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THE ROLE OF THE ADULT YOUTH MINISTER IN YOUTH MINISTRY

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THE ROLE OF THE ADULT YOUTH MINISTER IN YOUTH MINISTRY

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The role of the adult youth minister in youth ministry

George Boran, *Fordham University*

Abstract of doctoral thesis

This study was designed to research the role of the adult youth minister in youth ministry. The investigation sought to build a theory that could help define the role of the youth minister by interpreting the data supplied by people who have been successful in this role. The study involved youth ministers from both the United States and Latin America. Role theory provided an important theoretical basis for the research project, especially the concepts of role expectations, role ambiguity, role clarification, and role conflict. The research strategy employed a qualitative research approach which used guided interviews to collect data from a sample of 21 youth ministers from the United States and Latin America. While the United States participants were selected from three Catholic dioceses on the east coast of the country, the Latin American participants came from nine different countries. Based on the theoretical framework of the study and the categories that emerged from the data, a theory of the role of the adult youth minister in youth ministry was developed. The findings were presented under three main frameworks: personal role expectations, the expectations of others, and role conflict. There was remarkable consensus among participants from both continents within these frameworks. Nevertheless important contrasts emerged in the following areas: visions of youth organization, empowerment of young people, mission of youth in society, establishment of boundaries with regard to relationships between adults and adolescents, critical awareness, involvement of parents, and models of church. The major differences that emerged did not so much reflect competing models between participants from the Latin American and the United States churches as much as an ideal toward which youth ministers in both continents need to work. The weaknesses of each group were challenged by the strengths of the other group. Differences did not necessarily mean disagreements but rather goals or levels of youth ministry at which not all have as yet arrived.

Subject Area

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE AND FOCUS OF THE STUDY

Background

Statement of the Problem

While approaches to youth work within the Catholic Church differ from diocese to diocese and from country to country, there is a common concern that goes beyond diocesan and national boundaries: the need to clarify the role of adults in youth work. This research, therefore, is despsicigned to study the question: What is the role of the adult youth minister in youth ministry?

The term adult youth minister refers to the adult person working either as a paid professional or as a volunteer in the area of youth ministry. Adult youth ministers can be priests, religious, or lay persons. Different countries and places use a variety of terms: director, chaplain, adult youth minister, youth worker, adviser, animator, coordinator, and assistant. In this study preference is given to the term youth minister which appears to be the most popular and significant term in both Catholic and Protestant traditions.

The term adult refers to persons who have a certain distance from young people in terms of age--usually over 25 years of age. However, there is no definite age that serves as a dividing line. Maturity and local circumstances are important determining factors.

There are a number of reasons why the adult minister has a crucial role in the formation of young people. Adults bring to youth ministry two important contributions: experience and a theory of youth work. Since adolescents are at a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood, they often experience an identity crisis and periods of emotional instability (Erikson, 1968). In such moments, ministers can be stabilizing factors. They are mentors who train young people as leaders for ministry among their peers. The importance of the youth minister in the Protestant context is highlighted by Barna (1990): "Research consistently shows that people are most likely to accept Christ as their Savior before they reach the age of 18. Currently, about two-thirds of all decisions for Christ happen by that age" (p. 119).

Yet, good will is no longer sufficient for effective youth work. An important study by Murnion (1992) indicates that the degree of burnout is high

among youth ministers. When compared to other ministries in the church, they "have the shortest tenure, more than a third a year or less, and are more likely than others to be on the brink of leaving their current positions" (p. 53).

This extremely high burnout is strongly linked to role confusion. Youth ministers are seen to have a variety of roles, among which are recreator, educator, and administrator (Mattingly, 1982). However, adults who work with teens are confused about many aspects of their role. Some are democratic, some are paternalistic, others are authoritarian. Some have no clear methodology for involving young people in a growth process in which the latter have more control over their own lives and their environment. Long-term goals are vague or nonexistent. Unclear role expectations lead to personal frustration and lack of effectiveness. Ambiguity "is significantly related to tension and dissatisfaction with one's job, a sense of futility, and a loss of self-confidence" (Sarbin & Allen, 1968, p. 504).

Context of This Study

An understanding of youth ministry itself is crucial to understanding the role of the adult youth minister. Youth ministry is the context in which adult youth ministers operate and their role must be defined within this context. Moberg (1984) notes that the church develops a structure for its mission and this structure separates people into roles that he defines as "the patterns of rights, privileges, duties, responsibilities which are expected or required of those who occupy certain social positions within the group" (p. 8).

Youth ministry refers to the specialized organization within both Catholic and Protestant churches that works with young people, socializes them into the Christian community, and encourages them to become involved in the church's mission in society. The sustaining strength of youth ministry is the youth groups and youth teams in parishes and schools. These groups and parish teams are interlinked in a network through committees on different levels: parish, diocese, region, and national. Youth ministry functions within a coordinated plan of the local diocese or conference of bishops.

The Latin American bishops describe youth ministry as an organic and differentiated ministry that takes into account the social reality of young people, that inspires conversion and provides efficient channels of active participation

in church and in the transformation of society (Conferência Geral do Episcopado Latino-americano, 1979, nos. 1187-1189).

Some key documents clarify the role description and expectations for the adult youth minister in youth ministry.

In 1976, the Catholic Youth Ministry engaged in a process of evaluation and reflection on where the church's work with young people was going. The result was the publication of <u>A Vision of Youth Ministry</u> (United States Catholic Conference, 1976) which established goals, principles, and components of a comprehensive ministry to contemporary youth. Youth ministry, as a multidimensional reality should be brought into focus by a common dedication to two goals: fostering the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person and seeking to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the faith community.

The same document established the following principles: Youth is a unique time of personal development; youth ministry is concerned with the total person, is rooted in relationships, is called to community, proceeds as an affirmation of gifts, and as a true ministry duplicates itself.

The document points out that a vision of youth ministry should also have certain components to give it direction: Ministry of the word is one such component. "Ministry of the word in relation to youth involves not only evangelization, but also catechesis in order to render faith living, conscious, and active" (p. 13). Worship is another aspect of the vision and "is the focal point of an effective youth ministry program" (p. 15). Creating community is also important. "As young people and adults open their lives to each other and realize their common membership in the community of faith, they establish a new basis for identity--the family of God" (p. 16). Guidance and healing respond to a profound need of modern youth. "Divisions and wounds in the young person's world can be healed in Christ through the reconciling efforts of peers, family members, or a youth minister who has the confidence of the young person" (p. 17). Justice and service should be constitutive dimensions of the church's ministry to youth. Youth and the larger faith community are called to "join with Spanish-speaking, Black, and Native American youth, and their communities in dealing with prejudice, and to share with other young people the struggle against hunger, unemployment, and injustice" (p. 19). Enablement of both youth and adult youth ministers is a further component of youth

ministry. Advocacy is the final component of youth work. "Advocacy gets down to the everyday practicality of being a buffer, an intermediary, a broker. An advocate shows dedication by interpreting and speaking for youth" (p. 21).

This document became the foundation for a national vision of youth ministry during the subsequent years, providing a new and unified vision for the different experiences of youth ministry throughout the country. Rapid growth took place as a result.

In 1980, youth leaders held a national symposium in the United States to decide on the direction of youth ministry during the following decade. They defined a developmental model that had four goals and rested on five principles. The five principles were: The maturing of faith is a gradual process that depends on God's grace and also on the interaction and environment we create. There are distinctive stages; this progressive growth is reflected in the patterns of human and faith development, and the culminating point is the commitment to some type of ministry (Catholic Youth Organization, 1980).

The four goals established in the above symposium are a useful measure for evaluating role expectations for the adult youth minister: to socialize young people into the community of faith; to help them establish a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; to foster commitment to a personal Catholic Christian identity; and to enable young people to recognize and live out their call to ministry as mature Christian believers (Catholic Youth Organization, 1980).

During a period of 10 years, more than 80 experts in the field of youth ministry worked on the preparation of Competency-based Standards for the Coordinator of Youth Ministry (National Federation, 1990). The aim of this work is to give guidelines for selecting and preparing adult youth ministers for work with young people, "adults who will not only hand over information, but adults who will hand over themselves and the secret of their own faith" (p. v). These standards are a profile of knowledge and skills needed by adult youth ministers to be effective as educators of young people.

The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis (National Federation, 1992), prepared by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM), presents six foundational themes for youth ministry: Jesus, discipleship, mission and ministries, faith, the developing human person, and the community. The adult youth minister is an educator and in a special way an

educator in the faith. The Christian message colors in a special way the pedagogical relation of the adult youth minister to young people.

In November 1993, a new document, The Challenge of Catholic Youth Evangelization (National Federation, 1993), builds on the 1976 document, A Vision of Youth Ministry (United States Catholic Conference, 1976), while facing a new challenge of clarifying the meaning, content, principles, and methods of the effective evangelization of young people. Within a new social context, the document proposes the following principles to guide youth work though the present decade:

> The starting point for youth evangelization is our recognition of the presence of God already in young people, their experiences, their families, and their culture.

> In the evangelization of youth, we must consider the developmental characteristics of young people.

> Evangelization efforts must support families in their role as the primary evangelizers of their children.

> Evangelization is the responsibility of the entire faith community.

> Evangelization draws on and responds to the richness of individual ethnic cultures.

> Evangelization recognizes the power of society to shape the values and identities of young people. (p. 7)

The Latin American church presents further challenges for the adult youth minister of youth ministry. In 1979 the bishops described youth ministry as an organic and differentiated ministry that takes into account the social reality of young people, that inspires conversion and provides efficient channels of active participation in church and in the transformation of society (Conferência Geral do Episcopado Latino-americano, 1979).

Over a decade later, the Latin American bishops gave further guidelines for youth ministry in their Santo Domingo document (Conferência Geral do

Episcopado Latino-americano, 1992): Young people should be trained in critical skills to meet the impact of contemporary culture and become involved in the church community, and in social transformation. The educational process gives priority to experience, participation, and transformation.

The accumulated literature now makes it possible to identify a growing body of knowledge that is essential for effective youth ministry and for defining the role of the youth minister. This knowledge provides an important context for the question to be studied in this research project: What is the role of the adult youth minister in youth ministry?

Review of Related Literature

The literature studied in this section deals with the role of the adult minister working with youth. In the American youth ministry, young people are usually considered as two distinct groups: adolescents (13-18 years) and young adults (19-25).

In a research project of this nature, it is important to consider the body of related literature that already exists on this topic. A body of cross-cultural literature was presented. "There have been important developments in theology, especially theology from Latin America, that now needs to be incorporated into the literature of youth ministry" (Warren, 1986, p. 30). The literature can situate an investigation so that it is more focused and capable of producing new knowledge and insights. The great geniuses of society advanced our knowledge because they were able to stand on the shoulders of giants and so could see further afield.

This review does not claim to be exhaustive. The focus of our study has been limited to both general and research literature directly related to the role of the youth minister. As mentioned earlier, the literature on this topic is scarce.

Non-empirical Studies

An awareness of necessary qualities and skills for the youth minister is an important first step for role performance. A comparison can be made with the performance in a play: "The **actor** performs well if he knows the script and he accepts the direction provided him by the director, the other actors, and the

audience. In addition, of course, his talent for action is important" (Bentley, 1968, p. 72).

Cavanaugh (1993) outlines the qualities that define the role of an effective adult youth minister. Self-knowledge is important; otherwise, "hidden motives that deal with the needs to acquire power, prestige, attention, romance, control, and the needs to be perceived as competent, holy, intelligent, attractive, clever, successful" will dominate (p. 100). Healthy adult youth ministers, according to the author, need to receive affection and give affection. A healthy self provides the adult youth minister with good energy. A healthy spirituality is also important.

Vecchi and Prellezo (1986) strengthen Cavanaugh's thesis by emphasizing the internal maturity and unity expected of the adult working with youth. The authors point out that only people who are profoundly unified in themselves and rich in values can establish an enriching dialogue with young people, transmitting to them a human and Christian message that is really liberating.

For this reason, as Watson (1960) points out, youth ministers are not on the same level as the young people they serve. They are not overgrown playmates for the youth in the church. Their job is "not primarily to entertain youth but to develop them in Christian service and personality" (pp. 25-26).

The youth minister needs to be a team person. Westling (1983) discusses the skills necessary for working on a team. Some of the topics covered are: why a team must have one leader, how a team can act with a common purpose, clarifying role relationships, and maintaining the team concept, development of a philosophy of ministry that is "owned" by the entire church.

Nuechterlein (1989) complements the work of Westling, in his study of key topics for becoming an integrated team member: role expectations, different personality traits, self-esteem, power styles, and communication skills.

Recruiting, training, and caring for volunteers is a central task of the effective youth minister. Cristie (1987) explores some of the necessary skills for achieving success in this area.

Two Protestant authors, Burns and Cambell (1989), emphasize other aspects of the youth minister's role: vocation, accountability, self-confidence, brokenness, vision, and flexibility.

Empirical Studies

Almost all the research done on the role of the adult working with young people has been by non church organizations. An example is the pioneering studies in the area of urban youth done by Stanford university under the leadership Dr. Milbrey McLaughlin. McLaughlin, Irby, and Langman (1994) relate the result of a 5-year research project in the role of neighborhood organizations in the lives of urban youth. The challenge faced by these organizations is revealed by a startling statistic. Between 60% and 80% of the young people in the United States are judged to be at serious risk of never reaching productive maturity. The research focused on organizations in three different urban areas--organizations judged successful by local youth themselves. Six are selected from a total of 60 neighborhood-based organizations. The authors describe the adult youth ministers who lead these successful organizations.

> What we found in each of the six was a love for youth, a commitment to serve them, a strong sense of mission, and a passion for some particular set of activities. In short, the genius and success of these leaders lies less in <u>what</u> they do more than in <u>how</u> they do it. (p. xviii)

The study concludes that the vision, drive, and commitment of a single adult are the deciding factor in each success story. In these organizations young people become aware of the issues facing youth and of their ability to take action. The organizations provide the values, the support, the safety, and the competencies the young people needed before they could believe in their own futures. Adult youth ministers believe that young people can be successful given the right direction and support system. They do not so much serve young people as make them active agents in the enrichment of their own lives. They design settings to engage young people in the types of learnings and experiences that will transform their lives. Adult youth ministers distinguish between managing the organization and leading it and are dedicated to both.

Heath and McLaughlin (1993) point out that youth need situations in which they can interact with adults to avoid being encapsulated in impoverished peer cultures. The authors point out:

> Young people are in desperate need of the things that adults can provide, but they learn from the street and family to trust no one but

themselves. The most essential contribution that youth organizations can make to the lives of young people is that of a caring adult who recognizes a young person as an individual and who serves as a mentor, coach, gentle but firm critic, and advocate. (p. 61)

An important aspect of the role description of the adult youth minister should be to empower young people. In 1992, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development urged that special attention be given to the out-of-school experiences of young people. The study suggests the need to build networks of youth organizations.

> that incorporated the interests, energies, and ideas of young people, and that they be given roles of responsibility within these organizations--teaching others, caring for facilities, and planning activities, finances, and governance of youth groups. . . . Such organizations should establish young people at their center--as resources. (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993, p. 4)

A national study (Search Institute, 1984) carried out by Search Institute and 13 national youth-serving organizations concludes that there is no magic formula for forming youth leaders apart from giving young people an opportunity to exercise leadership.

> Programs should take seriously young adolescents' growing need for autonomy and self-determination. Programs should provide young adolescents with experience in making decisions, setting rules, and shaping program content, while at the same time making the limits of this freedom explicit. (p. 381)

The adult youth minister is a type of parent. Steinberg (1993) examines the scientific research done on three types of parenting: (a) indulgent, (b) indifferent, and (c) authoritative. Research has shown that the third type, authoritative parenting, has produced the most responsible and mature young people. The latter is understood as a style of parenting characterized by warmth, dialogue, clear goals, and the development of self-direction. This model may offer useful elements to clarify the role and relation of the adult youth minister to the young people with whom he or she works.

The difficulty of the adult youth minister remaining on the wave length of young people is illustrated by the results of a sociological study conducted on Spanish youth and described by Racionero and Martinez (1983). The authors conclude that differences today are not only between adults and youth but also between different generations of young people. This change creates the modern phenomenon of successive generations of youth. A youth generation today can change within a short space of 4 years.

