

**EPISCOPAL YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS IN  
CONGREGATIONS and ON CAMPUSES**

*As reported by*

**Congregational Youth and Young Adult Ministers/Leaders**

**Research Sponsored and Developed by Members of:**

**PEALL (Proclaiming Education for All) Task Force**

**The Mission Leadership Center**

**The Evangelism and Congregational Life Center**

**Of the Episcopal Church**

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## **FOREWORD**

In the spring of 2007, PEALL (Proclaiming Education for All) affirmed the study of diocesan and congregation youth and young adult ministry as a priority for research and development attention. Over the next year, between August of 2007 and 2008, two surveys were developed, distributed via email and web, and analyzed. The first survey was designed for diocesan youth coordinators, with a report issued in late fall, 2007 on diocesan youth ministries. The second survey designed for those who with responsibility for youth and young adult ministries in congregations, was distributed through the efforts of the diocesan coordinators and through the web survey address posting on Church Center websites.

Program officers Betsy Boyd and Thomas Chu of the former Ministries with Young People Cluster, Douglas Fenton and Miguelina Espinal of the present Mission Leadership Center, as well as PEALL representative Kaileen Alston (Youth Missioner for the Diocese of Newark) were primarily responsible for suggesting questions to include on these surveys. Working with Bud Holland and Kirk Hadaway (program officers in the present Mission Leadership Center and Evangelism and Congregational Life Center, respectively), Adair Lummis, associate program officer for research, took responsibility for survey design, data analysis, and draft of findings. The final conclusions and recommendations emanating from both surveys are from those with church-wide leadership responsibility for youth and young adult ministries.

This is a report on the results of the second survey for congregational youth and young adults ministries. Total percentage answers to each of the questions are in the Appendix, as are illustrative quotes from survey comments on major points.

### **A. Youth and Young Adults and Those Who Minister to Them in Congregations**

There is good distribution of the 555 responses received by July 31, 2008 from over eighty dioceses and wide range of smaller and larger congregations.<sup>1</sup> This is important because characteristics of location and size of congregation are often predictors of involvement of young people.

#### **1. Congregational Participation of Young People Over Five Years**

Among young people under thirty, there seem to be far more regular attending youth in school grades 6-12 than there are young parents, employed young adults, and particularly more youth than college students.<sup>2</sup> Half of those responding reported that the proportion of youth in their congregations has grown over the last five years, slightly under half saw

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<sup>1</sup> Congregations represented ranged in size from 31% with 75 active adults members or fewer to 10% of over 400 adult members).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Less than fifth (17%) reported that in their congregations there were less than 5 youth attending regularly, about a third saw less than 5 young adults or young parents, but almost half (46%) said there were that few college students regularly attending their services. See Appendix p 2 for full distribution.

some increase in young parents, though only a third saw some increase in young adults. At the same time, a fifth of the congregations appear to have declined in the last five years in their proportions of active youth (21%), and a sixth of the congregations declined in involvement of young parents (16%) and young adults without children (15%).<sup>3</sup> In responding to a question asking to what factors survey respondents attribute stability, stagnancy or changes in participation of young people in their congregations, over 350 persons with some staff responsibility for these age groups gave reasons. Congregational staffing was the one of the most frequently mentioned areas contributing to growth or decline in the participation of young people. Since those who answered this survey have some responsibility for young people in their congregation, who are they?

## **2. Survey Respondents: Leaders of Youth and Young Adult Ministries**

Demographic characteristics: They range in age from 36% who are thirty-five and younger to 31% who are over fifty. Almost all are white, and three-fifths are women. A third are ordained. Around three-fifths have at least a college degree and most of these have advanced degrees or professional certification. Further, almost half have had continuing education pertinent to youth or young adult ministry in the last two years. In addition, nearly three-fifths said that they were also prepared for youth ministries by their prior experiences in having been a teen member of church youth group or church camp, teaching Sunday School or being a church camp counselor, and for nearly half – raising their own children.

### Congregational salary, benefits, and hours spent in ministry with young people

Two-thirds of those responding to the survey are paid. Those who are paid full-time are more likely to be ordained, but almost equally likely to be women or men. However, women predominate in the part-time paid and volunteer categories. Although age is not significantly related to congregational salary status, those age 35 and younger are somewhat more likely to be at the larger congregations.

