in their pastoral practices as indicated below:

“Seek collective wisdom; see people’s gifts; inclusive (Hispanics); empowering, trusting, let go of authority, risks; collaborative structures” (P)

“All in leadership must be faithful to collaborating – not doing ‘my thing’. Be open to all ideas, pray, and respond.” (P)

“Collaboration is the key needed as the fullness of the tradition to the community. It is almost symbolic of what can save our world through unity and peace.” (P)

“Our people will be far more encouraged than ever before to use their broad variety of gifts.” (P)

“Openness to new ideas and openness to the action of the Holy Spirit” (P)

“Process to seek consensus; collaboration; non-judgmental; inclusive; see the work of the Holy Spirit; willing to risk; listen” (PLC)

“Seek the wisdom of everybody (collective wisdom); know how to process information. Be willing to take time; know how to bring out the gifts of a person; bring people who have been hurt back into the church. Do not be judgmental. Deeply believe that the Holy Spirit works through the whole team.” (PC)

“Collective wisdom; all are one; each is equal with different functions” (D)

“Seek collective wisdom; use time to ‘process’; be inclusive” (D)

“Develop trust and empower other leaders; build a process that builds leadership and cooperation.” (D)

“The key is inclusiveness with all those who seek to be church-ed. Work to seek out the people who are both willing to use their time and skills and seek out those who have never been asked and do not see themselves as leaders.” (D)

“Seek collective wisdom; build community; insure collaborative structures” (PA)

“Seek the wisdom of everyone and respect it. Know how to use process toward consensus. Be willing to take time. Help others value the gifts of each other. Welcome and heal and include everyone. Believe that the spirit works through the groups gathered. Build parish structures that will insure collaboration. Learn from mistakes and help others to do so.

Ministers and ministries are themselves part of a whole. Share the vision so all will understand it. Trust in others to do the job well.” (PA)

“Working from a hierarchy and one power structure to a cooperative where we are jointly responsible instead of just having a priest as the leader, representative or decision-maker.” (PC)

“Seek collective wisdom – process collaboration; be inclusive through consensus; allow the Holy Spirit to work through you. Be empowering and trusting.” (DR)

“Staff seen as team; inviting to all people to use gifts for building up community” (DR)

“Collaborative leaders search for and utilize the gifts of other ministers to build community, deepen communal spiritual experience, orient the people outward to mission and relate liturgy to the wholeness of their lives. They are respectful of others and humble about their own limitations. They are willing to give their gifts to support others in ministry. They nurture people with an intuitive understanding of ministry, drawing them progressively into positions of more leadership.” (DR)

“Listen carefully; include and address all populations of the parish; be patient and work and wait for consensus; accept imperfect plans and the possibility of making a mistake; be willing to delegate and let go – allow a project to be done NOT your way.” (DR)

“Collaboration is in the definition; however, we need to recall the attributes of collaboration.” (DR)

“Open to wisdom of the outer community, especially to include other denominational faiths; open to wisdom of the outer community, especially to include other Catholic churches in the community” (DR)

“Utilize communication channels in the language of the people; show loyalty when we make decisions” (DR)

“Seek collective wisdom; use process to get input from everyone and to reach consensus; willingness to take time to be collaborative; help others to see the gifts of each other; work to bring people back into and heal wounds, inclusive, and non-judgmental; deeply believe the holy spirit works through the group; can share their vision and revise it based on others’ input; trust and empower people with different gifts; openness and willingness to let go of some authority; people see themselves as part of a whole” (O)

Greater recognition of the richness of gifts provided by a variety of people” (O)

“Believe in the Holy Spirit working through groups; share vision; empower and trust people with their different gifts; listen; ministries are part of a whole.” (O)

“Be able to empower; be nonjudgmental; inclusive” (O)

“Be willing to take risks in empowering others – knowing that they may not do things as well as he/she. Trust others to perform their ministry without micro-managing or second guessing. Support ministers in their endeavors being interested in what they are doing. Build a sense of our ministry not just mine and yours.” (O)