Garland (1990) presents the results of a survey done among 468 youth from 25 Conservative Baptist churches in Southern California. Some of the implications of the study help to clarify the role expectations of the youth minister: the need for continuing education among youth workers, setting distinctive ministry objectives, and helping youth integrate their faith.

A rich source of information on the training of men and women for the skills necessary as youth ministers can be found in the doctoral thesis of William Cavender Hackett (1992). The thesis is entitled: Designing an Effective Youth Ministry Concentration at Southeastern College. Hackett studied the effectiveness of the course over a period of 12 years and explained many of the strategies used. The research revealed a major concern with the personal growth and development of the youth pastor. The program was seen as offering a good mixture of youth ministry basics and pastoral teaching. The emphasis given to supervised field training and concern for practical training was also seen as positive.

A rare doctoral thesis in the area of Catholic youth ministry was undertaken by Riley (1990). The thesis is entitled: Welcome, Nurture, Challenge: A Program of Collaboration in Youth Ministry Involving a Catholic High School and Four Catholic Parishes. The project sought to integrate students of a Catholic high school into the life of their parishes, through the school's active support of parish youth retreats, through encouragement of student involvement in the ministries of the parish, and through providing school time and space for interaction of the parish staffs and their youth on a quarterly basis. A pre- and post-project self-report questionnaire administered to the student participants concluded that the project was successful. The study concluded that this model would not be successful in parishes that do not have a youth minister available to work with young people.

Conclusion

A number of important conclusions emerge from the review of literature undertaken. These conclusions will serve as a basis for this research.

A growing body of organized knowledge is an important aid for clarifying the role of adult youth ministers and energizing them with a vision that lifts them beyond the immediate tasks at hand. However, while there is a body of knowledge produced by the secular and pastoral sciences that can be useful for determining the role of the adult Catholic youth minister in youth ministry, almost all the empirical research located by this writer has been done by secular sciences or by Protestant churches. There is lacking a similar study of the role of the <u>Catholic</u> youth minister. A further difficulty is the lack of cross-cultural research that compares the role of the youth minister in different countries. This research project aims at addressing these two lacunae.

Theoretical Rationale

The purpose of this study of the role of the adult youth minister in working with young people is to investigate the following questions:

1. What are the personal role expectations of youth ministers?

2. What are the role expectations that others have of the youth minister?

3. What are the role expectations that have been successfully realized?

4. What are the areas of conflict among these expectations?

5. What are the differences between the role expectations of youth ministers in the United States and in Latin America?

There is a dearth of empirical study on the role of the adult youth minister. There is no general theory that touches on all aspects of the question. It is rare to find an entire book dedicated to this theme. The existing literature can be found in chapters of books on youth ministry and other related subjects. The lack of clarity is a key problem for youth ministers. When role expectations are unclear, there is decreased effectiveness and productivity, as well as personal frustration (Sarbin & Allen, 1968).

<u>Role Theory</u>

The literature on role theory throws light on important strategies for improving the effectiveness of adult youth ministers. Role theory had its origins in the theories presented by Kurt Lewin (1948, 1951). E. J. Thomas

and Biddle (1966) point out that it was only in the 1950s that a sizable body of empirical literature developed. Role theory has been defined by Biddle (1979) as "a science concerned with the study of behaviors that are characteristic of persons within contexts and with various processes that presumably produce, explain, or are affected by those behaviors" (p. 17). Role theory concerns one of the most important features of social life: characteristic behavior patterns, or roles. It explains roles by presuming that persons are members of social classes, hold positions, and have expectations for their own behaviors and those of others (Biddle, 1986).

Goffman (1959) was one of the first to point out that interpersonal behavior of people in organizations is analogous to the unfolding of a play on a stage. People have different roles to play in organizations. Each "actor" must interpret his or her role. The interpretation depends to some extent on what each one brings to the role. But it is also influenced by the fact that the role is played out within an organization. There is an interaction with other actors and with the audience. Role performance is also influenced by the expectations of those in charge. In the case of our research topic, the adult youth minister's behavior is shaped to some extent by the expectations of colleagues, by the youth ministry organization, and by other reference groups.

There are, however, some weaknesses of role theory that we need to take into account for this study. Sculhein (1989) points out that while role theory was seen as one of the most promising theories in the behavioral sciences in the 1950s and 1960s, it has both weaknesses and strengths. Role theory's weakness lies in the multiplicity of models and its strength in its ability to provide situation-specific connections. A further limitation of role theory is seen by Connell (1979) as its inability to explicate the constraints created by social structures. However, we cannot expect too much of any one theory. Other theories of social analysis are necessary in the context of youth ministry for analyzing the influence of socioeconomic, cultural, and political structures on the quality of life in the wider society. These theories complement the findings of a role theory study but are outside the scope of this research project.

The focus in this study is rather the situation-specific connections within the church that clarify the role of youth ministers and role theory does this well. Owens (1991) points out that role theory has been used extensively by reflective practitioners and researchers in many kinds of organizations to

understand and predict behavior of people in organizations. A number of key concepts are used in role theory analysis:

Role. The different positions held by people in an organization have certain expectations of behavior built into them--expectations held by both the person himself or herself and the onlookers. "Role is a psychological concept dealing with behavior enactment arising from interaction with other human beings" (Owens, 1991, p. 63).

Role expectation. Role expectation refers to the expectations one person has of the other and is a central concept in the study of the role of the youth minister. Role expectations are involved in role ambiguity and role conflict, both of which are important in youth work. Sarbin and Allen (1968, p. 497) explain that role expectations are composed of the rights and obligations of the one occupying a position in relation to those who occupy other positions in the social system. The authors point out that role expectations are more than ideas. The person is expected to put these ideas into action in a certain manner, as well as at the right time and place. Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, and Snock (1964) stress that expectations may also deal with personal styles, how the person should believe, or how the person should act in relationship to others.

Role ambiguity. Role ambiguity is an aspect of role expectation. A lack of clearly defined roles leads to role ambiguity (Bass, 1981, p. 209). Ambiguity arises when the role description has contradictory elements or is vague. "Frequently, those who must perform their roles under the conditions of ambiguity and tension . . . develop dysfunctional ways of coping with the situation" (Owens, 1991, p. 64). One such dysfunctional way may be the avoidance of any discussion of the problem. "Vagueness, pomposity, complex structure, clichés, and overly obscure vocabulary in communication are popular avoidance techniques" (Boguslaw, 1965, pp. 170-177).

Role conflict. Role conflict is related to role expectations. Smith (1973) points out that role conflict is present "when two or more role expectations interfere with each other or contradict one another altogether" (p. 27). There are many sources of role conflict. Two persons, for example, may not be able to establish a satisfactory role relationship. The author calls attention to the fact that role conflict and role ambiguity "are the heart of the most difficult problems that the minister faces" (p. 15). Tensions can produce loss of self-confidence and job dissatisfaction. The situation is aggravated, as Smith points

out, by the fact that the minister must fulfill a wide variety of roles, and they must be played in a highly visible position.

    <u>Summary</u>. Role theory is an important tool for evaluating the work of adult youth ministers and correcting lacunas. Its concepts will be directly related to the task of clarifying the research question: What is the role of the <u>youth minister</u> in youth ministry? Role expectations are crucial to improving role performance. When role ambiguity and role conflict are not properly dealt with, role performance can likewise be seriously affected.

<div align="center">Limitations of the Study</div>

    This research project is limited to adult youth ministers affiliated with the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, due to the many similarities between Catholic and Protestant youth ministry, both Catholic and non-Catholic authors are quoted throughout this study. Protestant churches have been working longer with youth ministry than the Catholic Church as the latter has traditionally channeled most of its material and human resources into Catholic schools. Youth ministry is a relatively new form of ministry for Catholics. Consequently, empirical studies in this area have usually been conducted by persons connected to Protestant churches.

    The researcher chose to interview the more successful adult youth ministers as these were the most likely to contribute to a clear and dynamic theory on the role of the adult youth minister. As these latter were in contact with the less successful adult youth ministers, it was felt they should also be capable of indicating the underlying causes of their lack of success. Nevertheless, the successful are unable to reveal completely the perspective of the unsuccessful, since they are, to some extent, outsiders looking in. This is a limitation of this option. But, since qualitative research is more concerned with transferability rather than with <u>generalizability</u> to the target population, this is not a major concern. Seeing what is happening is more important than being able to predict and control. The procedures adopted beforehand do not determine validity. People who read the results are invited to judge their validity for their own unique situations (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1990).

    A guided interview was used to collect data. A limitation to this study was the impossibility of using observation of the interviewees in their work situation as a data collection method, since the Latin American participants

were interviewed in a context where they were far from home. Bias can occur in the interviews through the participants' desire to please or cover up negative aspects of their ministry. An effort was made, however, to limit distortions of objective truth by skillful use of questions that would reveal contradictions and thus challenge the interviewee to present a more objective account of his (her) reality. Since the researcher has much experience in the area of youth ministry, there was also the danger of imposing his own theories rather than letting the theories emerge from the data. Being aware of this danger was already an important step in the effort to avoid this trap. Regular briefings with this researcher's mentor were also an important strategy for guaranteeing the authenticity of the research process. Also participants are free to verify the affirmations put forward in their names.

<p style="text-align:center">Significance of the Study</p>

Pastoral work with young people is a critical issue for the church today. This age group represents the greatest concentration of physical, psychological, emotional, and intellectual growth in the life of the human person. It is a stage of human life when people are most open to formation and to taking decisive steps that can determine future life direction. As people grow older, change becomes more difficult. This is also a privileged period for forming Christian leaders: leaders who can renew the church, society, and modern culture.

In parishes where there is no specific work with this age group, the young people have disappeared from the life of the church. In Sunday Masses, young people are largely absent and only a small number has any link with the institutional church. In the United States alone 44% of Catholic young people get no formal religious instruction at all (NCEA, 1986, p. 2). The crisis is especially acute with regard to vocations to the priesthood. A recent study presents the hard evidence of a 40% reduction in the number of diocesan priests from 35,000 in the year 1966 in America to 21,000 in the year 2005. It also projects the Catholic population expanding from 45 million to 74 million during that 40-year period (Schoenherr & Young, 1993).

Properly trained and motivated adult youth ministers hold the key to this crisis. In a study of six successful organizations for inner-city youth, McLaughlin et al. (1994) conclude: "In each successful organization, it is the

vision, drive, and commitment of a single adult that makes much of the difference" (p. 3).

Clarification brought about by role theory is a key factor in conflict resolution and in preparing competent youth ministers. Blizzard (1966) points out that:

> Role conflicts are a basic, root problem of the ministerial profession. . . .
> Parish ministers who desire to be effective in these times are aware that there is much ambivalence about the many roles they are expected to perform. . . . Role ambiguity, therefore, is inherent in the profession. (p. 65)

There is much confusion of roles. Rogers (1983) explains:
> The adult youth minister of youth in many churches today is a misunderstood individual who is seeking to endure a bout with frustration. For years the adult youth minister . . . has been wrestling with the demands of conscientiously helping to equip youth spiritually, emotionally, socially, and psychologically for the world in which they live. At the same time, however, he has been called on to provide a structured activity program that will draw crowds of youth and keep them "out of trouble." (p. 49)

Campolo (1984) paints a vivid picture of the role confusion in the minds of many adult youth ministers:
> Far worse is the situation where adult youth ministers find themselves seduced into being merely recreational directors who entertain the kids with wholesome activities that keep them off the streets and off drugs. These youth workers struggle to hold on to their visions while exhausting themselves in a host of activities that have nothing to do with translating their vision into reality. Such a loss of integrity debilitates these youth workers so completely that they get out of youth work, if for no other reason than to save themselves. (p. 6)

Despite the enormity of the challenge facing the church, and the key role of the adult youth minister in resolving this crisis, there has been almost no scientific research done in this area. A search through the literature as well as

dissertation abstracts did not uncover any research on the role of the Catholic youth minister. While a significant number of dissertations were located on the topic of youth ministry in Protestant churches, only one was related to the role of youth minister. The review of literature reveals that almost all the empirical studies useful for working with young people have been done by secular authors and within the context of parallel disciplines of education, psychology, and sociology. For the above reasons this study was designed to address the need for empirical study of the role of the Catholic youth minister in youth ministry.

This study is also important for its international aspect. Contrasts were made between the role expectations, role performance, and role clarification of the United States adult youth ministers and their Latin American counterparts. A library research conducted by this writer was unable to locate any other study of this nature. This researcher believes that the contrasts, comparisons, and different models that emerged will add significantly to the existing knowledge on this issue in youth ministry.

In summary, this research project sought to offer a unique contribution in clarifying the role of the adult Catholic youth minister in youth ministry. While there are some documents, articles, and chapters in books on this subject, these are mainly exhortational in nature. No empirical research has been located concerning the Catholic youth minister. The international aspect of this research--the contrast between perspectives, strategies, and visions of United States youth ministers and their Latin American counterparts was also a new initiative that promises to add knowledge to this field. In this study, concepts of role theory were applied to the role of the adult youth minister in light of the responses to the interview guide.

Organization of Dissertation

Chapter I is an overall view of the research project. The chapter begins with the background and purpose of the study. The research question is presented with its theoretical rationale. The design is set out and the significance and limitations of the study are stated. The review of literature is divided into general and research literature related to the role expectations for the adult youth minister.

Chapter II deals with the methodology and research design. The research strategy employed a qualitative research approach that had the in-depth interview as its principal method of data collection. The interview guide and interview process are clarified. The stages and methods of data analysis are discussed.

Chapter III organizes the raw data and presents the findings as related to the research questions.

Chapter IV discusses the findings and makes pertinent recommendations based on the experience of conducting the study.

CHAPTER II
METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Questions

This chapter describes the research strategy and methods, the participants and their selection, data collecting tools, and the procedures of data analysis, and reporting.

This study focused on the role of the Catholic adult youth minister in youth ministry. Within this general topic the research focused on following questions:

1. What are the personal role expectations of youth ministers?
2. What role expectations do others have of the youth minister?
3. What are the role expectations that have been successfully realized?
4. What are the areas of conflict among these expectations?
5. What are the differences between the role expectations of youth ministers in the United States and in Latin America?

Research Strategy and Methods

Qualitative research was considered the most appropriate strategy for gathering and analyzing the necessary data to answer the above questions.

Qualitative inquiry starts from a methodological understanding that the subject matter of social and human sciences is radically different from that of the physical sciences. Human behavior cannot be controlled and quantified, and replicated in the same way as the physical sciences. Qualitative inquiry considers the subjective elements involved in the analysis of human behavior. Unlike quantitative inquiry, it does not look for theories that are unchangeable over time and are true everywhere. Rather, "the ultimate goal of this kind of inquiry is to portray the complex pattern of what is being studied in sufficient depth and detail so that one who has not experienced it can understand it" (Ary et al., 1990, p. 445). Qualitative inquiry was particularly suited to our study of the role of the adult minister in working with young people since the nature of

the data is so rich, complex, and highly subjective that strict "laboratory" control is not possible. The study seeks to construct patterns through the analysis and resynthesis of constituent parts and to analyze the relationships between events and external factors.

Qualitative inquiry admits that inquirers' values and life options may play a part in selecting the topics or issues to be studied. This is an important characteristic for a study of the role of the youth minister as the very nature of his or her work is value laden. Inquirers can have different perspectives and, therefore, options, depending on factors such as social class, political vision, sex, religion. Hidden and unconscious options can influence the issue chosen, the methodology used, and the facts selected. "In our day, the values commitment implicit in the choice of method is often unrecognized, even by the investigators themselves. This makes it even more dangerous to treat methodological issues without an understanding or concern for the specific substantive questions being asked" (Shulman, 1981, p. 26). Complete neutrality is a myth. Each person approaches reality with a prior vision and value system. Youth ministry, which is the context in which the adult minister works, is a clear value system and pastoral priorities. The preferential option for the poor, for example, is one such priority. Qualitative inquiry avoids the option of quantitative research of presupposing an unreal type of neutrality, which in fact does not exist. An important part of this research project was making explicit and contrasting the visions, the values, and the pastoral options of youth ministers.

Concerning the inquiry itself, however, procedures were designed to work with objective facts and evidence and avoid bias, and other subjective factors, insofar as this was humanly possible.