As seen in Table I following, those who are paid by their congregations, particularly full-time, are more likely also through congregational coffers to have health and pension benefits, as well as some funds for continuing education. Three-fifths of the full-time congregational staff members have a yearly salary of \$40,000 or more.<sup>4</sup> The paid staff members are also likely to have a job description and their ministries evaluated on a regular basis, particularly if they are full time. Volunteers in three-fifths majority work less than five hours a week in ministries for young people,<sup>5</sup> but they are somewhat more likely than those paid by the congregation to focus on one age group – primarily youth. It is also true that youth in junior and senior high school get more attention than any other group under thirty in the congregations of the great majority of survey respondents.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, page 4, for percentages about stagnancy, decrease, stability and increase in proportions of youth, young adults, and young parents perceived over the last five years.

<sup>4</sup> The full range salary range for full-time congregational staff is given in Appendix, question #19.

<sup>5</sup> Only those paid full-time by the congregation spend over 30 hours a week in youth ministry in any significant numbers. (Over 30 hours in ministry for youth and young adults: 48% of the full-time, 4% of the part-time paid, and 1% of the volunteers.)

<i><b>TABLE I</b></i> <i><b>STAFF SALARY STATUS &amp;</b></i> <i><b>RELATED ATTRIBUTES</b></i>	<b>PAID BY CONGREGATION?</b>		
	<b>YES, FULL-TIME</b> <b>44%</b>	<b>YES, PART-TIME</b> <b>23%</b>	<b>NO, VOLUNTEER</b> <b>33%</b>
<b>CONGREGATIONAL STAFF</b>			
Ordained	58%	26%	5%
Female	51%	76%	69%
Age 35 and younger	40%	34%	33%
Job description	85%	79%	14%
Ministry evaluated	71%	60%	17%
Health benefits	88%	28%	0%
Pension/retirement plan	89%	28%	0%
\$ For continuing ed.	85%	47%	16%
Sm duties for all ages	30%	15%	2%
Primarily for - youth	57%	67%	74%
-5 hrs wk for yth/yad min	22%	21%	64%
Ch salary, \$40,000 +:	61%	2%	.....

## **B. Reasons for Increase of Young People’s Participation**

### **1. Quality and Consistency of Congregational Leadership**

A new energetic rector or a visionary rector with interest in young people makes a big difference in whether there are youth and young adults in the congregation. Similarly, congregations without a rector for some time, or which have a rector with little interest or abilities to minister to young people, will decline in numbers of youth and young adults.

*For example:*

- *Declined. We have had two periods without a full-time priest in the last 3 years. This has caused many people under forty to drift away from the parish, as there has been little consistency of leadership. While there are people like myself in other positions of leadership, it has still been difficult to keep the morale of the parish high.*
- *Declined – because we have had a BIG turnover of staff. The Youth Choir director left; the youth priest left, another priest and her husband left, our associate rector left, and the rector resigned.*
- *Moving out of decline: The parish has been through an extended transition (5+ years) of interim rectors), and attendance had declined. With the calling of a new rector six months ago, new families have started to join the parish bringing new young people.*

- *Increase - of young families is largely due to a new rector who has set forth a vision for how he wants the church to grow. The implementation of set goals has really revived the congregation in order to accomplish these goals.*

## 2. Staff Specifically Responsible for Youth and/or Young Adult Ministries

In smaller parishes the rector or vicar is the sole person handling whatever is done specifically for youth and young adults, a situation not typically viewed as getting more young people involved. However, in congregations that have another staff member to handle some of these ministries, these youth and young adult ministers/group leaders were frequently cited as the reason the number of young persons increased; or conversely, decreased if there is no person taking such ongoing congregational responsibility. Programs are typically at least partly dependent on the efforts of volunteers to be successful, and parents with children can be called often to help. At the same time, being able to rely on paid staff rather than only volunteers has the advantage of ensuring consistent attention to involving youth and young adults in the church.