“Seek wisdom; able to process and reach consensus; willingness to go through process, to take time, help others see their gifts, be non-judgmental, and be inclusive.” (O)

“Willingness to invest time and effort to achieve a goal; understand the importance of process to gain consensus; remove barriers to service; pray for healing of sinful behaviors and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Heal the wounds of those who feel alienated, continually calling forward all people to serve. Openness and willingness to ‘let go’ of some authority; consensus versus voting which alienates and divides; build ownership by collaboration and bottom-up approach; continue formation opportunities; openness to new ideas” (O)

E. Inclusive Behaviors of Leadership

Participants from the South were asked to describe inclusive behaviors of leadership they expect will characterize communities of the future. They most frequently describe these as multi-cultural awareness and inclusiveness, teaching by example, and providing welcoming, inclusive, and inviting communities.

Multi-cultural Awareness and Inclusion

Similar to the colleagues in the Southwest, South participants identify multi-cultural awareness and inclusion as a hallmark of inclusive behaviors of leadership for the future as reflected by the following comments:

“All parishioners learning how to accept and recognize gifts of others; realize that God can speak through anyone, uneducated or educated, young or old, or regardless of ethnic background” (P)

“I believe we will grow in inclusiveness because it is a factor that is growing at this time and over the past few years.” (P)

“There will be much greater sensitivity toward the use of gifts coming from those different from ourselves.” (P)

“Inclusiveness is more than welcoming ‘good’ Catholics. It is the idea that every human being is a unique creation of God to be honored, loved, and respected. Avoid stereotyping people and seeking to include only those whom we are comfortable with. The more diversity the better. The greater the acceptance of those outside our comfort zone the more we fulfill God’s call to evangelize.” (D)

“Show openness to being inclusive in your leadership.” (D)

“Diversity is good, but not the only reason to do something.” (D)

“Respect diversity in all forms. Each has a piece of wisdom.” (PA)

“Bringing those different cultures together not only for worship in their language, but in other areas of church.” (PC)

“They will welcome foreigners, including foreign priests.” (DR)

“Inclusive leaders find the ways for leaders of ethnic communities to contribute their own insights, their own voice, and their own perspective. They work to understand, appreciate, and honor the cultural values of the ethnic communities represented in the parish. They help people feel like they matter, especially those most at the margin. They listen to what people want to say, no matter how distasteful.” (DR)

“Inclusivity will always be a challenge, but it is a virtue that must be cultivated.” (DR)

“Openness to all cultures and genders; use of inclusive language; not separate liturgical experiences, but a bi-lingual liturgical experience. Offer bi-lingual formational opportunities.” (DR)

“Concerned about all, not just those who are like-minded; able to adjust services/happenings to the needs of various cultures within the community; ensure that ministry meets the needs of all generations of people, not just the young or the old. Be open and welcoming to all.” (O)

“Diversity is a blessing, not a problem or a concession” (O)

Teach by Example; Respecting Others

A few participants from the South reference the importance of teaching by example as an important inclusive behavior of leadership as indicated below:

“Teach inclusiveness by example. Can you live in the tension of the ordination of women?” (P)

“Teach by example; be open to living with and listening to all opinions; meet people where they’re at.” (PLC)

“Teach by example; be open to all beliefs” (PLC)

“Teach by example; live fruitfully with the tension; consistency” (D)

“Teach by example. Let people see what you are doing. Can you live with opposing groups? Do not oppose people who are against you. Stay in the church teaching. Be open to listening to young people.” (PC)

“Youth – teach by example. Be inclusive in your approach. Accept diversity in beliefs. Make all youth welcome – culturally, economically, racially, and spirituality. Be welcoming and accepting of other views.” (DR)

“Respecting and listening to others” (DR)

“Mentor new leaders; support each other when we fail; enter into setting out of our comfort zone.” (DR)

“Teach by example – your openness is contagious. Don’t alienate those who diametrically oppose your view on something yet stay with the boundaries of church teachings. Meet people where they’re at, no matter where that may be.” (O)