Critical Aspects of Qualitative Inquiry

There are some procedures of qualitative inquiry that this research used:

Context and Natural Setting

Proponents of this approach are very conscious of the need to consider social, historical, political, and cultural influences related to the issue being studied. This study was done in a context that was naturally occurring and not something that was set up artificially. Different factors that exercise influence

on the role of youth ministers were considered. The approach sought to be holistic.

This researcher gathered data by talking to people, observing their behavior, reading written records, and taking notes. The field method used was that of interviewing. Notes were kept of personal reflections and insights. Guba and Lincoln (1981) describe the power of this strategy:

> The ability to tap into the experience of others in their own natural language, while utilizing their value and belief frameworks, is virtually impossible without face to face verbal interaction with them. (p. 155)

While quantitative inquirers start with specific hypotheses to be tested, qualitative inquirers rarely have such clear theories about where they want to go. The design of this study emerged as the study unfolded (Ary et al., 1990). This writer was not sure what he was going to learn as much depends on what he was going to read, hear, and observe during the investigation. Methods were adjusted as the research advanced, so the inquiry could only be characterized beforehand in a general way, beginning with a general research question: What is the role of the youth minister, in Youth ministry? Within this general question different aspects of the adult's role were investigated.

This investigation, therefore, was an effort to listen to the opinions, beliefs, and understandings of the "experts" in the field of youth ministry: adult laity, sisters, and priests who have been successful in this specialized pastoral work. Interpreting these data, the researcher sought to build a "grounded theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) for understanding the role of adults in youth work.

As the inquiry evolved, the investigator developed tentative working hypotheses or questions based on his observations and insights. These were more focused and refined as the study progressed. Hypotheses were tested through a variety of procedures.

Establishing Trustworthiness

The credibility of data gathered was related to the seriousness of procedures, time spent, and debriefing with the inquirer's mentor and peers. Authenticity depended on presenting the incidents of the material on the role of the youth minister as found. Sometimes direct quotations were necessary to allow the reader to verify the comparisons made. Control was instituted at each step of the data collection. The author kept analytic memos for his own reference to preserve the integrity of statements and to preserve important data from his observation: body language, context of interview, and other significant data. Credibility depended on the report being presented so that arguments could be painstakingly examined. A trail of materials that documents how the study was conducted was important as it can be examined by an independent third-party auditor.

This researcher conducted the inquiry so that the gathering of data and their interpretation took place simultaneously. This was especially true of the United States stage of the interviews. As data came in, the investigator developed hypotheses (hunches) and sought to confirm them with new data. A theory of the role of the youth minister in youth ministry was developed inductively from the systematized experience.

The final report is strongly narrative, using the concrete language of those interviewed, describing contexts and situations, and depicting differences and tensions.

Sampling Technique

In quantitative research the people being researched are referred to as "subjects" since the researcher's objective is to exercise maximum control over the subject. However, as this research was conducted with a qualitative methodology, the youth ministers being researched are often referred to as "participants," since they are active agents with the researcher in building new knowledge with regard to the church's work with young people.

For the purpose of this study, 21 successful youth ministers were selected to be interviewed. This researcher had originally planned to select 20 participants, but since a married couple was included, the number was increased to 21. The selection was made on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Length of experience (at least 3 years), ability to work with young people over a period of time, and a general consensus in the diocese about who were the successful youth ministers were some of the criteria used.

2. National documents of the United States youth ministry and Latin American documents (Conferência Geral do Episcopado Latino-americano, 1994; National Federation, 1990) were also used to establish criteria for discerning the more successful candidates.

3. The opinions of influential gatekeepers were considered. For the United States interviews, the diocesan youth ministers for the three dioceses were requested to indicate an initial list of successful adult youth ministers to be interviewed. This procedure did not work with one of the dioceses so other people with knowledge of the diocese were contacted to indicate likely candidates. The Latin American youth ministers were selected from the participants of a 5-week course organized by the youth sector of the Latin American Bishops' Conference (Conferência Geral do Episcopado Latino-americano). This course was held in Bogotá, Colombia from September 18 to October 20, 1995. The coordinator of the course, Fr. Horacio Penengo, was the Latin American youth minister for the bishop's conference (CELAM) and traveled extensively, coordinating youth activities on the continent. Fr. Horacio agreed to act as gatekeeper and indicate an initial list of people to be interviewed. Fr. Penengo left this position some months before the course and his successor, Dr. Paulo Moreno, who replaced him, helped indicate other suitable names for interviewing.

4. The opinion of interviewees served as a further criterion for selecting those who were more successful and influential. The suitability of the gatekeepers' initial lists was cross checked as the interviews were conducted with different interviewees. Other contacts were also asked to evaluate the initial list. The "snowball technique" (Babbie, 1986; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Seidman, 1991)--people being interviewed are asked to indicate other candidates--was used to locate additional candidates.

5. The Latin American participants had an additional criterion for judging the "successful" candidates to be interviewed: the fact of having been selected for the course. The Latin American course is expensive as it lasts for 5 weeks and involves traveling to another country. Expenses of participants are

usually paid for by their respective dioceses, so there was a presupposition that only the more capable youth ministers would be sent.

6. As Babbie (1986) pointed out, in certain situations it was also appropriate for the researcher to use judgmental sampling based on his knowledge of the population being studied.

The list was flexible as the interpretation of data during the collection period sometimes suggested changes for the remaining interviews. A total number of 21 people were interviewed. The point of saturation-—when little new information was forthcoming--was an important criterion for ending with this number.

Care was taken to include a variety of experiences so that findings would reflect what was going on and thus give greater validity to the research. The participants in the sample included lay persons (volunteer and paid), religious, male, and female candidates.

Data Collection

The in-depth interview. Spradley (1979) classifies ethnographic interviewing as involving two distinct but complementary processes: developing rapport and eliciting information. Once rapport is established, it is easier to penetrate emotional barriers that camouflage important information. Rapport was facilitated by the fact the interviewer has worked for over 25 years with youth ministry in Latin America and is well known. Adults who work with young people were also more approachable than people in other research projects.

The initial question was important in this process. A descriptive question, according to Spradley, is a useful way of starting the conversation and keeping the informant freely talking. Prepared questions were elaborated as a flexible tool for soliciting information. During the interview, however, many of the prepared questions had to be rephrased to make clear the information being solicited. Sometimes new questions were formulated based on insights of previous interviews. Mishler (1986) remarks that "one way an interview develops is through mutual reformulation and specification of questions, by which they take on particular and context-bound shades of meaning" (p. 53). More probing questions were necessary when the required information was not forthcoming.

Each interview was a learning experience--no two were the same. The interviewer sought to be flexible and to change preconceived ideas and plans to meet new and unexpected situations. He sought to have his theories open to being modified by the concrete praxis. The truth of the theory is decided by the praxis. The unexpected can be a tool for widening horizons and questioning preconceived ideas, and over rigid analyses.

Interviewing was the primary data collecting instrument. Some document analysis was also used to deepen the scope of the interviewing technique.

Both methods of data collection complemented each other and are a way of validating data. The interview probed the ideas, experiences, successes, failures, emotions, and attitudes of the person involved in the topic under discussion. The skillful interviewer digs out the gold that lies underneath the surface. Some document analysis was another way of checking the data furnished by the informant. Printed material and documents used for youth work also revealed additional information, leadership style, values, and philosophy. The printed word is usually carefully reasoned and organized; the interview is not necessarily so. The sources of data were not seen as separate. The document analysis sometimes indicated questions for subsequent interviews. Both methods of data collection were interwoven in such a way that together they paint a more global and objective picture of the truth.

Formal observation in the work situation as a method of collecting data was not used in this research project as the Latin American participants were not interviewed in their own countries, but rather during a 5-week Latin American course.

Development of the interview guide. The guide is a list of questions to steer the interview and guarantee that all relevant aspects of the question are covered. An initial interview guide was prepared for a pilot study.

In Spring of 1994, two separate 90-minute pilot interviews were conducted with two adult youth ministers to test the list of questions. On each occasion, the interview guide (Appendix A) was refined. The questions were also submitted to two experts in the field of qualitative research for further refinement.

Interview process. For the purpose of this study, tape recordings of the interviews were made and listened to during the latter phase of the

interpretation of data. The original proposal was not to transcribe the recordings but rather to back them up with copious notes. This interviewer, however, later decided to transcribe all the interviews in order not to lose the richness of detail and the concrete language of grassroot experience. Interviews varied between 1 to 2 hours, depending on the availability and content of the participants.

Initial contacts were made with candidates by telephone to explain the purpose of the research project and to arrange a suitable time and place for each interview. A letter (Appendix C) followed, confirming the date and time of the interview, presenting the researcher, and explaining the focus of the research project. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the study for the participant's own work. Contributions would be kept strictly confidential.

Latin American candidates were interviewed during a 5-week Latin American annual course for youth ministers. Each person to be interviewed received a similar letter beforehand, presenting the researcher and explaining the research project. The Latin American youth minister and coordinator of the course agreed to act as gatekeeper.

The original plan was to ask participants to complete a personal form with such relevant data as name, gender, years in youth ministry, educational level, profession, religious or lay, diocese, state, and country. This plan was abandoned for a strategy of asking for some of this information during the interview itself or writing it down on separate memo pads.

Analysis of Data

Miles and Huberman (1984) suggest three concurrent processes for analyzing data: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The first step therefore was one of <u>reducing</u> the large quantity of raw data by selecting, simplifying, and focusing the material at hand. A second step was one of <u>displaying</u> the data in the form of narrative text. Charts were also used. A third concurrent step was one of <u>conclusion drawing and verification</u>.

As categories and concepts were grouped together, the first sense of a structure for writing began to emerge. A set of categories and concepts then logically coalesced into a chapter.

Ball (1991) points out that as these processes of sorting and thinking about the data continue, new categories are created or initial categories are subdivided or amalgamated. If this is being done, as it should when data collection is still going on, the categories and the prepositional relationships between categories can be tested via specific data collection tasks. Ball gives an example:

> If change seems such a crucial factor in revealing or disrupting existing patterns of social relationships I should try to interview more people from schools that are in the throes of dramatic change. (p. 65)

At the beginning of the United States phase of the interviews, for example, an additional question on the way the participants work with young people in the local community was added to the interview guide. This question was added as the researcher realized that although he was familiar with the approach to youth work on a grassroots level in Latin America, he lacked the same familiarity in the United States.

Summary

The study of the role of the adult youth minister in youth ministry was exploratory and descriptive. While interviewing was the primary tool of data collection, some documentary analysis was also used to deepen the scope of the investigation and guarantee greater trustworthiness. Data were reduced, displayed, and conclusions drawn and verified in keeping with qualitative methods.

CHAPTER III
PRESENTATION AND INITIAL ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This study was designed to research the role of adults who work with young people in a church setting. The research aimed at clarifying role expectations, role conflict, and role performance, and at discovering agreement and differences between the roles of the United States and Latin youth ministers.

Qualitative inquiry, using in-depth interview, was the primary data gathering technique. Special questions were included to provide a profile of the people interviewed.

In writing these last two chapters, this writer has tried to deal with the question of inclusive language in a way that would facilitate the flow of ideas. For that reason such clumsy phrases as "he and she" and "her and his" have been avoided and a simple strategy of using the feminine pronouns in this chapter, and the masculine ones in the last chapter has been adopted.

This chapter is organized under the following headings: (a) a profile of the participants compiled from informal observation and information given in the interviews, (b) the findings that are grouped around personal role expectations, role expectations of others, role conflict, role performance, and contrasts between the models presented by the United States and Latin American participants, and (c) a summary of the principal themes that emerge in each section.

Presentation of Findings
Profile of the Participants

The data selected from the interviews and informal observation provide the following portrait of the participants. All the candidates in both the United States and Latin America have a university level education. A total of 11 participants were interviewed from three dioceses in the eastern part of the

United States. A total of 10 candidates were interviewed from Latin America from the following countries: Cuba, Argentina, El Salvador, Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil, Chile, Venezuela, and Guatemala. In the interests of anonymity names are withheld when quotations are used. In order to get the perspective of three important groups in the church, priests, sisters, and lay people, a balance was maintained in the selection of candidates. The Latin American participants had an unusually small number of women as priority was given to other criteria: the balance among the three above mentioned categories, the most successful youth ministers, and the inclusion of a large number of countries. This situation also reflects the Latin American context where women are few in number on the diocesan or national levels of youth ministry. In the opinion of this writer the imbalance does not effect the results in any significant manner.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 give a clearer picture of the candidates who were interviewed. Table 1 displays the religious status of participants in the church.

Table 1

Religious Status of Participants Within the Church

	Priests	Sisters	Lay Persons
United States	3	3	5
Latin America	4	3	3

Table 2 displays the age distribution. In general the United States participants are older.

The search for suitable candidates and the interviews themselves revealed an interesting contrast. The United States youth ministry is largely dependent on adult lay ministers. Very few priests and sisters work with youth ministry. Priests who start with youth ministry after ordination move on to some other

Table 2

Age Distribution of Participants in the United States and Latin America

Age	Men	Women	Total
Age Distribution in the United States			
20s			
30s	1	1	2
40s	1	2	3
50s	1	2	3
60s	2	1	3
Age Distribution in Latin America			
20s	3		3
30s	3	2	5
40s	1		1
50s		1	1
60s			

ministries after the first few years. One United States priest notes that "No priest who has been ordained 5 years in our diocese is still going strong with youth ministry." In Latin America, on the contrary, most youth ministers are priests. The number of sisters is also growing. Lay adult ministers are very few.

The length of experience that most of the interviewees have had in working with young people is significant. Some, in fact, became involved with youth groups as teenagers. Table 3 illustrates the length of experience of those interviewed.

Table 3

Length of Experience of Participants in Both the United States and Latin America

Over (Years)	Participants
5	3
10	5
15	2
20	3
25	4
30	4

The participants from the United States work in a variety of socioeconomic settings. Some work in relatively well off middle-class parishes, while others minister in working class or even crime and drug-infected inner-city areas. During one interview, for example, the interviewee pointed across the street to an apartment where many people were coming and

going. They were people dealing with drugs. A $79 million drug operation had been busted by the federal police weeks before, yet business seemed to be continuing as usual. Before the interview this writer accidentally locked his keys in his car and was about to approach a nearby garage for help when the interviewee warned him that the garage was a front for drugs and did not really work with cars.

The political background of the Latin American youth ministry is significant. Almost all the Latin American countries have emerged from military dictatorships within the last decade, and they now enjoy relatively stable civilian governments. However there are differences. Guatemala is one of the more recent countries to adopt a democratic government after a military dictatorship that claimed the lives of 150,000 of its citizens. El Salvador has had an equally bloody recent past. Cuba is a special case where, only in recent years, has the church enjoyed sufficient freedom to organize its pastoral ministry. In contrast participants from the United States have worked in a country with a long experience of democracy. There is a further difference. While the people interviewed in the United States all came from urban dioceses, the participants in Latin America have worked in dioceses with both rural and urban populations.

The job of youth ministry is more clearly seen as a recognized profession in the United States church. A youth ministry magazine called Group publishes a yearly survey of youth ministers' salaries in both the Catholic and Protestant churches. The 1995 survey ("The 1995 Youth Workers' Salary Survey," 1995) deals with such items as average base salary, housing allowance, professional supplies, car/travel allowance, contribution to Social Security, health insurance, pension/retirement contribution, continuing education, and paid vacation days. The average salary package for 1995 was $25,914. A comparison is made with the salaries of other professions: assistant professor at public university, teacher, human resources director, newspaper reporter, librarian, public relations accountant executive, social worker, paralegal, licensed practical nurse, administrative assistant customer service representative.

With the exception of the priests interviewed almost all the United States participants are full-time youth ministers and receive a salary for their work. Especially significant was the presence of older adult lay ministers who

have made this ministry their professional option in life and are raising families on the income that they receive from this work. One youth minister gives a breakdown of expectations in her diocese:

> In the diocese we suggested that a youth minister should not be paid less than $20,000 a year. We did a breakdown: an apartment on Long Island for a person living alone, cannot be gotten for less than $600. And your take home on 20,000 is probably 12,000. Then you have a car, part payment. If you want to hire a person with experience you have to start with no less than 30,000 to 35,000 to hire a coordinator. If you pay less you get a youth minister not a coordinator who does not have the skills; they will rap with the kids; they will take them to Great Adventure; they will bring them on a youth retreat. You don't know the advice they are giving to kids. Are they skilled in guidance? Are they skilled in adolescent development?