In illustration:

- *What we have tried has not been successful so far. I long for conversation with teens and wish I could offer them something more substantive and meaningful... There is no paid staff here that does youth ministry. It's me or nobody.*
- *We have several families with current teenagers who have been active in promoting youth activities for several years. Those families and their youth will remain involved until they graduate.*
- *We don't have a professional youth minister, so programs wax and wane as volunteer leaders come and go.*
- *For youth, I think finding appropriate leadership that is consistent is very important. The average turnover for youth ministry leaders is too short. My impression (based on observations in my area) is that churches do not have a paid youth minister and therefore depend on volunteers who may not be appropriate; or, have higher paid staff that are not good youth ministers, and are not willing to commit to youth ministry.*
- *Having a dedicated position of youth minister with constant contact in coordinating youth activities has greatly increased the activity of youth groups and youth presence here.*

Comments made further suggest that having a staff person focused time on involving one age grouping of young people (e.g. teenagers, or college students, or twenty-

something young adults without children, or young parents) is most effective in increasing the numbers on that one group, but not others. Or in other words, the amount of attention given to a specific grouping of young people has an impact on their congregation involvement. Further, staff members who specialize in one grouping of young people are more likely to have (and gain) expertise in better understanding what kinds of services and programs are relevant, attractive to them.

- *The youth program has grown because of new staff tending to their needs. I think that the number of young adults has remained the same because there are no programs or staff especially for them.*
- *There is an increased focus on young adults, so there are more here now. However, this is not true for youth. There are simply no programs for youth and no intention that there will be.*
- *Youth participation has increased because this church is intentional regarding providing opportunities for families. Young adults' participation has remained the same over the last five years – with few participating at any given time. We probably need to provide more specific fellowship opportunities for young adults.*
- *Youth participation has increased mainly due to the creation of a youth group. Participation of college students has increased mainly due to the resurgence of the campus ministry group. I think young adult attendance/participation has increased because the parish is more open to it than it used to be, and they feel welcome and supported*
- *Increased in numbers of youth because the congregation added a full time youth minister who was able to provide more relevant events.*

### **3. Services and Programs Designed for Young People**

Worship services that involve youth and young adults may often be different than those appealing to senior citizens. Almost all would attest that some way of making youth feel valued and visible in the worship services is important. The great majority (89%) reported that youth under age 18 served as acolytes and a majority (56%) as well said their congregations had youth as lay readers. However, making the sermons and especially the music more appealing to youth may not engage older people in the life and support of the congregation, unless the congregation is offering several services a week.

- *Increased because: We have moved into an intentional post-modern approach, are open, inclusive, affirming, and welcoming. The start of a choral scholars program which pays high school singers to participate in our choir make our parish look younger.*
- *Decline because: The worship service is boring. The congregation is old and won't let anything interesting happen. The music director is narrow focused. The rector is wrapped up in clericalism.*

- *As a parish, 80% of our members are over 65. Our younger families and youth are leaving in search of a more contemporary style of music.*
- *Music!!! They do not listen to organ music on their ipods, why make them worship to it! I know elitists think contemporary praise and worship is theologically lacking, but come on! Get with the times.*

Congregational Programs: Many made comments citing the importance of programs particularly appealing to youth or young adults to attract and retain them in their congregations. A supportive rector and staff members dedicated to youth ministry are important in part because of the particular programs for young people they develop, sponsor or lead. Young people are drawn to congregations that have programs that attract other similar age and life style young people.

The most frequently offered congregational programs reported for young people are for youth under eighteen: About four-fifths (79%) report their congregation has a youth group, and half (50%) say their congregations hold weekend and retreats for youth. Another fourth (25%) are college student groups or congregations that sponsor a college student group. In contrast, less than a fifth of the congregations represented by youth and young adult ministers/staff leaders in this study have weekend retreats for young adults, or groups for young parents, or groups for young single adults, and only 9% hold vocational discernment events for youth of the parish.

Suggestions made on effective congregational programs for attracting young people include advice to advertise the event or group through media appealing to youth (Facebook, web, ipod), focus on issues important to youth, but also have some time for social fun, and “always” provide food.

As will be given more attention later in this report, even with great staff commitment and funds for developing programs, some discover it is a lot easier to devise programs for one grouping of young people than another, no matter how much they would like to reach all. Young adults want different programs from youth. Young single adults in the workforce may well be drawn to quite different programs than college students or than young parents. Young parents, however, may be involved in particular congregations more because of what is offered their children than any program specifically for them.