Welcoming, Inclusive, and Inviting Community

Similar to other regions throughout the United States, participants from the South identify the importance of parishes being welcoming and inviting places to engage communities and parish members in the future. This is indicated by the following comments:

“The creation of systems that will apply a good process for serving people, e.g., what kind of ministry can we create for 40 families. What structure can bring intimacy from within to these groups of 40 families on a given street.” (P)

“Consistent communication of what’s happening, inviting dialogue. Remember what the word ‘Catholic’ means. Know who is not there and go out and invite them in. Be ready to leave your comfort zone. Find out significant feasts, symbols, music, etc., of the cultural populations...incorporate these through parish liturgy, etc.” (DR)

“Invite the community; ask the question: ‘Does our leadership look like the people of our community?’” (DR)

“Openness; being all right with the ‘grey’; dialogue; inclusive of singles and young marrieds; encourage multi-cultural, multi-lingual dialogue in community” (O)

“Help others to see the gifts of each other; be non-judgmental; good sharer and motivator of vision; willing to put trust in others; willingness to take risks and make mistakes; people see integration of ministries and provide a structure for this.” (O)

F. Welcoming Behaviors of Leadership

To conclude the discussion on the marks of pastoral leadership, participants were asked to define the welcoming behaviors of leadership most important to the future of their parishes. They identify the need for personal efforts to create a welcoming environment and hospitable communities as important priorities as reflected by the following comments:

“Make everyone know that their ideas are important; must be inviting; hospitality must always be #1.” (P)

“Truly Christian communities will welcome others with open arms and especially open hearts. Homogenous communities will be rare.” (P)

“Genuine openness and care; good people skills” (P)

“This is self-evident, simple, and basic. As we give welcome, we receive a great gift also.” (P)

“Hospitable; welcoming in a visible way; diocese being a model of welcome for parishes; encouraging parish members in creating activities to welcome everyone; model the welcoming behavior of Jesus.” (PLC)

“Welcome as we would welcome into our homes.” (D)

“Create an environment that is warm and welcoming. Make sure that greeters acknowledge those who show up and invite them in and back. Be genuine about asking them to come back.” (D)

“Be open and hospitable” (PA)

“Great hospitality and welcome all; offer food; breakfast once a month for newcomers” (PA)

“A welcoming community is one who with open arms welcomes the stranger. Be hospitable from the entrance to the exit, beyond church, everywhere.” (PC)

“Hospitality; church to welcome people; ask (invite) to bring up the gifts; diocese should be inclusive and open to the people who walk into the Chancery. Space and room for different events – treat everybody the same.” (PC)

“Hospitality; welcome others into our community” (D)

“The Diocese should be a model of welcoming and hospitality. Be models to new members.” (DR)

“Provide a truly welcoming telephone/reception (automated does not measure up); call on a ‘welcome wagon’ for new parishioners; check distribution and use of facilities; provide parish service information in parish bulletin; call all parishioners to the mission of Jesus: welcoming all to a relationship in Jesus. Be a model – slow down and recognize individuals’ presence; greet. Be sure that all staff is provided with spiritual growth opportunities together.” (DR)

“Remembering names; asking you to do ‘special’ jobs; complimentary of parishioners’ strengths; ministers of hospitality versus ushers/greeters; meet and greet with pastoral council” (DR)

“Making all whom you come in contact with feel welcome, whether it is at church or not. Make a person feel they are the only one in the room when you are speaking with them.” (DR)

“Welcoming is beginning to be a part of our lives in the church. We need a lot of work in this area. Evangelization (the awakening of God in one another) is not at a mature stage in our Christian lives.” (DR)

“Welcoming leaders help everyone feel at home by contributing their passion to the goodness of the community. They teach respect. They establish a parish ministry of welcome. They encourage outreach, especially to those who are undocumented immigrants or from closed parishes.” (DR)

“Evangelizing parish is more open and hospitable. Start before Mass with new neighbors being approached. Ask guests to be recognized. Make sacraments a part of the community. Be sure hospitality underlies all committee meetings and other ministries.” (DR)

“Hospitality is a planned behavior on behalf of the community.” (DR)