There is also a significant difference in dress. This researcher was surprised to find United States lay adult ministers dressing very formally (collar, tie, and suit). A sister suggested that the decision to dress in this way reflected a strong desire to be seen as a recognized professional. Such a formal style, however, would erect an insurmountable wall with youth in a Latin American context.

The Latin American scene is very different. All the participants are part time youth ministers. None of those interviewed receive a salary for their work with youth. All have to work at something else to keep themselves. They confess to knowing only two or three persons in their own countries who are salaried youth ministers. The lay people interviewed were all in their 1920s. Two of those had to divide their time between university studies, professional work, and youth ministry. One youth minister summarizes what would appear to the most common situation:

> Well, there are no salaried youth ministers. At least in our reality! They all depend on something else for their source of income. However, when we go to another diocese to help, if that diocese is in conditions to pay the fare for the trip, then they pay the fare. But with regard to our work, they don't pay us anything. We never receive anything, except when a diocese is in conditions to give a tip.

A common characteristic emerged from the interviews. Participants have a deep love for young people and see their work as a special vocation, a calling from God. There is a satisfaction in "seeing the fruits, the results of a particular thing, seeing people become involved and grow, seeing people knowing God more, being more involved." Their enthusiasm and wealth of knowledge and experience came across in their answers to the different questions. It was a pleasure and an inspiring experience to be able to drink in a fountain of wisdom built up during many years of trial and error, prayer and study. This researcher came away from the interviews with a feeling of awe and admiration for the dedication, idealism, and greatness of these people who go about their work with young people almost unnoticed. Although the youth work is probably the most difficult ministry in the church, they persevere because they like being with young people. They like their energy, their honesty, their forthright comments, and their idealism. One participant explained: "Where there are young people there is more energy."

Method of Presenting Data

The interview guide consisting of 16 questions was used as the data-gathering instrument. The questions sought to elicit information on role expectations, role ambiguity, role conflict, role clarification, and role performance by approaching these issues from different angles.

In keeping with the methodology of qualitative research the results are presented in narrative form. Rather than presenting the results of each question the findings have been grouped under the following headings: personal role expectations, role expectations of others, role conflict, and role performance. The differences between the United States and the Latin American perspectives are analyzed within each section.

An effort is made in this chapter to organize and present the findings without at the same time analyzing them. The aim is to leave the analysis for the last chapter. An exception is made within each section when a contrast is made between the findings that emerge from the data of the United States participants and those of the Latin American participants. Here it proved impossible to avoid an initial analysis since all comparisons demand analysis.

Personal Role Expectations

       This study examined the perspectives of people who exercise a leadership role and were relatively successful as youth ministers. The responses to the questions reveal a variety of expectations. These have been grouped around expectations concerning: (a) the youth minister, (b) the youth ministry, (c) content or theoretical basis, and (d) contrasts between the United States and Latin American participants. The expectations of the participants concerning each of these areas are presented in the following text.

       Expectations concerning the youth minister. The first theme, the expectations that emerge from the data concerning the person of the youth minister, are grouped around three subthemes: (a) personal qualities, (b) personal spirituality, and (c) awareness of being role models.

       The first subtheme, related to the person of the youth minister, has to do with the qualities required for this role. All the participants have expectations and are aware of the need to have certain personal qualities for the job. The adult needs to have some knowledge of youth culture and music and have a facility for talking to young people. She should have the ability to listen to them, not be judgmental, counsel them, and confirm them. A Brazilian youth minister points out:

> You have to be more ears than mouth. You have to listen more than to talk. I have often had to spend hours with a young person to allow him to say things. He was about to leave and because he had an opportunity to talk he remained in the group, and today he is still with us.

       Some make an important addition. The role of the adult is not just to counsel but also to share his own personal struggle with young people. A United States participant talks about

> being approachable to young people and accepting where they are at, and not trying to impose things directly on them. Nudging them on. I think they need guidance, and not completely hands off. But I think coming down hard doesn't work.

       But there are other qualities. Some talk about being yourself, not being phony, being honest with young people, admitting one's own sinfulness, telling them when they disappoint, showing gratitude for whatever they do, and above

all not blunting their enthusiasm. One youth minister points to the importance of having a happy, pleasant disposition as an essential element for living out the Christian vocation:

> I expect to really enjoy the ministry. I enjoy working with young people. They are very honest and forthright, and happy. You know we are supposed to be happy and joyful. Young people have more life. And Jesus said I have come that you may have life and have it in abundance.

The interviews point to the need for the youth minister to have a warm approach in relating to teens. To build relationships, however, demands time and presence. A balanced and mature personality is seen as central by several participants. The youth minister is also a factor of unity in conflictive situations.

An organization depends on organized people. A significant number of participants refer to the need for the youth minister to be an organized person to guarantee effective youth work. Others refer to the need for a proper filing system. One participant explains:

> I have a huge filing system. Everything I do is written down and put into the filing system. For example, we do a presentation of the living stations of the cross every year. Now it is the same program but it is different every year. I always say that you have to leave room for the Holy Spirit. I have phone numbers of people who can speak about certain things. If someone replaces me he can go into to the file and pick it out.

A second subtheme that surfaces from the data analysis and is related to the person of the youth minister is that of the personal spirituality expected of the youth minister. Spirituality is seen by all the participants as the determining factor in successful youth work. Spirituality is also the determining factor in perseverance. "Lack of prayer will show itself in time. The motivation just will not be there, the perseverance won't be there," is the opinion of one participant. To call young people into a relationship with Christ the youth minister must be himself in a relationship as well. Jesus Christ is the principal role model. One adult describes spirituality as the "youth minister's engine." Different aspects of spirituality are focused on by different people. Spirituality

includes a commitment to personal prayer. Some have the habit, before a talk or other commitment, of speaking to God and asking for help. Several place as central a deep understanding of scripture and the example and message of the gospel Jesus. "I believe there is a power in me" was the comment of one participant.

Different biblical images emerge from the data as important for participants as they define their spirituality. Jesus eating and drinking with sinners is an important image for one youth minister. The youth minister accepts others no matter what they have done. This does not mean always approving, but it does mean dealing with young people as Jesus would have dealt with them. Jesus accompanying the disciples on the way to Emmaus is another important biblical passage that motivates a number of participants. A United States youth minister considered as an important part of his spirituality "the willingness of Jesus to confront authority and power for the sake of those who have been hurt." A large number of participants see the identification with the marginalized as an important part of spirituality. Jesus does not necessarily require us to do great things, but rather small things like the widow who gave her two copper coins. It is spirituality that distinguishes the youth minister from being just another social worker. A priest from Cuba observed,

> If the center of your life is not spirituality, if it is not based on the strong demands of the beatitudes, of discipleship of Christ, then the young people will perceive something else. It will appear to them as the structure of the government.

Spirituality also helps youth ministers deal with setbacks in youth ministry. Older participants are aware of the volatile nature of the age group they are working with and insist on the importance of not always looking for immediate results. A priest put it this way: "A lot of catechetical work with youth is based on the principle that one does not worry too much about what a child does when he is 15. You worry more about what he will do when he is 40." One should not be disappointed if many of the young people do not go to church, although that should be one of our aims. A number of participants referred to the biblical image of the youth minister as the sower, rather than the reaper. A spiritual person does not need to be gratified too often or thanked for what she does. Results do not depend only on the youth minister's efforts.

God is also at work. The youth minister must help create an atmosphere where the gospel can grow and be received. A number of people talk about the John Baptist principle. The youth minister is present in such a way that the teenagers may grow more and more while she must appear less and less. A United States minister noted:

> I am not always successful in that, particularly since young people tend to idolize the youth minister. I have seen that where the youth minister revels in that a bit too much, being admired and almost doted upon by the young, can not only be deceptive, but just not useful. They are deflected from their own freedom and the youth center on the wrong thing. I have seen too many youth ministers who become jealous of others. When other youth ministers want to become part of what they are doing they insist on becoming the focal point.

The need for a community dimension to spirituality is highlighted by a number of participants. This dimension may be lived in the parish community or when youth ministers meet to share their struggles, to reflect, and to pray. A lay minister from El Salvador sums up the ideal spirituality of the youth minister:

> Following Jesus is fundamental. Jesus is my friend, but when you are a friend of someone you share his ideals and dreams. Spirituality means working from the perspective of the poor, confiding in a God who liberates, in Jesus who accompanies, who is on the same journey as ourselves, the companion who encourages and nourishes us.

> A third subtheme related to the person of the youth minister and around which expectations revolve is that of being a role model. One participant puts it very simply: My expectation is to be a good role model for them and I would be supportive of them for the entire time that they are in the program, and that I will stick with the program, and that I will bring them closer to their God.

Most of the participants are aware they serve as role models for the young people they serve. Their expectations were largely shaped by contact at

an earlier age with adults whom they themselves admired. One youth minister remembers:

> I think of a man, Potty, who was the most selfless youth minister that I have known, who could work with young people without seeking anything from them. He would go out late at night until 4 in the morning in a van called the Gusbus and would pick drunken kids off the streets and nurse them back into health, and take them home. He was a confidant of hundreds kids who couldn't talk to their own parents. Many people suspected him, but he was a man of pure instincts. He had that extraordinary ability to help without feeding his own self. He had a very strong influence on me in terms of youth ministry.

Earlier role models were admired by the participants for their dedication to and love of young people. Their human qualities, their intellectual capacity, and their spirituality exercised a strong attraction. The enthusiasm with which the youth ministers spoke of these models left this writer with the impression that, in their absence the participants would have probably taken another direction.

The need for role models brings up the wider question of integration with other age groups. One youth minister is critical of the value of youth masses.

> It is not real for teenagers to be put in a separate little box. I don't think it makes them grow. They should be yearning to be the adult. It is a challenge for them. They get into their own little world at a time when they are naturally selfish. There is an identity thing.

Expectations concerning youth ministry. The second theme connected with the expectations of the youth minister that emerges from the interviews has to do with the youth ministry. Within this theme of youth ministry expectations can be grouped around three subthemes: (a) the youth organization, (b) collaborative ministry, and (c) mentoring (or accompaniment).

Within youth ministry the first subtheme of youth organization is central. Many of the participants speak of expectations that hinge around the building of a youth organization on both local and national levels that has clear vision and direction. Organization is a guarantee of roots and history: "My

function if I were imagining would be to root and to broaden. My role is to build structures, as I am initiating a program. Structures strengthen a sense of collective memory and organization." One participant looks back on her expectations that have come to fruition:

> We worked on building structures and then at programs. We had 74 events during the year. Of these 24 were weekly sessions, some weekend events, retreats, some interparish events. We also did some networking, participating in diocesan events, one state event, also connecting with a national organization. All are part of the youth ministry program.

The adult is seen as the guarantee of stability and continuity in the youth organization. Participating in events promoted by a wider diocesan or national organization gives a sense of "I am not alone." Young people come back enthusiastic. One participant points to another important advantage of the youth organization: It puts young people in contact with others who share the same values.

> I think the one good thing about the connection that can be established with the diocesan youth ministry is that it puts the local youth in contact with other local youth. Parents begin to see that it is always a good thing to introduce one's own children to others who share the same values. So if they reject their own parents they at least will see these values reflected in the lives of others whom they respect. I can listen to you even though you are saying the same thing as my own father is saying. I feel more comfortable.

A second subtheme connected to youth ministry and around which expectations can be grouped is that of collaborative ministry. Participants are aware that the job description involves the ability to work together with other youth ministers. This is a recurring theme in the interviews. The idea of the youth minister as the Lone Ranger, doing everything, and centralizing all decisions in himself is rejected by the interviewees. The youth minister needs to work with other adult ministers in a team. One participant was very emphatic about this point:

> I began here with the whole concept of building a team of adults who wouldn't function as chaperons but rather would implement the concept of a team based ministry, a ministry that is not based on one person. I think youth ministry throughout the USA as well as youth ministry in our diocese has been based on the idea of one person as youth minister and not as a coordinator of youth ministry. When the person leaves the parish the youth ministry dies. It has no structures that will last. So when I began here I started training a team of youth ministers.

The interviewees note that the members of a team have different gifts and can complement each other: Some are good at sports, others at organizing, others at giving talks, others at spiritual reflections, others with computers, etc. Collaborative ministry leads members to break out of a mold of dependency, of being chaperons of the young people, of not thinking for themselves. It helps them to take initiatives. The coordinator youth minister needs to be clear on where she is going while at the same time being able to listen to the proposals of others, and change when a better proposal is put forward.

Many of the youth ministers interviewed who are involved in some form of networking between parishes have strong convictions on the importance of coming together with other youth ministers to define their identity, to exchange experiences, to evaluate their lives, and to plan. One participant sees the importance of working together for prayer, for support, and communication. Youth ministers discover that it is through team work and in the day-to-day working out of youth ministry that their role is clarified.

The third subtheme connected with youth ministry that emerges from the data analysis can be summed up in the frequently repeated expectation of accompanying or mentoring young people in their growth process. A Venezuelan youth minister explains:

> My work has been to accompany the coordinating committee as we organize youth ministry in Caracas, which is where we work. My principal function has been to accompany everything, but not only accompany with supporting words, but also accompany by becoming involved, by organizing, calling meetings, and preparing things with the team.

A United States lay minister sees herself as a facilitator:
We are first among equals. We are on the road to discovery together.
We have been with others who were pretty stiff and saw themselves as
directing, telling kids what to do. We just function in another, more
participatory, and informal way.

Some participants are teachers and are aware of the importance of a
teacher's skill in "explaining things in a clear-cut manner." Yet they realize that
the atmosphere in youth ministry is very different from a classroom setting
since young people have volunteered to participate. Different skills are needed.
A sister from Paraguay calls attention to the importance of discernment in
accompanying adolescents. Young people are at a crossroad with different
paths opening up before them. They need help in discerning the paths that are
more life giving. A priest involved with inner-city youth talks about the need
for accompanying youth in a very informal way:
I often use the phrase to accompany them. In many ways in a
neighborhood like this the ministry is not always organized but is one of
acceptance, of telling them often about the love of God and making God
present to them, and being present to them so that perhaps they feel
something of God's love.

Expectations concerning content. The third theme that emerges from
the interviews has to do with the content or the theoretical basis that
illuminates the expectations of youth ministers with regard to their role. The
theme of content can be divided into two subthemes: faith content and existing
theory on the role of the youth minister. Personal expectations concerning both
subthemes were manifested by the participants.

The first subtheme connected to content is that of faith content. This is
a continually recurring topic in the interviews. Participants have a variety of
expectations concerning the content of the faith they hope to transmit. There
are different emphases with regard to this content, especially between the
United States and Latin American participants, as we will see later in this
section. Yet there are many common aspects. Some participants define their
expectations in terms of helping young people to grow in maturity and faith
commitment. One youth minister talks about the need to have very low

expectations in terms of the understanding of faith, the desire to go to church on Sunday, and even to pray, due to the family and social environment in which young people live today. Another youth minister remembers starting her youth program:

> There were a lot of other young people doing things, but they were very lonely, and they lacked any kind of knowledge of their faith, even though they had gone through Catholic schools, or religious education program. They didn't have any kind of knowledge of their faith or experience of God. So the challenge to root youth ministry in parish life.

One United States participant considered the approach to be one in which "You don't go to bring Christ to them, but to extract the Jesus that is within them, more like a dentist." Another participant sees his role in the light of the biblical image of the Good Shepherd who is concerned with the needs of young people. A recurring theme in the interviews is the love of God. Adolescents need to learn that God loves them, "to care for one another, and accept themselves." Expectations with regard to faith content also involve a belief in the need to adapt the message. One participant emphasizes the need to speak to young people on their level and promote an understanding of the faith that they find attractive. This involves sharing one's own faith with young people.