For example:

- *The EYC has increased greatly because we have an ordained person on staff focusing hard on that ministry. We plan to place a similar focus on young adult ministry to help increase their participation, but that seems far more difficult. It's easy to select a good, workable model for 6-12 graders. It is not so easy to find a good model for young adult work*
- *Young adult participation is level because we never had a vibrant young adult program that targets their needs, although many are quite active in parish programs. Our young parent program participation fluctuates. We have great children's programs so parents are involved. We have had parenting groups in the past and are in the process of*

*launching new programs, but the lives of young parents are so hectic that we have not found a great model that works. But we are trying.*

- *Our young parents come because we offer a beautifully staffed nursery and a redesigned school program.*

Diocesan and Inter-church Programs: Programs and events offered by the diocese or other interchurch groups might be seen by congregational leaders as way of providing effective programs for their young people, particularly if their church budgets for special staff and programs are restricted.

Programs involving young people from other parishes, in which over half reported their congregations has participated recently, are also those geared mainly for youth, i.e. weekend or retreats for youth of this and other parishes, and youth summer camp opportunities (66%) and (55%) mission opportunities and trips.<sup>6</sup> Happening/Teens Encounter Christ-renewal was the fourth most frequently mentioned event in which youth in 36% of these congregations participated with others. No other inter-congregational or diocesan event drew from as much as fourth of these congregations.

The congregations with the fewest programs of their own for young people are also those least likely to be involved in diocesan programs for young people. This may be because some congregations see any other program than their own for youth as “competition.” Another fact may be that the smaller congregations, which run fewer programs of their own, do not have enough staff time to coordinate with the dioceses or other parishes in putting on a youth program.

#### **4. Community Dynamics Impacting Congregations and Their Programs**

The degree to which young people are involved in a parish can be affected by the population demographics of the area and the pull of what other congregations, institutions and events in the community offer for youth and young adults.

Comments indicated that congregations in small communities far from populated cities and suburbs may have difficulty attracting many new people at all, and especially young adults and families. Congregations in long established suburbs may be too pricey for young adults and young families to find affordable housing. Congregations in growing suburbs have an easier time often because of new families with children moving in - unless they do not have the resources to mount new programs that would appeal to young adults with busy schedules, or the motivation to open the lay leadership to newcomers with new ideas, or willingness to alter the worship services in any way. .

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix, question #9 for the percentages indicating events that their young people have participated in within the last year or so.

In any-sized community, there will be other events and duties that compete all too effectively for youth participation on Sundays. To attract and keep youth and young adults with or without children, congregations have to reach out to the community in new ways. Some do not want to make this effort, cannot afford to make this effort, or do not know how to proceed:

For example:

- *We are an urban parish without a neighborhood. Families need to make an intentional effort to come into the city outside of the Sunday service for activities or events. These have not been successful. If youth cannot drive themselves, they are dependent on parents for transportation. Youth also have very full schedules and most parents work.*
- *Our (suburban) community is too expensive for young parents to live in the area. Most of our parents of young children are much older than thirty.*
- *Due to demographics and economics, it is very difficult for single or coupled people under the age of thirty to afford housing nearby. Most parents of young children in the congregation are older than thirty.*
- *We are a tiny church in a small (1,000) mining town. The youngest parishioners are in their fifties. There are few young people in the town due to the lack of jobs. A few people are moving into town because of recreational opportunities; these are mainly retired.*
- *Our parish (and the Episcopal Church in general) is “competing” with larger, more contemporary churches, which seem to attract a younger congregation with contemporary music services, high-tech visual aids, etc.*
- *Primarily all of our youth events involve our own parishioners. It is hard to compete with the ever-popular entertainment style programs the more modern churches offer. We do not have a very aggressive program that reaches outward to the community at large. Frankly, I am glad we have not surrendered to the “popular.”*
- *Demographics. College students typically move out of the area so don't attend this parish and often lose interest in their spiritual life despite our efforts to retain them. People are so busy with sports, family vacations, extra-curricular activities such as dance, cheerleading, working out, computer classes, etc., that it is hard for a youth or young adult program to compete with that. (Yet improvement because :) We have changed the youth program to meet on more weekends rather than a weeknight due to attendance issues, and it has helped. We continue to offer events and if the timing is right, and there is a lot of planning and publicity, these can be well attended.*

## **5. Young Adults: Working, Parents, Students**

Whatever issues make designing and running effective programs for youth difficult, are compounded in even contemplating putting on congregational programs that would be appealing to young adults between 18 and 30, given that some are in college, some are parents, and are some are singles in the workforce, and combinations of these.