“An opportunity for us to really begin to model the 21st century interpretation of the Gospel, Jesus, and the baptismal call” (DR)

“Use of space and facilities – who has priority? Scheduling of events in light of people’s commitments. Use liturgical feasts and symbols that mean something to people. Show courtesy when answering the phone or answering the door. Workshops for parish secretaries on the mission of the church; parish bulletin” (DR)

“Cultural sensitivity; better scheduling of parish facilities so there is no in-fighting; how the bulletin is put together and how it serves the parish” (DR)

“Openness to strangers; smaller sizes; training of theology of welcome and hospitality that goes beyond the walls of the church as building to the streets of the kingdom” (DR)

“Ensure that ministries are open to new personnel, new ideas, and new people as potential leaders, not just as participants. Identify, invite, and involve community members. Pray with the people, not just for them or above them.” (O)

“In clusters – a hallmark of success is the degree of welcoming among communities; plan for hospitality; whole community needs to be inspired to welcome in every opportunity – Eucharist, meetings, wakes, etc.” (O)

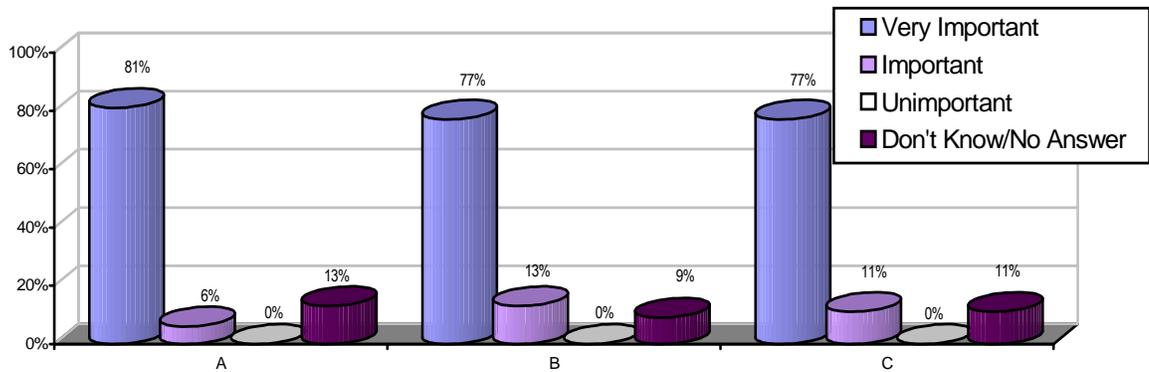
“Welcome with love; get away from us versus them; we is all of humanity.” (O)

VI. CONCLUDING ASSESSMENT:

To conclude the symposium, participants were asked to privately evaluate their parish ministry on a number of factors. The summary below is for this region's report/symposium only. Data will be aggregated across all regional gatherings for more detailed analysis by cohort groups and a number of detailed demographic factors.

Figure 1 below indicates the importance of the three major elements of pastoral leadership evaluated during the symposium. Among the South Symposium participants, all three of these elements are identified as very important to the future of building vibrant faith communities.

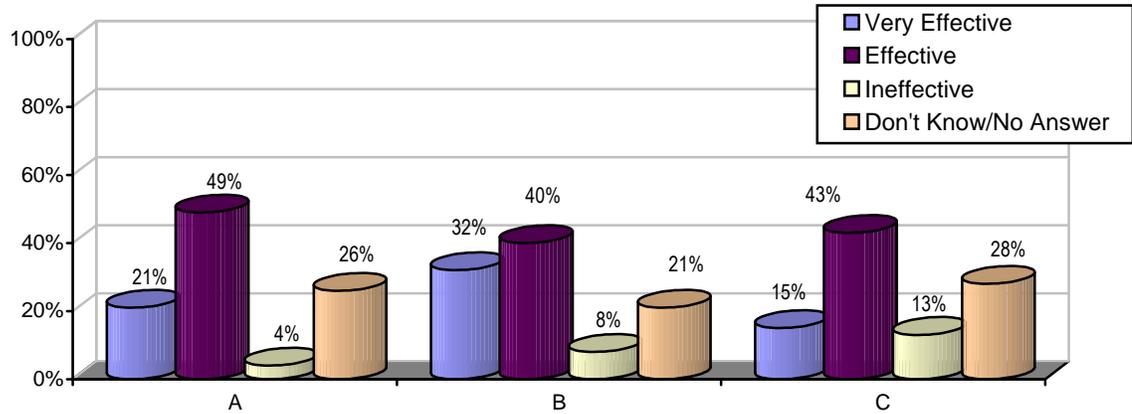
Figure 1
Importance of Pastoral Leadership Elements
(All Respondents)