Expectations concerning faith content also refer to the bible, community, sacraments, and mission. A significant number of answers refer to the bible as an important tool for building a foundation for faith. The youth community is seen as a model of the church that is more loving and caring. A priest refers to the need to give the churched youth a deeper understanding of the sacraments. "The sacraments for them are a rite of passage rather than an ongoing relation with Jesus. The big challenge for us is to make religion real." At the same time the youth minister must reach out to the unchurched youth by being a presence to them on the streets. Part of the faith content is a missionary attitude of reaching out to surrounding society. An Argentinean lay youth minister warns of the danger of "looking only at one's own youth group, of gazing at one's umbilical cord, and forgetting to look at the thousands of youth outside." But faith commitment must be situated in the real world. An El Salvadorian lay

minister explains: "We insist a lot that the youth minister who does not watch the news on TV or read the newspapers does not know where he is." A United States youth minister summed up her expectations in accompanying young people:

> I would like to see the students come to a realization of the goodness that is within themselves, I would like them to be happy, to be secure, to be concerned about their neighbor, gospel values, service to others, I would like them to be other centered.

A number of interviewees talk about a faith content that is holistic. They see faith as penetrating the different dimensions of the young people's lives. One youth minister points to her expectation of "putting together a multifaceted program that would appeal to young people, be growth producing, and challenge them."

The second subtheme connected to youth ministry has to do with the already existing theory on the role of the youth minister. Many participants are aware that their expectations can be clarified by a large body of knowledge that already exists in the area of youth ministry. A Brazilian sister refers to an important development in youth ministry in recent years:

> A few years ago nobody talked about the person of the youth minister. There was no systematization of experiences. However in the last few years important building blocks have been put in place for constructing a theory on the role of the youth minister.

In the interviews youth ministers who are isolated and have no connection with any networking system reveal an ignorance of diocesan and national guidelines. Participants point out that it is hard to clarify expectations if there is nothing written, if there is not a wider organization that is building an ongoing theory with inputs from all levels. One youth minister points out the danger: "I can't be in isolation and set up a little parish program that has nothing to do with all the backdrop of all the findings, the research, and the history of the church in other areas."

The advantages of connecting with an already existing theory and avoiding trying to invent the wheel again are outlined by one participant:

The principles of the document "Vision of Youth Ministry" have always made a lot of sense of me. It is always a guideline in terms of the principles of ministering with youth to youth, for youth, in the sense of how we reach out to young people and include them. It is a very inclusive approach and very comprehensive one to youth ministry. And so we always need to make sure that these components are present in terms of forming community, of leading young people in prayer, of sharing knowledge of the faith, of helping young people become involved in service, also giving youth the opportunity to socialize, built friendships, and have some fun together as young people.

Contrast: United States and Latin American participants. In general, a remarkable similarity between the ideas of participants from both continents emerges from the data. There are, however, some striking differences that are presented in the following text.

Some initial observations, however, are in order. Contrasts made between youth ministers in the United States and those in Latin America are exploratory as this research project is based on a purposeful rather than a scientific sample. Since the project employs a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach, findings cannot be generalized to a target population. Rather, each person reading the results of this research project must decide whether or not the findings are applicable to his or her reality. Statements are not made about the United States church or the Latin American church but rather about the thinking of the group of people involved in this research. People who wish to generalize beyond the two groups studied in this research project must remember that this was not the purpose of the study. Due to the nature of the sample used in this research project, perhaps these differences should be seen as tentative exploratory hypotheses rather than findings. Further research would be necessary to establish validity for a wider population.

A further observation is in order here. In this chapter an effort has been made to present the findings that surface from the data and leave the analysis of these findings for the next chapter. However, in this section where a contrast is made between the thinking of participants from both continents, this researcher feels obliged to make some initial analysis of the findings as he is the only one who has listened to and been in contact with both sides. Contrast involves

analysis. Individual members were unable to make this contrast as their experience is limited to their own group. Not all observations can be documented with quotations since very often the significant point is the absence of any assertion on the part of one side.

While there is substantial agreement between participants from both continents with regard to the above expectations, the data analysis reveals different role expectations in the following areas: (a) youth organization, (b) the role of young people, (c) the mission of youth ministry in society, (d) the question of boundaries between adults and young people.

1. The first area of difference is that of the youth organization. Two visions of the youth organization emerge. One group understands this organization as a diocesan office that offers services to parishes while a second group understands it as a network of parish youth groups with coordination teams on different levels.

Participants from two of the United States dioceses left a strong impression of a lack of an effective networking system, even on the level of adult youth ministers. They lamented the isolation and not being connected on a higher level. The diocesan youth offices worked very much as a top-down service.

Youth ministers of the third diocese, on the other hand, spoke with enthusiasm of the advantages of a new experiment of networking in which the diocese had been divided into three geographical areas.

> Here in this area fortunately we have a strong network. Through the diocesan office of youth ministry the diocese was divided into three areas. Our area has a network of about 15 parishes where the youth ministers meet once a month to share notes and work on a common project.

The Latin American participants take the networking approach a step further. They have a clear vision of the need for a networking system not only between adult youth ministers but also among the young people themselves. Pastoral planning, evaluation, and youth coordination teams are important ingredients. Coordination committees are organized on different levels: national, regional, diocesan, parochial. A Venezuelan priest looks to the future:

My greatest expectation is that one day in Caracas, we can have an organized ministry, that we will have coordination committees on parish, deanery, and archdiocese levels. That is my expectation as youth minister, to have a better network of youth groups in youth ministry.

The different terminology used illustrates the basic differences. While the United States participants talk of the "diocesan office" of youth ministry, their Latin American counterparts talk about the "diocesan youth coordination." While the United States youth ministers talk about expectations of organizing "youth programs," their southern neighbors prefer to speak of launching "processes of formation." When the United States participants talk about the need for supporting structures, they usually refer to bureaucratic structures, files, computers, a well-equipped office. When the Latin American participants talk about the need for structures they are more concerned with organizational structures such as coordination committees, evaluation, and planning assemblies that are a guarantee that youth are a part of the decision making process.

2. The second area of difference between participants from both continents has to do with the role of the young people. The pastoral model of the United States participants rests heavily on an organization in which decisions are taken almost entirely by adults. Adults organize programs for young people. In one parish the adults organized the recreational activities, take the weekly role call, collected furniture for and renovated the youth center. A number of participants referred to one of their functions as that of chaperons. A participant explains:

We identify roles for the adults, procedures, attendance procedures, registration procedures. Some take on different roles, some register, others take on role of chaperons, some clean up the kitchen of the youth center.

Some participants surprised this researcher by inadvertently referring to their youth as children. In the more advanced parishes teens are involved in some of the planning; however, control remains tightly in the hands of the adults. But some participants do in fact talk of empowerment of young people. One, in particular, is cogent in his argumentation:

The relative inability that some youth ministers have to empower others! They do things on their own. To believe in others, to give them space, to allow them the time to do things. We can do things more quickly and more efficiently, often enough--but that doesn't mean more effectively.

Nevertheless, although some United States ministers talk of empowerment and do in fact give responsibility to youth, pastoral structures are not set up that are owned by the young people themselves--especially on parish, diocesan, and national levels. One United States youth minister is very explicit on her view of the role of young people:

When I worked in the diocese office, we realized that you cannot put a young person as coordinator in the parish. They do not have the life experience; you need supervisory skills, mentoring skills, administrative skills; you need to be working with volunteers with an eye to what are their gifts, how can they be used. You need an understanding of young people.

The Latin American youth ministers present a very different model. Without exception, all participants refer to their expectation of promoting the young people as "protagonistas" or principal actors in the youth organization. While some United States ministers would see one of the roles of adults as that of chaperons guaranteeing good behavior of teenagers on outings, etc., their Latin American counterparts would seek to push that responsibility on to the youth leaders themselves. They see a danger of organizing a "ministry of adult ministers" rather than a "youth ministry."

Rather than a diocesan office that offers and organizes services for young people, the Latin American participants see youth ministry as a network of youth groups in which young people themselves are put into the driving seat and given the driving wheel. The role of the adult is different from that presented by the United States participants. She seeks a background position while promoting young people as coordinators of the youth organization.

The youth coordination committee sees me as a reference point when something is not clear. The opinion of the youth minister is always important at a critical moment before making a decision.

A youth minister from Bolivia puts it this way:

> As youth ministers we present an image of companions in a process where the young person has to take on the executive role in youth ministry. The role of the adult youth minister, from my point of view, resides in giving the young person the possibilities and the means to take on the task of responsibility in the organization.

An effort is made to help youth feel ownership of their own ministry not by preaching to them about responsibility, but rather by handing over responsibility to them and then accompanying them as advisers. A priest from Chile explains:

> My expectation as youth minister is to form a youth organization that is at the service of young people, where they are the protagonists, they are in charge, so that when I leave, the seed sown will continue to grow.

Some adults talk of the need for humility to allow oneself to be corrected by the young people when a change of direction is required. A Brazilian participant talks about formation being a two-way process. Adults can learn from young people:

> I learned to be a youth minister with the young people themselves. At the beginning I was very paternalist. I was very protective. I thought that I was the one that had to give out the ideas, that I should be in the front leading, giving orientation. The young people converted me, saying that that wasn't the way I should act. You should be a companion, walk with us, but not take our place.

Youth ministers see as their aim the need to empower young people rather than fossilize them at an initial state of dependency. The underlying vision of many of the comments pushes the youth ministers to go beyond a stage of merely providing services to developing a process that combines both theory and praxis and in which young people have a say on the level of decision making. An Argentinean sister calls attention to the need for internal democracy in which "young people elect their delegates to the wider coordination teams." Thus the network makes possible a continuous flow of

information and ideas between youth groups and youth services, and the national coordination committees.

But there is a problem. While the vision of the Latin Americans of empowering young people by giving them real control over their own organization, its weakness lies in the lack of attention to recruiting and forming adult lay youth ministers. An Argentinean lay minister is explicit: "There is very little experience with lay ministers." Almost all the adult ministers are either priests or sisters who are overburdened with other church responsibilities. An over-reliance on priests has its disadvantages. A priest from Guatemala, for example, is diocesan and national youth minister but is also pastor of a parish with 55,000 inhabitants and 55 rural community chapels.

The dedication and work of the United States lay ministers reveal the need for greater involvement of lay adults in youth ministry. Some of those interviewed describe a very efficient and well-run youth ministry that reaches a significant number of young people. One adult minister talks of a program he has coordinated during 20 years and of "a total of 1317 kids who have done the program." Another has two programs that reach 80 adolescents on a weekly basis, while still another reaches 130 youth on a regular basis. A feeling of stability and continuity came across in the interviews that would seem to be the result of the strong commitment and presence of adult lay ministers.

3. The third area of difference between participants from the United States and Latin America has to do with different visions of the mission of youth ministry in society. The United States participants come across as being heavily focused on relationships and on the internal life of the church community. Nevertheless there is also an awareness that youth ministry must deal with the challenge of the poor in society. One priest participant works in an inner-city area where poverty, drug, and crime are widespread. This researcher was moved by his simple lifestyle and his complete identification with the poor. One United States sister, working in a difficult area, explains her motivation:

> I think the other thing would be the scripture quote at the end of Matthew's gospel, when I was hungry you gave me food and when I was naked you gave me clothes. We are challenged by the Gospels to reach out to others.

Yet the United States ministers come across as uncritical in their approach. The Gospel is seen to respond on the micro level of society but is silent concerning the macro level. Youth ministers organize services to the poor and marginalized in society: classes, soup kitchens, campaigns for food and clothing, visits to the sick, baby sitting. And the dedication and commitment is very impressive. However, the Gospel does not seem to come across as a liberating force on the macro level of society. There is no critical reflection on the deeper causes of poverty. One youth minister talked about a soup kitchen organized by Catholic Charities, in the same area, that serves 1,000 people a day and a smaller one close by, which was supported by the parish and which serves 200 people. There seemed to be little awareness that such poverty could have deeper social, economic, and political causes that needed to be addressed while encouraging young people to work with the poor. At least such an awareness did not emerge in the interview. While several questions gave an opening for participants to talk about deeper structural causes of poverty, nevertheless the questions were not put in an explicit way. This researcher feared that a direct question could alert the interviewee to what might be understood as a "more correct answer" and so influence the type of answer. For this reason it cannot be affirmed categorically that participants do not have more scientific tools for analyzing the deeper roots of poverty around them. This researcher is affirming only that such evidence did not appear in the interviews of the United States participants.

When the same questions were put to the Latin American youth ministers most of them placed a strong emphasis on the involvement of young people in changing society. A Venezuelan priest talks about his expectations of forming "youth leaders who have criteria, are critical, and become involved in changing the milieu where they move, their family, their community, their university, their work, and in that way discover their vocation as Christians."

While the United States youth ministers would seem to be forming young people to accept the system in an unquestioning way, their Latin American counterparts speak of the need to form youth leaders who are critical of the way society is organized and work to transform it. Key phrases that continually appear in the Latin American interviews and that are largely absent in the language of the United States participants are: option for the poor, critical awareness, transformation, and pastoral "line." By pastoral "line" is

meant a clear liberating direction and goals that have been established by national and Latin American youth ministry. The See Judge Act Method and documents of youth ministry and of the wider church serve as a frame of reference that determine the model of youth ministry adopted. An Argentinean participant remembers his work with university students:

> In 1988 and 1989 we had a beautiful experience of reflection and preparation of formation material based on the See Judge Act Method in which we used documents of the church for the Judge part: documents of the Vatican Council, of Medellin, etc.

While the United States group talks about involving youth in service programs for the poor, their Latin American group refer frequently to the "option for the poor." The option for the poor is understood as siding with the poor in order to change social, economic, and political structures that produce poor people. A Bolivian lay youth minister put it this way:

> The laity are called to transform both church and society. The young people are going to change society through their presence in communities, in labor unions, in political movements, and in non-governmental organizations. The gospel principles are solidarity, fraternity, equality, love, justice. We see these values reflected in Jesus. We see them reflected in God.

In summary, the two perspectives can be diferentiated as two different models of youth ministry, to use a terminology employed by John Nelson (1991): a psychological model and a sociological model. The United States participants would seem to stress a psychological model of youth ministry while their Latin American counterparts put greater emphasis on a sociological model. This distinction is further developed in the next chapter.

4. The fourth area of contrast between the perspectives of participants from both continents has to do with the boundaries between adults and adolescents. Youth ministers from both continents stress the importance of building relationships when working with young people. Deep friendship and warm loving relationships are both the starting point and the condition for effective youth ministry. One participant explains her strategy:

I have to be aware and talk about their relationships in their lives. My belief is that God is a loving God who wants us to be good and loves us whether we are or aren't. We would hope that that would come through, that they are lovable people, and we have a good God. God does not do bad things.

Yet United States youth ministers tend to be fearful and to draw somewhat rigid boundaries in this area because of scandals of pedophilia, sexual abuse, and the media attention given to many cases of suing for large sums of money. This fear is presented as one of the reasons why priests shy away from working with youth. One priest disclosed:

> Well today it is quite difficult, you know because of the pedophilia and all of that. No hugging or kissing. So you really have to be very restrained. It is sad. Now I find myself hesitant with my own nephews and nieces. How much! You are so embarrassed and hurt by it. But today there are a lot of accusations that are not true. And the accusation just has to be made and you have a problem that is insurmountable, the end of your career, the end of your ministry certainly, the end of your work with youth. And that is a big thing. How do you handle that. It is very hurtful for the priests who are still ministering. Then I know priests who have been involved in those things, have problems. On the one hand they are not evil, but they have done evil. This terrible thing. It is a terrible thing. And of course they make it look like the whole church is that way. So I would say the first rule is "be afraid" and the second rule should be "be not afraid."

Yet, independent of the fear of scandals, some form of boundaries need to be set "because adolescents are at a very delicate stage in their lives and you are an adult and you should know differently." Boundaries do not mean that adults cannot be friendly. One United States lay minister put it this way:

> They don't necessarily want us to know all about their music; they don't necessarily want us to be wrestling with them on the floor with them; indeed I believe the majority would prefer that we did not do that. And that is what we try to get across to the new team members. There is a distance, rather than a distance, a dividing mark.

It is significant that any discussion of boundaries between adults and teens is completely absent from the statements by the Latin American youth ministers.