Many explained the lack of growth in young adults in their congregations as various combinations of staff transitions and lack of appealing programming. In some communities there are few young adults who stay after high school, in other communities young adults cannot afford to live there. Although young adults, like youth, are more attracted to congregations, events, and programs where more of their age-life stage group is present, this can present a greater problem if there are few of one type of young adult to try to recruit or retain in the congregation.

Young Adults: In the Work Force and/or Who Are Parents:

A point that has to be underlined is that so many parents of young children and “younger” adults in congregations are over thirty, and yet young parents will come to congregations if there are programs for their children. Many made comments to the effect that young adults without children are not attracted to a congregation made up predominantly of adults eligible to join AARP. Getting a program together with appeal to one type of young adults in sufficient numbers is difficult. And yet, getting programs, service, and resources that will appeal to young adults is very important in the opinions most expressed.

*In illustration:*

- *We do not have a formal program for young adults under age thirty. Our youngest adults are in their thirties. We have been attracting more of this age group. These thirty-something adults have served/participate/led in a variety of ministries in the congregation (bishop’s committee, building and grounds committee, Sunday School teacher/leader, outreach programs).*
- *We have few young adults for several reasons. (1) They do not have children and so are not as interested in regular participation in church. (2) There are few other adults of their age to attract them.*
- *Younger adults come for one or two services and then we never see them again. Most of us in this congregation are sixty and older.*
- *Young adults have a group that’s much like any other adult book group or men’s group. There’s not really a lot aimed specifically at us though, and most of the community still thinks of young adults as youth or children. That’s why I think young adults don’t get involved more.*
- *Few young adults here; I think this has to do with the congregation not offering a place for them. You finish with high school and your next place to fit in is when you have a child to baptize.*
- *While our church is growing, especially with new members who are parents with children, and we have increased children’s programming which feeds into youth programming. But our number of young adults has not changed, since nothing is specifically done for young adults without children.*

- *In this city the participation of young adults has increased, due to interns who have been asked to create young adults groups in their respective parishes. Our church also hired a young priest in his thirties, which helps the young adults to connect with the congregation.*

### College Students:

The 18-22 year olds in college are in some ways easier to attract through programs – if not to established congregations at least to campus ministries. A campus ministry can be sponsored mainly by one congregation or primarily by the diocese, by a university, or other group. A campus ministry can add young people to a congregation by staff reaching out to nearby colleges, or if it is a very successful campus program be an alternative to students' involvement in a parish.

Some campus-based chaplains, who reach out to students of all denominations, report being able to develop an overall stronger campus ministry due to: (1) increased numbers of students involved, and (2) possibly resources from other denominations. The latter factor is particularly important to a campus ministry if the diocese or parishes are not supporting it at all or sufficiently. Like other ministries, campus ministry too takes consistent staffing, money, appealing programs and facilities, to be effective in recruiting and retaining young people during their college years.

In illustration:

- *After we got a youth minister, a local college has gotten a lot more involved with our church.*
- *We are a growing congregation in many ways, and our youth and campus ministries are growing along with the congregation. We also have made small steps by staffing a full-time campus minister and maintaining a part-time youth minister.*
- *Our congregation is integrated with different facets of the college community. Our on-campus ministry includes some who never come to the parish. Parishioners supply food for students. Young adults work on finding their own place between student life, new careers or a church family/community of faith. We offer all options without worrying about the boundaries, and young adults move freely among different circles – to the benefit of their own spiritual growth while bringing new perspectives to the lives of others.*
- *Most of our college age kids are involved with the campus ministry at the State University, rather than our congregation.*
- *We are primarily a college chaplaincy with our own chapel on campus, a 40-member student choir, and students serving as acolytes, readers, ushers, sacristans, etc. We cater specifically to the academic community in our small town. Most families with young children attend the local parish church, just down the street from us.*