- A. A spiritually alive, healthy community
- B. A visible commitment to building the life of the faith community
- C. A total ministering community (including the leadership or pastors, staff, and council together)

Figure 2 below indicates an evaluation by pastoral leadership of their current effectiveness of realizing the same three critical dimensions of pastoral leadership. Similar to other regional symposium participants throughout the United States, these leaders rate themselves primarily as effective or very effective in creating spiritually alive and healthy communities, demonstrating a visible commitment to building the life of the faith community, and creating a total ministering community.

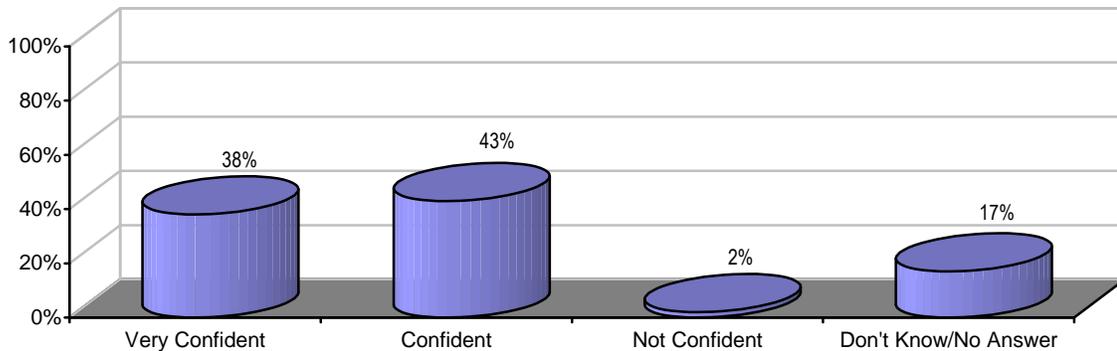
Figure 2
Effectiveness of Parish in Pastoral Leadership
(All Respondents)



- A. A spiritually alive, healthy community
- B. A visible commitment to building the life of the faith community
- C. A total ministering community (including the leadership or pastors, staff, and council together)

Figure 3 below indicates the confidence expressed by symposium participants that their parishes will become vibrant faith communities in the future. The majority of respondents are confident or very confident that their faith communities are in the process of becoming more vibrant faith communities. These confidence levels are very similar to other regions in the United States.

Figure 3
Confidence in Parish becoming a Vibrant Faith Community
(All Respondents)



Participants were asked to comment on their levels of confidence in becoming vibrant faith communities. They offer the following explanations of their ratings:

“My personal observation and how people have responded to new initiatives in the five years I have been pastor. The parish is in the infancy stage of such a collaborative model of parish ministry. They know what it means to accept responsibility for a task and ministry.” (P)

“If new clerical leadership decides to clip lay wings then the process would be negatively impacted.” (P)

“We are in a process that involves the whole community which is focused on purpose which leads to leaders meeting the spiritual and temporal needs of the faithful.” (P)

“We are in the process of recovering from Katrina. We expect to recover our previous vitality with smaller numbers. We also expect some new blessings and growth. (P)

“We are making strides. The parish was making great strides 10 to 15 years ago when a new pastor came in with a different vision. We are trying to rebuild the collaborative model. What will the next pastor do with and to it?” (P)