In summary, youth ministers from both continents have common expectations about the role of the youth minister. These expectations are grouped around three main areas: (a) the youth minister: the qualities the minister must bring to his work, a personal spirituality that is necessary for this role, and youth ministers are aware that young people look on them as role models; (b) the youth ministry: the need to work to strengthen the organization of youth ministry, the role of the youth minister involves working with others as a team in a collaborative ministry, and the need to accompany young people in their faith and human journey--not only individually but also collectively; and (c) content: the faith content to be transmitted to young people and the need to take into account a theory already elaborated on the role of the youth minister.

However, important differences between both sets of youth ministers emerge from the data analysis. These differences modify radically the role of the adult youth minister in youth ministry. These differences hinge around four themes: (a) a vision of youth ministry as a network of youth groups rather than a diocesan office in which adults organize services for youth, (b) the role of young people as principal actors and adults as advisers as opposed to a youth ministry where adults make all the decisions, (c) the mission of the youth minister to form young people whose aim is to change society rather than to fit into it, and (d) the question of boundaries between adults and adolescents in youth ministry.

Role Expectations of Others--as Perceived by the Participants Themselves

The data that emerge from the interviews for this section were less than expected. Some participants were not used to reflecting on how their role is perceived by others. One participant even said she was unaware of the opinions of others about the role of the youth minister.

The expectations of four groups of people within the wider church emerge from the data analysis: the people in general, the clergy, the parents, and the young people themselves.

The interviews reveal that for many in <u>the first group--the people in general</u>--there is a lack of clarity on the role of the youth minister. Many people see the youth minister as a volunteer who helps children but they are vague about his role.

They feel children need religious education and they know that the church has largely failed in this direction, and very few parishes have programs for children. "They know that they should have something, but they don't know how to do it. They look at attendance and they feel they are not reaching young people."

Expectations can be very minimal and negative:

Their confusion is how to run a program. They are afraid that you just can't have a spiritual program. They feel that they have to do something else to get the kids, so they start a teen club, get them off the streets, run home with them, and then we promise that if they go for 6 weeks then we will have a party. The old model of the teen club. They don't really have a model of youth ministry at all.

There are a number of different expectations expressed concerning the age of the youth minister. First there is the naive view of some church leaders that the adult youth minister has to be young to work with young people. A Guatemalan participant refers to the practice of designating young priests to work with youth. "Church leaders believe that the younger priest automatically has the required qualities. They put age before charisma."

A second view holds that younger adults, even though they may have a vocation and charisma for working with youth, do not really have sufficient life experience to work on their own in a coordinating role. One older youth minister put it this way:

Around here youth ministers are usually young kids just out of college who will work for a year or two for very poor wages before they either burn out or get a real job. So there is not a real identity. . . . They don't have much of a power base or they don't have much of a reputation because they change so frequently, the programs change.

A third viewpoint is that younger adults because of their closeness in terms of age have greater capacity to communicate and motivate young people.

Older people may have life experience but not the skills for working with youth. Many younger adults have accumulated experience by working with young people during several years while others have come up through the ranks of youth groups. There is however a negative side.

> The life span of the adult minister if they are in their 20s is short
> because there is so much happening in their personal life, they are
> moving, getting married, going back to school.

Expectations are often positive. A significant number of participants believe that people in the wider church admire their work because they see young people as the future of the church. Yet there is a big gap between rhetoric and practice. "You have no budget, you have no administrative support services." Participants believe that the youth minister does not get the moral or financial support that other things get.

The expectations of the second group--the clergy--are seen as mainly catechetical in nature. Pastors expect the youth minister to have a program and to have young people going to church, to lead them in prayer, and eventually grow to take over the role of the adults in the church. "Religious ignorance is incredible" is the comment of one priest. Many church leaders are appalled by what they see as the religious ignorance of today's youth, and see religious instruction as an important task of the youth minister.

Different reactions of the clergy reveal different expectations concerning the role of the youth minister. One lay minister talks of two distinct reactions of priests. "One of them is one of being threatened by someone who is in any way relating to youth. And the other one is joy that someone is doing something with the youth." But there is also a very positive view. Some priests can be very supportive and "are very willing to jump on board when we need them." A priest participant presents another attitude:

> Well the clergy normally is kind of the moderator. And I think that
> implies that it is not so much a hands-on experience as being a priestly
> presence in terms of the youth group, where the youth minister or team
> is handling the weekly experience. The priest comes in the same way as
> he would visit the bingo people.

The expectations of the <u>third group</u>--<u>the parents</u>--are dwelled upon especially by the United States participants. Parents, in general, feel it is fantastic that the church is opening its eyes to the needs of the young and are very supportive. These parents see the minister as an adult guide at a time when they themselves have difficulty dealing with their kids. The youth minister can serve as a role model. One participant, however, sounds a note of warning:

> Some of the parents feel that it is my job to take care of their children, their spiritual and religious need. And by getting them enrolled in the program they don't have to be bothered doing it.

<u>Young people</u> are the <u>fourth group</u> considered by the participants. There is a feeling that, in general, youth have very positive expectations of the adult minister. One United States participant quoted a letter of a girl: "We indeed are aware and very grateful and do know that you have sacrificed a lot of your time to enable us to do things that make us happy and bring us to life."

A recurring theme in many of the interviews is that young people desperately need to talk. "And to be able to talk they need to know that you are going to listen and not reject them, etc. So their expectations are very high, almost too high" is the evaluation of one participant. Participants talk about expectations that youth have of the role of the adult, "to be fair, to keep order if necessary, to take them seriously, and to be present for them."

Interviewees also refer to spiritual expectations. Young people do not want to be preached to but expect the adult to share his struggles as a Christian with them. They expect that talks will be mostly "witness talks." One participant looks back: "Willingness to share your personal struggle has been a very big part of the appeal of our program."

A youth minister from El Salvador points to a negative expectation among young people when a youth minister with no experience is imposed on them. He continues: "The young people expect that the youth minister will help them discover their goals, the paths for the group to take, how to journey together. But they do not want him to arrive deciding everything. Rather they want him to help them embark on a journey of discovery together." More socially and politically involved young people in Latin America will sometimes seek out a youth minister to serve as an "umbrella" against attacks from

different quarters because "the adult youth minister is an authority and a security that others respect."

Contrast: United States and Latin American participants. The above data analysis reveals the areas of consensus among participants. But participants also believe there are some marked differences between expectations of people in the wider United States church and the Latin American church, at least in their own immediate areas. These differences are more clearly seen in attitudes toward (a) critical awareness and toward the (b) involvement of parents. Differences reflect perceptions on the part the participants. Further research is needed to determine if in fact these perceptions correspond to reality of the wider population.

1. This first area of contrast between both groups that emerges from the data has to do with expectations of people--other than the youth ministers themselves--of the youth minister's role concerning critical awareness. These differences reflect perceptions on the part the participants in the research project, as the people themselves were not interviewed. Further research is needed to determine if in fact these perceptions correspond to the reality of the four groups whose opinions were considered: the people in general, the clergy, the parents, and the young people.

The theme of critical awareness is frequently referred to by the Latin American participants. They believe that many people in the wider church see the acquiring of critical thinking skills by the young people as a goal to be pursued by the youth minister. A Paraguayan participant talks about her experience:

> The young people expect the youth minister to accompany them in such a way that their opinions are respected. They are very critical. They believe they can move forward by making proposals and positive criticisms, and they want the youth minister to be part of that process.

The United States data analysis reveals a very different picture. The idea of developing a critical awareness among the youth is absent in the interviews. Only one United States minister refers to critical awareness and that is to lament its absence. And she is unusually blunt:

> The negative piece is to keep them down so they will be good guys and little sheep that will come in when called. The adult is there to control

them. One thing I have noticed is that young people that I have contact with are woolly; they are not like the young people of 17 years ago who were willing to write letters, to suggest change. Church leaders believe I should be able to control them, to squash any type of critical manifestation. Although in general the youth in the USA are not critical.

In the opinion of this researcher, this rather strong view does not reflect the context of all the United States participants. But coupled with the fact that nobody else even mentions the concept of critical thinking, it does give food for thought! At the very least, it does seem to reflect the attitude in a given area of the church. Some Latin American participants manifest a similar concern that sectors of their church wish to form a passive, non-questioning youth. Nevertheless the Latin American youth ministers believe that the main thrust is in the opposite direction, that there is general support in their church environment for developing a critical awareness among young people. A Paraguayan sister talks about expectations that the youth minister

> have an analysis of his surrounding reality, be a person of a deep
> interior life, be an agent of change, bring about personal change and
> change of the surrounding reality, and help others to take on a similar
> commitment.

The second area of contrast between both groups that emerges from the data has to do with expectations of people--other than the youth ministers themselves--of the role of the youth minister concerning the involvement of parents. An analysis of the data reveals a strong expectation of United States parents to be involved and consulted about the youth minister's work with their sons and daughters. A priest describes a successful program:

> We started what we called Dialogues on Manhasset. We would meet
> with six couples, 12 adults and at least 12 youngsters in a given house
> on a given night. We had the same question for all the children and
> parents who participated each week. So you would meet with someone
> else's children and then, at 9:30 or so, go home and discuss with your
> own children what they had discussed with other children and other
> people's parents. It was very successful. I remember one night we had as

many as 80 young people who showed up and wanted to be part of it, and be listened to.

Many United States participants talked enthusiastically about the involvement of parents in activities, in discussion evenings, and sometimes even as members of the parish team of youth ministers. A lay youth minister remembers: "I did a workshop with parents to open the program last month, and the parents were so happy to be involved in the program." There is a strong conviction that work with young people is weakened if the family environment is not also somehow brought into the picture. One participant is very emphatic:

> I have always said to parents, if you have any questions about anything I welcome them. You shouldn't just hand over the care of your children to adults you don't know. You should be calling and asking how is this is going to happen. I welcome your caution and questioning.

In the data supplied by the Latin American youth ministers there is an astonishing omission. There is no mention of the need to involve parents in the ministry to young people.

In summary, the data analysis reveals that expectations of others concerning the role of the youth minister can be grouped around four groups of persons: the people in general, the clergy, the parents, and the young people themselves. While there is considerable agreement in many areas and lack of clarity in others there are also clear contrasts, namely, in attitudes toward critical awareness and the involvement of parents.

Role Conflict

An analysis of the data reveals frequent role conflict. The interviews points to two main causes of this conflict: role ambiguity and conflict of role expectations.

The first cause, role ambiguity, is put forward by a Venezuelan participant as the main difficulty he faced when starting out as archdiocese youth minister: "I just had no clarity on where we should be going pastorally." On a parish level there may be no clear objectives or the objectives may be unconscious, and need to be spelled out. The expectations may be that the youth minister will "watch kids" or "baby sit." A United States youth minister

sees a danger when the pastor's main concern is to be able to say he has a youth ministry and to "make sure there is no fight in the gym on Wednesday night."

> Another is emphatic:
> The parishes should be made to spell out their expectations then have them go through some process of analyzing themselves. Because if you do not spell it out how are you going to evaluate success. So you are setting yourself up for you don't know if you can succeed or not. Whoever is hiring them must be more defined in terms of expectations and role. And also for this person to be able to get some job satisfaction also.

Sometimes the expectations for role clarification can be unreal. "On the other hand, people want things in nice neat little packages and don't realize that youth ministry is never going to be a neat little package."

The lack of role clarification is also seen in the frequently repeated reference to the lack of support, both moral and financial. The expectations of the pastor, the parents, and the wider community is that the youth minister has been appointed to do a job and they can now wash their hands of any responsibility for youth work. The youth minister on the other hand believes that "the whole parish community is responsible for the ministry to youth." A United States priest participant points to one of the difficulties:

> The status quo needs to be promoted and sometimes kids are spontaneous and loud, and sometimes destructive. But I think all that needs to be taken as part of the course in youth minister, but not everyone thinks that way. And when one little thing happens then the whole program comes under attack.

The <u>second cause of role conflict</u> that emerges from the interviews is the problem <u>of conflicting expectations</u>. Expectations can interfere with each other or contradict each other. This was the more common cause that appeared in the data and for that reason more space has been dedicated to it.

Two different paradigms of what people expect concerning the pedagogical approach of the youth minister emerge from the data. One group of people--identified with a more traditional church--expect a more top-down

approach and see the youth minister's role as that of warning young people when something is wrong, and telling what to do. This group sees the role of the minister as the one who organizes everything. A lay minister contrasts the approach of her group with that of another one:

> And it was so interesting that their approach was different. As we were viewing the activities, they saw themselves as directing, directly telling kids what to do. They didn't see themselves as participatory.

One participant talks about the danger, in this model, of manipulating the young people as puppets. "The youth minister can manage them like puppets, manipulate them, or he can allow them to grow."

Members of the second group have a more liberating and participatory paradigm. They are coming out of a different model of church in which the youth minister is "the companion, who helps young people to attain objectives, in a process in which they themselves are the principal actors." In this model the youth minister needs much patience. She has to be tolerant. Sometimes she will allow disorder because she is concerned with growth more than with order. People expect the youth minister to challenge the adolescents, but "without yelling and screaming at them."

There is often a conflict of expectations concerning the job description-- explicit or implicit--of salaried youth ministers. One participant refers to the expectation of knowing what the salaried person is doing every moment of the day, so the tendency is to tie him to an office of a gym. He continues: "But then how is he going to go out and meet people. And if he is meeting the people, it doesn't look like he is working."

A conflict of expectations may also arise from different "measuring sticks" used by the clergy. The clergy sometimes look on large emotional youth rallies as a criterion of a successful youth ministry while the youth minister has other expectations.

> The young people become very emotionally involved, and very moved by it, and they weep and they fall in love with little Jesus and they call Jesus these very tender names, and stuff like that; there is so much emotion involved. I am not saying that it is bad; it just is not lasting and I have seen constantly that it does not last.

Furthermore, there may be a conflict of expectations between the youth minister and the young people. There is an expectation that the youth minister is always available and this can be overwhelming as one youth minister reveals. "To reach youth you have to be available at weird times, in the evenings, or on weekends. . . . But at the same time you are expected to do a certain amount of other work." Two of the youth ministers confessed that they were on the verge of burnout because of this pressure.

There may also be a conflict of expectations between the youth minister's expectations and those of the youth organization. A number of participants refer to this problem. Adults may choose this ministry for motives that are different from those of youth ministry. A participant explains:

> Some youth ministers are very needy people and that is why they want to be involved with young people, and it is because of their need more so than the children's need. I don't think they are screened at all.

To avoid this problem and to guarantee agreement between the expectations of the potential youth minister and the youth ministry organization, the process of selection and training of adults with a vocation and charisma for youth work becomes important. A participant who has been "burned" a number of times has learned from experience to hand-pick youth ministers after exhaustive consultation with others, because once installed "it is very hard to sack a volunteer." Other participants point out that in many situations the process of youth ministry is more spontaneous as adults who like working with youth become involved on their own initiative. A Brazilian participant explains: "In my situation, the youth minister goes after the youth group, becomes involved in it. She is won over by the young people and wins over the young people." All of the participants talk about efforts--some more structured than others--to help those who are already working in the field to assimilate the expectations of the diocesan and national youth organizations with regard to the role of the adult youth minister.

One of the more serious conflicts occurs when there is a clash between the expectations of the priest who is imbued with a clerical ideology and other ministers who believe in a more participatory role for themselves and the young people. One participant places the root of this conflict at the door of the seminary formation. A Latin American lay participant believes the priest is led

to believe in the seminary that he is a very important person, that he has all the answers, and that all that remains is to subjugate people. The participant continues: "He thinks he has absolute authority over the way the group thinks; the group has to do this; it can't do this other thing. He manipulates the group and marginalizes people who think differently." A number of participants refer to the difficulty created when such a person becomes diocesan youth minister and sees his position as a power base to further his ecclesiastic career. He becomes an obstacle to effective youth ministry. A very hierarchical and bureaucratic system evolves. The career youth minister insists on being always in the limelight and resents other adults who see the role of the youth minister as being at the service of young people's needs and who may overshadow him.

However, the question of clericalism did not emerge as a dominant theme from the data. This may be because only the successful youth ministers were interviewed. The latter, in general, had positive experiences with priests in their parishes and possibly would not have persevered and been successful if it had been otherwise. One sister says so in so many words: "Now in both situations I have been in, I have had the support of the clergy. And if I didn't, I'd adios--which is easier for me to do than it is for a parishioner to do, either paid or volunteer."