- *This is a college mission of the Diocese of ... Our mission is to bring a face of the Episcopal Church on to the campus where we serve...The College Missionary Team is made of lay and clergy missionaries from fifteen campuses in the Diocese. They plan and execute diocesan wide events from mission trips, ski trips, spiritual pilgrimages, leadership retreats and involvement in the councils of the Diocese.*
- *We lost funding from the diocese. So money for chaplain and program is gone, hence fewer students.*
- *This is a campus ministry. We have increased programs and tried to reach out ecumenically beyond denominational boundaries. This has increased our membership.*
- *Despite fewer numbers of Episcopal students, as a full time campus ministry, we have a solid group of students who worship together and participate in numerous outreach groups.*
- *There is a great turnover of campus ministers, so the ministry rarely has a chance to grow.*
- *Increased participation of college students because the Center is a 24/7 operation with study area, chapel, living room, kitchen, and a large back door for outdoor functions*
- *We are a campus ministry and so all our programs are for young adults. Currently we have a group called "College Crew" consisting of college students who identify as Episcopalian, which meets for supper and conversation every Tuesday night. We have gone on field trips as a group, and have worked with another Episcopal campus ministry at another university in the region. In addition we have another group called "Progressive Christian Students", which focuses on exploring social and political issues from the perspective of Christian faith.*
- *The campus ministry at this university includes Café Canterbury, a coffee café open to students, faculty and staff. We have a Wednesday evening Eucharist followed by a family style dinner, three weekly bible studies, a weekly spiritual direction group, weekly on campus lunch gatherings, monthly taize service, monthly open-mike nights at the Café. Study groups use our library and other groups meet at our facilities as scheduled. UCC meets on Thursday evenings at the Café, and other groups meet at the Café as scheduled.*
- *This is a campus ministry/mission congregation. Numbers vary from year to year and semester to semester. Some students are attracted by the worship that uses 'power point' projected on the wall behind the altar. Music is with guitar by student volunteers. Some students find it helpful that the Chaplain and our ministry group page can be accessed on face book. Students like that the*

*campus ministry storefront space is available to them 24/7 by key pad entry. They also like the Wi-Fi and computer availability, as well as TV, DVD and pool table. Students say this is “Home away from home.”*

### **C. The Importance of Programs and Church Size**

The bigger the congregation, the better its chances of increasing the number of youth and young adults involved in its worship and ministries (as seen on the bottom of Table 2 on the next page.) This is because larger congregations have more of the advantages mentioned as to why youth or young adult involvement has increased in their congregations, i.e.:

- Like attracts like; the more youth in the congregation, the more will come. (This is also true for young adults and young parents.)
- Paid staff members give more hours to youth ministry (unless they are rectors), as mentioned. Paid staff members typically have more education and more continuing education involvement specifically for youth and young adult ministry. The larger the congregation, the more likely the staff member is paid rather than volunteer.<sup>7</sup>
- The more congregational and diocesan programs for young people offered by the parish, the more likely the parish is to increase its proportion of youth and young adults. The larger the congregation, the more likely it is to offer and be involved in both congregational and diocesan youth and young adult programs.

**So does this mean that small congregations should give up trying to attract and retain youth and young adults?** No. Chart I (see next page) suggests that even with the small congregations, the more programs they offer, the more youth they will attract and retain (as well as young adults). The quality of the program (and staff leadership) is doubtlessly important as well, though not measurable by this survey.

The importance of novel, appealing programs for attracting young people has been attested to in the FACT cross-denominational studies as well. Roozen reports that the apparent reason that larger congregations have more youth involvement is because they not only have more programs for youth but also more programs for other ages as well.<sup>8</sup> Kirk Hadaway summarizes the characteristics of the “exceptional” congregations that are better able to attract younger adults as those that “tend to be more exciting, innovative and are more involved in recruitment.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Although younger staff members with responsibilities for youth or young adult ministries are more likely to be in the larger congregation, younger staff members are no more effective in increase in proportion of young people after controlling for size of the congregation.

<sup>8</sup> David Roozen, “FACTs About Congregations with High Youth Involvement”, based on FACT 2000 data.