“I trust absolutely in the action of the Holy Spirit helping me. My staff and lay leaders to build up the Body of Christ which is my parish. If the spirit is allowed to act unimpeded and encouraged through the genuine work of the people, my faith community cannot help becoming a joyful, vibrant, and life-giving community.” (P)

“When necessary changes take place, the parishioners, especially new ones, will be more open to evolving into an even more vibrant faith community.” (P)

“Because this is a parish tradition” (P)

“We have some of these in place already. Also, we have increasing numbers to renew these aging ministers.” (P)

“The Spirit is with us as we are growing together – learning, praying, and serving.” (PLC)

“We face real challenges with rapid parish growth and the dynamic of a core group of ‘old’ St. Joseph parishioners and the influx of ‘new’ parishioners and bringing them all together into a cohesive and vibrant community.” (PLC)

“Just remember whose idea of vibrant, etc. we are going to use. Five people will have 10-15 ideas over time. Using ‘the most’ is not always good in moral questions. Some are absolutes. We don’t vote on moral issues.” (D)

“Parish continues to decline in numbers and financial stability due to demographic factors.” (D)

“It will take time, but God willing, things will turn out great.” (PC)

“Because I am already teaching the next generation to be part of God’s family and to start taking up and learning about the leadership positions of the church.” (PC)

“We have already experienced much of this. It is working.” (PC)

“Need for groups to come together in fellowship to know and work with each group. Promote more unity among school and parish. Invite new and different parishioners to step forward – not just the same few!” (DR)

“We have good resources to make this happen – active parishioners who don’t want to lose their parish and we’re a wealthy parish. I do believe that our parish is in a transition. We changed pastors almost two years ago and we’re still seeing a shift in our parish with who’s staying and who’s going.” (DR)

“There are so many factors pressing in the other/opposite direction, e.g., the overpowering impact of the current bishop making decisions that alienate parishioners and debilitate pastors with a vision of a vibrant faith community with a passion for mission.” (DR)

“There are some if not many that are beyond my control.” (O)

“The pastors we have had and the pastors we have now have all used their gifts and recognized the gifts of the faith community to build our parish in Word, Worship, and Service. I’m confident this will continue, however, a new pastor with a different agenda could change things drastically.” (O)

“New ministries emerging to change the face of our church for the better” (O)

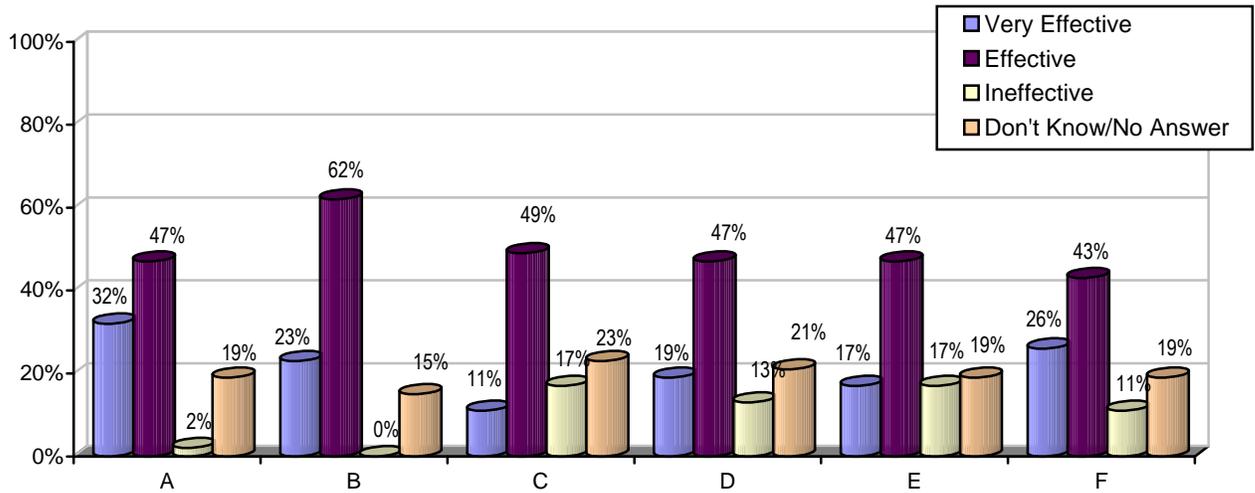
“Movement seems slow sometimes, but nevertheless, we are moving in the right direction. We must understand that change in the church happens slowly.” (O)