A further conflict arises between expectations of parents and young people. The involvement of parents can lead to rejection by the adolescents when there is not a clear awareness of their role. One youth minister put the issue rather well:

> The teenagers are going through this rebellious stage where they don't want their parents to have anything to do with their lives. So what you have to do is to keep them both happy. Keep the parents involved on the outside so that the kids don't see them but make sure they are all part of it.

There is also a conflict between expectations set by families and the youth minister with regard to values. Participants talk about the clash of expectations between middle-class families who can be materialistic and put strong pressure on adolescents to prepare for a career, to go to college, to get a good job, to make a lot of money, to have prestige, to participate in family outings and "on the other hand the youth minister who tells them spiritually that

that isn't the thing." Also young people have a hectic schedule. Everything is written down on a calendar. The strong materialistic and individualistic motivation in the home and their hectic schedule can lead young people to be unwilling to sacrifice their time for others.

An option for Christ, on the other hand, demands a number of sacrifices. One youth minister solves this conflict between her own role expectations and those of parents and adolescents by "providing a program that is not too intense, that doesn't demand too much time. But just demands enough of them that will be very interesting and they will learn something from it."

Finally, personal conflict can arise from the tension between expectations concerning activity and reflection. A United States youth minister sums up this conflict:

Activity can be like a drug, which is characteristic of American society. People just keep going and they never sit back and say where are we going? There is need for a balance. Without reflection we are not finely tuned instruments. That is the real danger.

Role ambiguity and the conflict of role expectations have consequences. The most common consequence indicated in the data analysis is burnout. One participant quoted a diocesan survey that showed a turnover of youth ministers in parishes every 2 or 3 years. Another participant counted herself and another lay adult as the only long-term surviving ministers in the diocese.

The data analysis indicates two solutions for burnout: role clarification and some form of networking. The people who do not burn out, in the opinion of one older youth minister, are "those who have a close community of people with similar interests, who are stimulated by their faith, and get together regularly to pray and exchange, and clarify their ideas."

Contrast between the United States and the Latin American participants. There is substantial agreement between participants from both continents about the different aspects of role conflict. However, an important area of contrast that emerges from the data has to do with attitudes in the wider church with regard to youth minister as a recognized profession, with the rights and duties that go with such a recognition. A common challenge faced by all participants is the need to be considered as professionals who have an important role in the spiritual and human growth of young people rather than as subprofessionals

who "watch kids." One participant notes that "There are many people who don't want to work with youth ministry because they believe it is an inferior work within the ecclesiastical hierarchy." In this area, the United States youth ministry has made greater progress, although there is still much to be done.

The inferior status of youth ministers in the Latin American reality is seen in the conflict of expectations created by the need to respond to a multitude of tasks that have nothing to do with youth ministry. Many Latin American youth ministers are priests and are also responsible for parishes and other diocesan activities in which they exercise many other roles. One participant referred to a priest on her diocesan team who is pastor of two parishes with many rural communities. Sisters usually have to do some other professional work such as teaching to keep themselves. Lay ministers are in an even more difficult situation as a participant from El Salvador indicates:

> We feel our hands are tied behind our backs since we have to study, work look after our families, and whatever time is left we dedicate to the ministry. We often have to work many hours, as youth minister requires, often until the late hours of the night when formation material has to be prepared. This is an enormous limitation. The burnout is caused by physical tiredness and stress that makes it difficult on some days to get up and go to work. It seems an impossible dream that one day we could dedicate ourselves full time to this work.

A Brazilian sister points to a recurring theme among the Latin American participants: the need to set priorities. "If you don't make youth ministry a priority and you have a thousand other priorities, then you don't have any priorities. And when you don't have priorities you don't prepare."

The heavy investment of the United States church in professional and salaried youth ministers is something that needs to be examined by the Latin American church. One United States participant explains:

> Volunteer youth ministers appreciate the fact that there are people who have devoted their lives to this and have some skills and know what resources work with teenagers and get help when they have some problems.

In summary, the data analysis reveals the all-pervasive presence of role conflict as one of the major challenges to be faced by the adult youth minister. Role conflict is seen as having two main causes: role ambiguity and conflict of role expectations. Role conflict is seen as one of the principal causes of burnout. The main solution that emerges from the interviews is that of role clarification in training sessions and support groups.

Role Performance

This section of the research conclusions is rather small since the data that emerged from the interviews were largely repetitious. Interviewees had little to say with regard to role performance. In general, the data analysis reveals that participants are satisfied with their role performance. But not in a static sense. They see themselves continuing to grow as they face new challenges. A United States participant points to many successful programs that have been set up by youth ministers:

> I know many of them personally who have spent a lot of time working with young people and have really done tremendous work in terms of opening up programs and getting many adults to become involved and take ownership of the youth program. We have many successful efforts here with ongoing programs.

Participants judge their role performance from the changes in the lives of the young people with whom they have worked. They see youth becoming involved and growing personally, socially, and in terms of community. There is a joy when individual members begin to make an option and become more independent. One participant describes her satisfaction when the principal objective is attained of "being a bridge to bring them to the Lord." Young people who arrived with very little now have a critical posture as they look to the future. They have gifts which they were unaware of and can now put at the service of the community. In some places the young people are the ones who bring dynamism and renewal into the parish community. A Bolivian youth minister recalls adolescents who entered the youth group with enormous timidity and "are now responsible for whole regions." A Brazilian participant is encouraged with the greater recognition of work of the youth minister, with

the organization of many training courses, and even a graduate course for youth ministers.

A criterion of success for role performance used by many Latin American youth ministers is the ability to raise the social awareness of young people so that they become involved in transforming society. One participant put it this way:

> There is a great satisfaction in seeing young people suddenly awakening and taking on serious commitment. Suddenly like a flower that unfolds, they take off and enter a student organization, some political party, a grassroots organization. As Christians they are together with people who have no faith, showing their courage.

A United States minister sums up what would appear to be the motivating force behind the role performance of most youth ministers:

> It is the fact that the kids like us and we are doing God's work. They appreciate our being there. Seeing them grow, struggling with their own lives, and being able to have some influence on that. There is something about being with young people; they are open; they haven't figured the whole thing out yet, and it is nice to have an impact on that. As they share their own struggle they affirm us also and we need that.

Summary

A number of major themes emerged from the data analysis.

The first theme is that of the personal role expectations of the youth minister. These expectations are organized around three areas: the person of the youth minister, the youth ministry itself, and the theoretical content to be taken into account. While there is much agreement concerning expectations of participants in both continents, there are also significant differences. These differences appear in four distinct areas: (a) a vision of youth ministry as a network of youth groups rather than a diocesan office in which adults organize services for youth, (b) the role of young people as principal actors and adults as advisers as opposed to a youth ministry where adults make all the decisions, (c) the mission of the youth minister to form young people whose aim is to change society rather than to fit into it, and (d) the question of boundaries between adults and adolescents.

The <u>second theme</u> is that of <u>the expectations of others concerning</u> the role of the youth minister. Here the expectations of three groups are analyzed: the people in general, the clergy, the parents, and the young people themselves. Significant contrasts between participants from both continents emerge in the areas of critical awareness, the involvement of parents, and the status of the youth minister as a recognized profession.

The <u>third theme</u> that emerges from the data is that of <u>role conflict</u>. There is frequently a conflict between the different expectations of the people in general, of parents, of the clergy, of young people, and of the youth minister himself. The Latin American participants perceive an especially strong conflict of roles in their particular context where there are almost no full-time, salaried lay ministers.

The <u>fourth theme</u> of <u>role performance</u> reveals general satisfaction of the youth ministers with the vocation they have chosen.

These major themes of personal role expectations, role expectations of others, and role conflict are discussed more fully in Chapter IV in order to define more clearly the role of the adult youth minister.

CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has focused on clarifying the role of the adult youth minister in youth ministry. An understanding of the role of the youth minister is central to success for effective work with young people. The lack of empirical research in this area and the international dimension of its scope highlights the importance of this project.

The research project focused on the role of the <u>youth minister</u> in youth ministry? Five questions formed the basis of the interview guide for approaching this research problem from different angles:

1. What are the personal role expectations of youth ministers?

2. What are the role expectations that others have of the youth minister?

3. What are the role expectations that have been successfully realized?

4. What are the areas of conflict among these expectations?

5. What are the differences between the role expectations of youth ministers in the United States and in Latin America?

This chapter presents (a) a brief summary of the design study, (b) the principal findings of the research project, (c) conclusions drawn, (d) implications of the research for youth ministers, and (e) recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Design of the Study

The research strategy employed a qualitative research approach which used guided interviews to collect data from a sample of 21 youth ministers from the United States and Latin America. While the guided interview contained 16 questions, this researcher followed up with additional questions when new opportunities for discovering pertinent data presented themselves during the interview. Care was taken, however, to phrase questions in such a way so as not to solicit answers that would fit into this writer's own theory on youth

ministry. An awareness of one's own values and pastoral options was seen as an important strategy for avoiding bias in this particular aspect.

While the United States participants were selected from three dioceses on the east coast of the country, the Latin American participants came from nine different countries. A number of criteria was used to select the more successful youth ministers for the sample population. The investigation sought to listen to the opinions, beliefs, experiences, and understandings of the "experts" in the field in order to build a "grounded theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) on the role of the youth minister. Role theory provided an important theoretical basis for the research project, especially the concepts of role expectations, role ambiguity, role clarification, and role conflict.

Within the philosophy of qualitative research methodology concern has been with transferability of the findings rather than with generalizability to a target population. Therefore, people wishing to used these findings must themselves decide the extent to which they are applicable to their own reality.

The findings that emerged from the data were presented under four main headings: (a) personal role expectations of the participants with regard to their job, (b) expectations of others with regard to the role of the youth minister, and (c) role conflict caused by role ambiguity and conflict of expectations. Important contrasts emerged in the findings between the ideas of the United States youth minister and their Latin American counterparts.

Principal Findings of the Data

The data analysis reveals a number of concerns and opinions of the participants with regard to the role of the adult youth minister in youth ministry. These can be grouped under three headings.

The first main framework has to do with the personal role expectations of the youth ministers concerning the job they have been called to do. For most of the participants expectations center around the personal qualities that are necessary to function successfully. High on the list of these qualities is the ability to listen, to counsel, to confirm, to share, to be honest, to be happy, to be organized, and to be warm. A personal spirituality is also an important part of personal role expectations. The youth minister must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ before he can call young people to a similar relationship. The personal lifestyle and teaching of Jesus exercise a powerful

influence on role expectations. A personal spirituality enables the youth minister to persevere in face of setbacks. The community aspect of spirituality emphasizes praying and sharing together. Personal role expectations also involve the awareness of being a role model for young people. Contact with adult role models facilitates the transition of youth to adulthood.

The youth minister does not work in a vacuum. Personal role expectations are related to the role of the adult within youth ministry. There are expectations of building up the youth organization as a means of reaching young people, guaranteeing continuity, and helping young people to make contact with one another and share values. Within youth ministry it is recommended that the youth minister work as a member of a team rather than as a "lone ranger." In collaborative ministry people with different gifts complement one another. Also within youth ministry the adult is seen to exercise an important role of mentoring or accompanying the personal growth process of each young person.

Within this first framework of personal role expectations there is also an important theoretical content to be taken into account. Expectations center around helping young people to grow in knowledge, maturity, and commitment in their faith. There is a need also to connect with an already existing theory on the work of the youth minister rather than trying to reinvent the wheel again.

There was remarkable consensus among participants from both continents concerning the above personal role expectations. This consensus is an important help in defining the role of the youth minister. Nevertheless striking differences emerge from the data analysis in four areas. The first difference has to do with two different visions of organizing youth ministry.

Conclusions Drawn

The data analysis surfaced three main themes that are discussed in this section: (a) the personal role expectations of the youth ministers, (b) the expectations of others, and (c) role conflict.

The Personal Role Expectations

An understanding of personal role expectations was a key step in defining the role of the adult youth minister. In many areas there was

remarkable consensus among participants. As this researcher listened to youth ministers talk about their wealth of accumulated knowledge, experience, and insights, he had the impression that each one inserted a piece of a puzzle which in the end revealed a wonderful coherent picture of an ideal that inspires life options and generous dedication to the promotion of young people. Some participants even expressed satisfaction at the way the interview led them to reflect for the first time on their personal role as youth ministers. Not having previously made their expectations explicit, it was hard to examine them critically and improve on them. The findings confirmed the literature on role theory which points to the importance of clarifying role expectations to avoid personal frustration and lack of effectiveness (Sarbin & Allen, 1968). ///

However, personal role expectations should not be something static. Ideally they should develop, widen, and mature in contact with other youth ministers and young people, in courses, and through personal reading and reflection. In general, the findings confirm and enlarge on the conclusions of existing literature with regard to expectations of personal qualities, skills, spirituality, faith content, and team work that should be part of the definition of the role of the youth minister (Cavanaugh, 1993; McLaughlin et al., 1994; Westling, 1983).

However, concerning the personal expectations of the youth minister, a number of major issues that emerged from the data need to be discussed and clarified in order to define further the role of the youth minister. These issues are: (a) the empowerment of young people (defining the role of the adult minister in relation to the role of the young person), and (b) role expectations involve clarifying the mission in society for which the young person is being prepared.

Empowerment of young people. The first major issue is the empowerment of young people. The issue of empowerment leads to a clarification and definition of the role of the adult minister in relation to the role of the young person. It is not possible to discuss the role of the adult youth minister without discussing the role of those with whom they are working. The way the role of the young people is defined can radically change the role of the adult. This theme of the empowerment of young people emerged from the data with the contrasting visions of the youth organization and role of young people in decision making between the United States and the Latin American

participants. The participants from the three United States dioceses see the diocesan youth ministry as very much a diocesan office that offers services to parishes. On both diocesan and parish levels decisions seem to be taken mostly by adults. While some adults ministers have the habit of occasionally inviting young people to help plan a meeting or a retreat, there is no reference in the interviews to permanent structures where real power is transferred to young people.

In contrast, the Latin American participants continually talk about making young people the protagonists of a pastoral process in which they are in charge. The Latin American youth ministers believe that a vision capable of raising young people to new levels of meaning and commitment would work only if young people themselves are involved in its elaboration.

The Latin American participants talk about promoting an organizational structure that reflects this option. Instead of a diocesan youth office that offers services such as courses, retreats, and workshops, they see the youth organization as a network of youth groups in which pastoral planning, evaluation, and youth coordination teams are important tools for involving youth in a "bottom-up" approach. Rather than a diocesan office, coordination committees are organized on different levels: national, regional, diocesan, and parochial. Rather than a top-down approach, members are involved in decision making through youth coordination teams, pastoral planning, and continuous evaluation. Young people have an opportunity to organize, discuss, argue their point of view, criticize, evaluate, make decisions, promote, and participate in different activities. In decision making bodies youth are in a majority, to avoid being "squashed" by the superior numbers and experience of adults. Youth ministers believe that when young people own their own ministry the level of motivation and dedication is more intense. The organizational structure involves a real transfer of power to young people.

This model of youth organization requires the youth minister to work in a process situation rather than in a diocesan office that offers services only. Youth ministers who work outside a process situation limit their activity to the organization of courses and visits to different parishes and youth groups. Yet courses and visits that are not part of a wider process rarely lead to commitment or educate toward responsibility. The youth minister does a lot of running

around, but sees few long term results. Since everything evolves around one person there is always the danger of discontinuity when that person leaves.

The proposal of a youth organization that empowers young people involves a radical redefinition of the role of the adult youth minister. The role of the youth minister becomes one of empowering youth on local level to analyze their own problems and discover their own solutions. The adult is there as a support but not as the one who decides everything alone. In meetings and evaluation and planning assemblies youth and adults are equal and decisions are taken together. Basically, the youth minister is challenged to see his role as one of forming leaders rather than followers. In this new role adults are not the ones who make the decisions and young people the ones who execute them. Adults have more of an advisory role. Decisions are taken together. The youth minister has only one vote. His role is seen as that of a mentor, a guide, a resource person. He tends to remain in the background in a supportive role, only intervening when the youth leaders need help. There is a pedagogical option behind this approach. Young people can only be trained as leaders insofar as they are put into real, learning situations where they have to exercise leadership. Young people can only be formed in responsibility to the extent that they are given responsibility. This may mean allowing them to make mistakes and then evaluating the consequences with them. This new role of the adult minister demands new skills, skills that go beyond being a good organizer and speaker to one of working through a process situation in which the parameters are often not clearly defined beforehand but are defined as the situation evolves. Important skills are the ability to listen, to dialogue, to convince, and to learn. The ability to manage conflict is especially important since the greater number of people involved in decision making involves a greater possibility of disagreement.