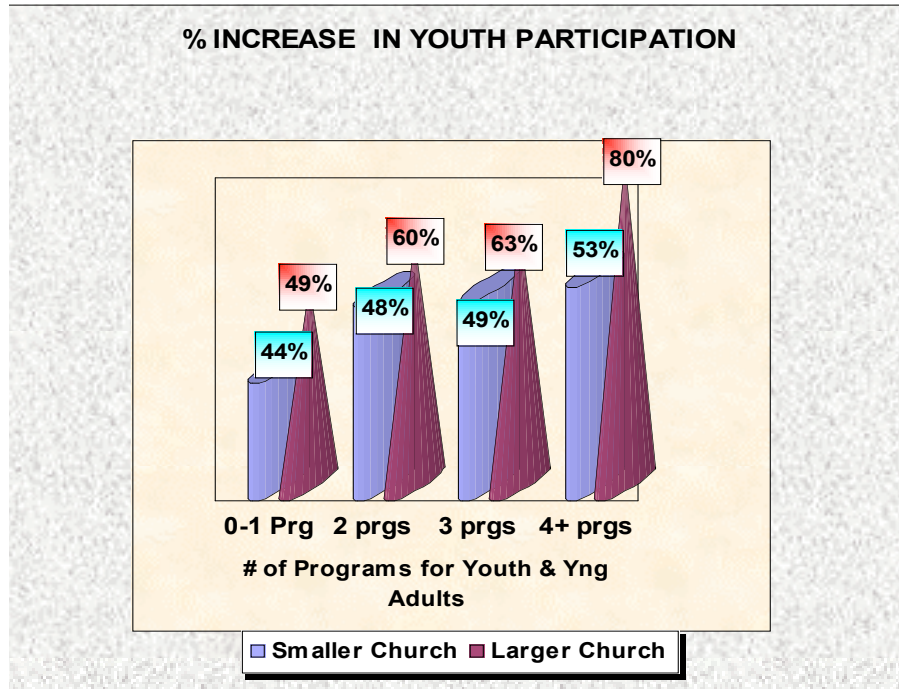
<sup>9</sup> C. Kirk Hadaway, *FACTs on Growth*, based on FACT 2005 data.

**TABLE 2  
INCREASES IN YOUNG PEOPLE BY CONGREGATIONAL SIZE WITH  
ASSOCIATED OTHER CHARACTERISTICS**

Other CONGREGATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	CHURCH SIZE, Total # of Adults				
	75 -	76-140	141-225	226-400	401+
<b><u>Age of Youth Staff</u></b>					
<b>Under age 36</b>	28%	30%	41%	43%	55%
<b><u>Staff are Volunteers</u></b>	42%	44%	24%	21%	11%
<b><u>Hours weekly just for youth and young adult ministries/programs</u></b>					
<b>Less than 5 hrs</b>	53%	49%	27%	15%	13%
<b>Over 30 hrs</b>	14%	10%	15%	39%	64%
<b><u>Congregational programs for youth/young adults</u></b>					
<b>0 program</b>	22%	13%	6%	0%	0%
<b>4+ programs</b>	9%	2%	15%	25%	47%
<b><u>Diocesan programs in which church participates for youth and young adults</u></b>					
<b>0-1 program</b>	33%	23%	17%	17%	7%
<b>6+ programs</b>	21%	22%	42%	56%	60%
<b><u># Youth (grades 6-12)</u></b>					
<b>0-4</b>	47%	9%	0%	0%	5%
<b>5-10</b>	32%	39%	7%	4%	0%
<b>11-35</b>	17%	50%	80%	62%	16%
<b>36+</b>	4%	2%	13%	34%	79%
<b>INCREASES in:</b>					
<b>Youth</b>	33%	46%	57%	62%	80%
<b>Young Adults</b>	34%	25%	33%	38%	46%
<b>Young Parents</b>	29%	47%	52%	53%	68%

## CHART I

### Increase in Youth Participation in Smaller (140 adults -) and Larger (141+ adults) Congregations



Programs alone do not equalize the advantages of large congregations over smaller congregations in attracting young people, for the reasons given, but they do help. Offering nothing for young people gives the message that the congregation is not interested in youth or young adults. Those answering this survey have many good recommendations for attracting and retaining youth and young adults. These broadly involve:<sup>10</sup>

- Respecting, involving and promoting young people as visible leaders in the congregations
- Get qualified staff specifically for youth and/or young adult ministry
- Develop worship services, music and media that appeal to young people
- Develop good programs for youth and young adults.

***And to quote two:***

- Go with events no matter how many show up. Its not about numbers, its about who shows up
- No matter how many youth or young adults you have – keep the program active. That way the program won't die.

<sup>10</sup> Please see examples of the many recommendations made in the Appendix, last five pages.

## **C. REFLECTIONS and PROGNOSIS**

### **1. Young Adult Episcopalians on Campuses and in Congregations**

**The Reverend G. Douglas Fenton  
Program Officer, Young Adult & Campus Ministries  
Episcopal Church Center**

The results of this survey provide us with a baseline to begin to ascertain both our desire to be engaged in ministry with young adults in congregations and on campuses and our willingness to alter or augment the work currently undertaken.