“Our parish is already moving toward a collaborative effort, parish wide, for making decisions and setting a vision and implementing programs toward building the life of the faith community.” (O)

To conclude the symposium, participants were asked to indicate their effectiveness in demonstrating the concrete behaviors of pastoral excellence. Figure 4 below indicates their rankings on each of these specific behavior areas.

Participants from the South tend to rate their parishes somewhat higher than the norm of other symposium participants on these factors of pastoral excellence. Overall, participants believe their parishes are effective or very effective in demonstrating the following range of behaviors in pastoral leadership outlined in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4
Effectiveness of Parish Leadership in
Demonstrating Concrete Behaviors of Excellence
(All Respondents)



- A. Ethical behaviors
- B. Pastoral behaviors
- C. Prophetic behaviors
- D. Collaborative behaviors
- E. Inclusive behaviors
- F. Welcoming behaviors

VII. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On October 3-5, 2006, 57 participants from the South participated in a regional symposium on the Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership. This symposium was one of eight regional symposiums sponsored by six leading national Catholic organizations for the Roman Catholic Church. These symposiums were funded by a Lilly Grant for Pastoral Excellence.

The following topics were explored at the Symposiums:

- **Future of Parish Leadership Roles**
- **Emerging Parish Best Practices**
- **Parish 2025 Futuring Exercise**
- **Marks of Pastoral Leadership**
- **Future Models of Pastoral Ministry**

When discussing the current vitality of their parishes, symposium participants from the South most frequently defined their parishes as:

- **Spiritually alive and healthy communities**
- **Spirituality alive with some struggles to improve**
- **Struggling to realize their full potential**

When asked to identify how their parishes express their visible commitment to building the life of the faith community, these pastoral leaders most frequently mentioned:

- **Visible and balanced commitment to word, worship, and service**
- **Visible commitment to building faith communities, but encountering various roadblocks**

Symposium participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which their parishes reflect a total ministering community involving pastors, staff, and pastoral councils working together. These participants mostly characterized their efforts as:

- **Collaborative efforts among pastors, staff, and parishioners**
- **Making steady progress**
- **Struggling or hurting to realize this reality**

The impact of Hurricane Katrina is very evident among parishes in the South, particularly those from Louisiana who participated in the process.

Participants were asked to identify their current parish leadership models. They most frequently mentioned:

- **Collaborative with shared ministry inviting others to live out their baptismal call**
- **Centralized staff leadership**
- **Traditional or hierarchical model of leadership**

In general, these symposium participants are from smaller communities reflecting a more grassroots and highly-engaged approach to leadership with the laity.

Participants were asked what type of leadership their pastor or parish life coordinators provide. They most frequently described this as:

- **Servant leadership**
- **Empowering and calling forth the gifts of others**
- **Engaging parishioners in the leadership process, but struggling to realize this reality**

When asked to describe the emerging roles of pastoral staff in leading parishes, participants often described these as:

- **Empowering, facilitating, and allowing gifts to emerge**
- **Team planning, program implementation, and training**
- **Few paid or no paid staff with mostly volunteer leaders**

When asked to define the type of leadership provided by lay parishioners in building faith communities, they often described these as:

- **Active and engaged communities of leadership**
- **Strong engagement through pastoral councils and formal ministries of the church**

When invited to comment on the intentionality of their parish leadership models and why they function as they do, participants often identified the following reasons:

- **Leadership of the pastor and staff**
- **Necessity and present needs**
- **Intentional model for parish life**
- **Spirit of openness and involvement in parish life which is embraced by the community**

When asked to describe the future emerging models of parish leadership in their communities, participants most frequently mentioned:

- **Increased lay involvement and dependency on the laity**
- **None or no change at this time**