Before venturing further, it is important to remind ourselves of a couple of things. Campus ministry, while it focuses on a portion of the young adult population (18-30 years), is not young adult ministry. It is a sub-set of young adult ministry. Those involved in campus ministry have, as their main occupation, being a student. Young adults are those who tend to be out of school, and may have chosen not to attend college. They may be those in the military, employed, underemployed or unemployed. They're partnered, non-partnered, and with or without children. They are bicycle couriers, investment bankers, tattoo artists, farmers, dentists and caregivers. They are Native American, gay, single parents, Republicans. They are far from being a homogenous group and yet many are Episcopalian.

In 2003, the General Convention saw the great possibilities emerging and undertook to provide financial resources to develop and strengthen ministry with young adults and the creation of new campus ministries in partnership with dioceses.

Young adult ministries have begun to develop more widely during this period once dioceses were asked to identify their young adult minister for the diocese, and one or two young adults to attend a church wide series of consultations on young adult ministry. Bishops were very candid in expressing their frustration in finding funds for staffing, and in their ability to encourage congregations to take this ministry seriously. Areas of focus that emerged from the consultations included Resources, Relationships and Advocacy and a Committee on Young Adult Ministry was formed to continue to explore, and develop these topics.

New Episcopal campus ministries are slowly beginning to appear across the landscape. We recognize their value as places for ongoing faith formation among those raised in the church and a place to explore their questions for those are seekers. Campus ministries have been places of discernment for countless clergy. Their value is tried and true yet we continue to see campus ministry as a place to trim. It's not a revenue-producing place and therefore, non-financially contributing ministries often feel the results of an economic downturn or realignment of priorities first.

The good news is that the church is paying attention to this group of people in our midst: young adults. The church wants to be attentive and responsive. The church desires to be a place of welcome, a place of discovery, a place for all on their journey of becoming better acquainted with God.

## **2. Youth Ministry In Episcopal Congregations**

**The Reverend Brian Prior  
Vice President, House of Deputies  
Episcopal Church**

Thank you to all of those who filled out this survey. The valuable input provides clear direction as we move forward with resources, network and support for adults who work with young people. This survey confirms recent information obtained from other forums where those who minister with young people gather.

First and foremost youth ministry is relational. The success of youth ministry on any level of the Church must be grounded in a relational model of ministry. The information makes clear of two key relational components: young people are attracted to be in gatherings of their peers, and secondly they need non-parental mentors in their lives. To this end, we as the Church need to continue to provide opportunities for young people to gather as a faith community. Likewise, we need to identify, equip, and support a wide variety of adults to be mentors.

The primary experience in the Church where young people gather is in their own local church. Youth group, Confirmation classes, J2A, Acolyting and Music Ministry are the most predominant connecting places. In addition, many have found gatherings such as camp, youth retreats, diocesan, provincial and larger church events such as EYE and Faith in 3D to be important faith communities.

Increasingly young people are interested in fully living into their Baptismal Covenant through spiritual formation and discernment of their gifts for ministry. The youth of our Church desire to be full participants in the life of the Church, and at all levels. As such, it is critical that the Church continue to provide access and opportunities for young people to use their gifts. In the congregational setting this translates into inviting and encouraging young people to serve on the Vestry, and other decision-making bodies of the congregation, especially worship. These same opportunities need to be provided at the diocesan and provincial levels, and in church-wide structures such as Youth Presence at General Convention.

As with all the saints, young people also need to be equipped and prepared for ministry. Resources need to continue to be provided and developed for youth to best utilize their gifts for ministries. Traditionally this has been done locally through Confirmation.

However, faith formation through offerings such as J2A, Youth Ministry Spirituality Project and other “homegrown opportunities” have begun to provide a deeper level of spiritual formation and ministry development. With this said, it is abundantly clear that many young people find their most significant formation taking place outside the context of the congregation. The vast majority of this takes place at youth retreats, camp, pilgrimages and mission experiences. It is clear that continuing to develop and share faith formation and leadership resources throughout the Church is essential.

As more young people live into their Baptismal Covenant and spend increased time involved in faith formation and leadership development they feel more called to use their gifts for ministry engaging in God’s mission. The level of young people’s involvement in community ministry, social justice and both domestic and international mission work is staggering. It is also potentially our greatest asset for evangelism. Continuing to provide resources and opportunities such as the Episcopal Mission Project – EMX is critical.

The survey is clear, as the Church moves forward it will need to continue to provide the highest quality of resources and support to those who minister with young people.