As in other regional symposiums throughout the United States, participants clearly identified an essential link in their minds between a commitment to a total ministering community of pastors, staff, and parishioners working together and a healthy parish of the future. To further identify these best practices for parish leadership, participants most frequently mentioned:

- **Commitment to collaboration and shared ministry**
- **Visionary and affirming leadership based on pastoral planning**
- **Emphasis on prayer, spirituality, and faith formation**

When describing their challenges in building vibrant faith communities, pastoral leaders from the South most frequently mentioned:

- **Need for training, education, and personnel resources**
- **Overcoming Parochialism with a Resistance to Change**
- **Emerging issues of theological, cultural, and multi-cultural diversity**
- **Ongoing formation, education, and evangelization**

When asked simply what the parish of the future will look like, participants most frequently mentioned:

- **Increased emphasis on lay leadership**
- **Inclusive of diverse people and forms of leadership**
- **Smaller faith-based communities**
- **Clustered and changing structures of the local church, including mega-churches and small faith-based communities**

When asked how close or how far they are from their future vision for the parish, these participants indicated they are either:

- **Working toward their preferred vision, but not there yet**
- **Significantly far from this vision**

As part of the Symposium process, participants worked in small teams to imagine parishes in the Year 2025. When asked how their parish structures will evolve, these participants most frequently mentioned:

- **More involvement in leadership of the laity**
- **More diverse parish structures with sensitivity to cultural diversity**
- **Larger clustered parishes with smaller, more intentional faith-based communities**

Participants were further asked to describe the expected evolution of ordained and lay ecclesial leadership roles. They most frequently mentioned:

- **Increased dependence on leadership of the laity and deacons**
- **More diverse forms of orders**

Participants were asked to indicate what forms of parish leadership will be provided by parishioners themselves in the future. They most frequently mentioned:

- **Realizing the baptismal call of the laity, empowering lay leadership**
- **More education and formation of leadership, particularly among diverse ethnic groups**

When describing their future expectations for parish worship ministries, participants in the South most frequently mentioned:

- **More diverse forms of worship**
- **More use of technology and other media in worship**
- **Increased role for the laity in worship**

When asked to describe future trends that will emerge in parish ministries of the word, participants most frequently mentioned:

- **Increased biblical studies, whole community catechesis, and use of liturgy of the word**
- **More use of technology, internet, and the media in education and preaching**
- **Increased opportunities for the laity, especially in preaching**

When asked to define future trends in parish ministries of service, participants from the South are most acutely aware of outreach ministries to the poor and marginalized and a greater emphasis on social justice within and beyond church structures.

To conclude the symposium, participants were asked to identify the marks of pastoral leadership beginning with ethical behaviors of leadership. These participants most frequently defined ethical behaviors of leadership as:

- **Accountability, ethics, and integrity**
- **Respect for the dignity of others**

When asked to define emerging pastoral behaviors of leadership in their local communities, participants most frequently mentioned:

- **A strong relational and affirming presence with people**
- **Gospel-centered leadership and values**
- **Commitment to shared responsibility and empowerment**

When asked to further define expected prophetic behaviors of leadership emerging in their local communities, participants most frequently mentioned:

- **Faithful and prophetic stance toward issues of justice**
- **Fidelity to the gospels**
- **Willingness to make unpopular decisions**

When asked to illustrate the collaborative behaviors of leadership, participants overwhelmingly mentioned a commitment to shared collaboration and the development of lay leadership rooted in the wisdom of all believers.

When defining the inclusive behaviors of leadership they expect in parish life, participants most frequently mentioned:

- **Multi-cultural awareness and inclusivity**
- **Importance of teaching by example**
 - **Creating welcoming, inclusive, and inviting communities**

When expressing their views on the needed welcoming behaviors of leadership, participants overwhelmingly defined these as personal efforts to create a genuinely open and welcoming environment with cultural sensitivity.

This South Symposium Report represents a detailed analysis of the findings and themes from the South Regional Symposium. These findings should be understood as representing one of eight regional symposiums scheduled through the United States between 2004 and 2006.