However, although the findings would seem to indicate two competing models--a model presented by the United States and another by the Latin American participants--this researcher does not believe that is so. In theory there is general agreement about an ideal of organizational structures that empower young people. This is an ideal to be achieved. The problem is that the practice of some lags behind the theory. Some United States participants speak clearly on the importance of youth empowerment. The problem is the absence of organizational structures that promote this ideal. Nevertheless the

participants in one United States diocese are moving in that direction, having already set up a network system between adults while involving some young people. The United States National Federation for Catholic Youth (NFCYM) has set up a national committee to study this question. One diocesan youth minister explained the challenge to this researcher:

> In the past we have swung between two extremes. Some adults handed over complete control to the young people. The adolescents' lack of experience led to the collapse of different undertakings. The adults then moved back in and centralized everything in their own hands. What we need is a balance.

Perhaps the secret in defining the role of the adult in relation to the role of the young person is to maintain a balance.

Neither is it a question of the Latin American participants being more advanced, in this respect, than their United States counterparts. Both reveal serious lacunae that need to be evaluated and corrected. While the experience of the United States participants would seem not to be moving fast enough in the direction of handing over real power to young people, the Latin American participants would seem to be erring in the opposite direction by not paying enough attention to the importance of lay adult ministers. The Latin American group revealed an unhealthy dependency on priest youth ministers who have a multiplicity of other tasks and are frequently transferred to other areas and tasks--often leaving the young people in disarray. The United States group left this writer with a profound sense of admiration for the lay adult ministers' dedication, competency, and accomplishments. Lay adults gave the youth ministry a sense of continuity and stability. However, the challenge is to involve adults in such a way that they do not undermine the leadership role of the young people.

The literature also supports the definition of the role of the adult minister as one who empowers young people. A national study (Search Institute, 1984) concludes:

> Programs should take seriously young adolescents' growing need for autonomy and self-determination. Programs should provide young adolescents with experience in making decisions, setting rules, and

shaping program content, while at the same time making the limits of this freedom explicit. (p. 381)

Talking about working with young people in a school setting, Starratt (1993) sees empowerment not only as a process of adults giving power to young people. Rather it is more a process that involves mutual respect, dialogue, and invitation; it implies recognition that each person enjoys talents, competencies, potentials that can be exercised in responsible and creative ways for the benefit of the young people themselves and those they serve.

The empowerment of youth also has a theological basis. A document of the United States national youth ministry points out that "For young people, there is no more powerful witness than other young people's own stories of the presence and activity of God in their lives" (NFCYM, 1993, p. 21). Church documents emphasize that the first evangelizers of young people should be young people themselves.

Mission in society. The second major issue--relating to personal role expectations of the youth minister--involves clarifying the mission in society for which the young person is being prepared. This issue needs to be further discussed to clarify and define more precisely the role of the youth minister. However, an initial observation is in order. The different visions that emerge from the interviews reflect the ideas of participants connected with parish youth groups. With regard to the United States context, it must be remembered that the American church has traditionally invested greater financial and human resources in Catholic schools than in a parish based youth ministry. But this is an area that we have not considered in our research project. Conclusions in this area may be very different.

The different visions that emerged in the interviews of the Latin American group and the United States group impact strongly on the role of the youth minister. The United States participants emphasize more a psychological model in which relationships are central and the Latin American participants tend to give priority to a sociological model in which social analysis is the main focus. A deeper understanding of both models is important here.

The youth minister involved in the psychological model sees his role as one of giving priority to the psychological forces that are at work in the growth process of the young person. The minister sees his role as one of presenting the

Gospel message in such a way that it illuminates the psychological challenges the young person is facing. Chief among these challenges is that of resolving the identity crisis (Erkison, 1968) which places the identity crisis as pivotal to the young person's growth process. The development of identity represents a commitment to specific values that serve as a basis for future life decisions (Newman, 1979). The young people who fail to establishing their identity remain confused and dependent on others.

The youth minister, in this model, is very much aware of his role in presenting a Gospel message that takes into account the specific developmental characteristics of adolescents and young adults.

Central to the psychological model is the question of relationships. However, while this model offers valuable insights for dealing with the psychological problems young people face, it is ill equipped for dealing with the social problems that surround them. The solutions for poverty--when it is considered--follow a line of alleviating symptoms rather than causes. The mission in the wider society is seen as helping young people to organize service programs to the poor and marginalized sectors of the population. No evidence emerged from the data that such services to the poor are followed by critical reflection on the structural causes of poverty. As a result, the impression is given that youth are formed to fit into society rather than to transform it.

The Latin American participants on the other hand stress more a sociological model of youth ministry in which the role of the youth minister is to help young people to acquire the critical skills for analyzing the structural causes of poverty and marginalization in society. Structures are understood as institutions and practices (economic, social, and political) created by people. A Vatican document (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1986) highlights the importance of these structures:

> Being necessary in themselves, they often tend to become fixed and fossilized as mechanisms relatively independent of the human will, thereby paralyzing or distorting social development and causing injustice. (p. 74)

In the sociological model, emphasis is placed on the historical role of the church in transforming society. This means overcoming a naive vision of the world. Political, economic, and social structures are seen as responsible for the

growth of the poor and shaping of values and behavior patterns. The building of a more just and fraternal society is possible only to the extent that people discover and eliminate the structural causes of poverty. Personal conversion is also fundamental but cannot be divorced from structural change.

But this is a difficult role for the youth minister. Structures are invisible. Although they exercise enormous influence on the quality of life and human values, people are largely unaware of them. A United States writer (Warren, 1982) on youth ministry argues for the inclusion of this model in youth ministry:

> Young people in our society are one of the most manipulated sectors of the population. They are oppressed because they don't have an active voice and therefore feel powerless; they are manipulated because they are unaware of structures and systems that control their lives. These structures and systems include the educational structures, economic structures, especially the structures of marketing and advertising, political structures, religious structures (especially organizational structures of parishes and dioceses). Awareness (of these structures) is linked with politicization. . . . Naturally a politicized youth will want to have an active voice in the adaptation of structures that exercise influence over them, including schools. This is perhaps one of the reasons why teachers dedicate such little time to help young people understand the functioning of power. (p. 55)

The emphasis of the Latin American participants is partly influenced by a different social and church context: the extremes of poverty and riches in the southern countries and the development of liberation theology which, as Lane (1984) points out, uses the tools of the social sciences to analyze the social situation to be evangelized.

Nevertheless the impression must be avoided that the struggle to work for social justice is a legitimate objective for a Latin American youth minister but is not relevant to his United States counterpart. That is not so. In the United States, for example, both youth ministers and youth are exposed to a constant barrage of ideas provoked by a political debate on the national budget, interest groups, education, environment, health care, housing, employment, minimum wage, welfare, and violence. These are themes that touch on the

lives of everyone. These are the frequent themes of the media and ordinary conversations. Without an understanding of structural causes and interest groups, young people are reduced to passive spectators with regard to the great questions of our time. They are easily manipulated by 30 second sound bytes that simplify complex questions by offering black and white solutions. And the youth minister will have neglected an important aspect of his role.

The literature supports the inclusion of the sociological model as an essential aspect of the youth minister's role. The document, "Justice in the World" (Synod of Bishops, 1972) speaks of justice as a "constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel" (no. 6). The United States bishops (NCCB, 1986) analyze a reality that the youth minister must take into account in his work with young people.

> Poverty is increasing in the United States, not decreasing. For a people who believe in "progress," this should be cause for alarm. These burdens fall most heavily on blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans. Even more disturbing is the large increase in the number of women and children living in poverty. Today children are the largest single group among the poor. This tragic fact seriously threatens the nation's future. That so many people are poor in a nation as rich as ours is a social and moral scandal that we cannot ignore. (no. 16)

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In the same line of reasoning, Michael Warren (1982) talks about the need for politicization in youth work.

> Politicization in my sense is a work of enablement by raising consciousness about the structures that affect one's life and by encouraging lines of action to speak to these structures. The opposite of politicization is privatization. (p. 66)

The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM, 1990), in its guidelines on the role of the youth minister, cites as one of the skills required of the youth minister:

> Ability to use the process of social analysis and theological reflection in designing and implementing justice and peace educational experiences, and service/action programs, which include both direct service and action for social change. (p. 11)

The findings reveal that the United States participants give primacy to relationships (psychological model) and the Latin American participants give primacy to the promotion of social justice (sociological model). However, the definition of the role of the youth minister should not involve an either/or choice: a choice between a psychological or a sociological model of youth ministry. A mature youth ministry in both continents will use the tools of both psychology and sociology to present the Gospel message and maintain a balance between the individual and the social. Youth leaders accept more readily that a youth ministry that gives priority to relationships--to the exclusion of social justice--is irrelevant in the modern world. On the other hand, a youth ministry that gives priority to social justice--to the exclusion of relationships-- just does not work. In the past an over emphasis in Latin America on the sociological dimension to the exclusion of the psychological one has frequently led to a youth ministry largely ineffective in mobilizing young people. Youth ministers need to avoid getting locked into an "either/or" choice. Both sets of participants need to avoid the trap of remaining at one end of the spectrum. In practice, the youth minister must start with the psychological model to be effective in motivating and involving young people. But he should also be challenged to move from a therapeutic model of pastoral ministry with its emphasis on building up self esteem and solving individual problems to an awareness of our responsibility for the wider human family, especially the disadvantaged groups in our world? The youth minister is challenged to face the challenge of preparing young people to become change agents in public life--while inspired by a perspective of core gospel values.

Figure 1 illustrates how the psychological model (micro level of personal relationships) and the sociological model (macro level of relations in the wider society) are interlinked. The young person is connected to both the micro and macro levels and the role of the youth minister is to help the young person to grow and contribute on both planes. However, the youth minister may be tempted to work only with the psychological model of youth ministry as this is easier--at least this is the experience of this writer. Young people like to come together and talk about their problems and work on building up their self esteem. There are many obstacles to the use of the sociological model today. To work for social justice and for the poor demands much idealism and

dedication. Commentators point out that a major cultural shift has changed the emphasis from a collective and community ideal to a more individualistic one. There is now a "new generation of young people definitely cut off from the identity of the sixties and seventies, and with enormous difficulty in defining their identity and place in history and society" (Comite Latino-Americano, 1991, p. 4).

Figure 1

Micro and Macro Relationships

Macro level of relationships to wider society

Micro level of personal relationships
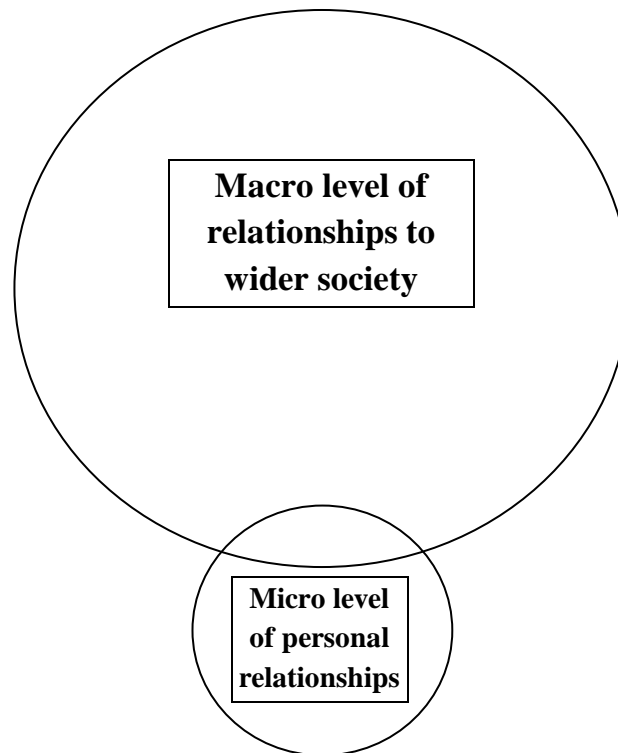
A Spanish commentator (De Pablo, 1985) is very emphatic on this cultural change among young people today:

There are clear symptoms of a generalized apathy and tiredness among young people and social organizations due to political disillusionment and the lack of faith in the possibility of changing social structures. There is a notable tendency toward the private and, even to searching for meaning, with a strong pragmatic non-institutional, non-ideologized bend. These young people do not seek to change society from within, as in the seventies, but prefer to live on its margin. (p. 77)

Subjective experience is now the central value. The discredit of many ideologies leads young people to concentrate on the present rather than the future. Passing emotions are cultivated at the expense of deeper meanings. The youth minister is challenged to rise above this. His role must be defined rather as one of facing the challenge put by Steinem (1993): "It's as if the two great movements of our time, those for social justice and for self-realization, were halves of a whole just waiting to come together into truly revolutionary groups" (p. 344).

Role Expectations of Others

The findings on the role expectations of others was a further important step in piecing together the role of the adult youth minister. Some participants were not accustomed to reflecting on expectations that others have of their role and how these expectations can impact on levels of success or failure, or job satisfaction, or frustration. The pastor, for example, may be looking for someone to organize sports with the young people to keep them off the streets, or to ward off criticism that he is doing nothing for the youth. On the other hand, the youth minister may have a goal of forming leaders who will become critically involved in changing their environment. When these different expectations are not spelled out beforehand, the adult minister is putting himself in an impossible position. It matters a lot in defining the role of the youth minister if expectations are limited to a negative philosophy of sheltering adolescents from the surrounding social influences or positive expectations of channeling their energy into transforming their environment. It matters a lot if church leaders have a narrow vision of youth ministry that is reduced to getting adolescents to go to mass on Sundays or a more holistic approach of helping young people to grow in all areas of their lives.

The findings reveal general consensus concerning the expectations of others that the youth minister must deal with in defining his role. <u>Three areas</u> need to be further discussed: (a) the age of the youth minister, (b) critical awareness, and (c) involvement of parents.

<u>The age of the youth minister</u>. The first area that needs to be further discussed is that of the <u>age of the youth minister</u>. Two different visions emerged from the data. One group emphasized the lack of experience and lack of professional and vocational stability of younger adults and the greater experience and stability of the older adults. The other group perceive greater dynamism and capacity to communicate with young people in the younger adults. This is a very important challenge that has not appeared in the review of literature and needs to be addressed. Negative expectations concerning young adults can have the effect of drying up the source of long-term committed youth ministers. Both younger and older youth ministers have their drawbacks. Younger ministers may not see all the pitfalls. Older ministers may have difficulty in adapting to a ministry where young people do not want to be talked down to. While younger adults frequently have greater flexibility for changing, older adults often do not. A younger minister may have developed the skills of team work while an older minister may not.

Rigid expectations that define ministers' abilities by age are not helpful. If expectations are negative, responsibilities will not be passed down the line. Younger minister will resent being treated as second- class citizens. The determining factor is not so much age as that many young youth ministers are thrown into situations where there is no support system, no networking with other ministers, and no structures of continuous evaluation where they are in contact with others who are on the same level and who may also have more experience. A more useful strategy is to judge youth ministers by their work rather than by their age and develop a collaborative ministry where there is a healthy mix of younger and older youth ministers. Age in itself does not confer an ability to work well with youth. On the contrary, in situations where young people demand to be part of a decision-making process, younger adults learn how to work effectively with youth by becoming involved, not by waiting until they get older.

<u>Critical awareness</u>. A second area that needs to be discussed further with regard to expectations of the role of the youth minister is the need of

young people to be <u>critically aware</u> of their surroundings. Critical awareness is not just a negative concept of criticizing. It involves rather the capacity to distinguish truth from falsehood, to perceive half truths, to see through manipulation. Correctly understood, it involves a coming together of both the sociological models and psychological. Critical awareness involves awareness of the social, economic, and political structures that prevent the individual from seeing the truth on a macro level, but also internal psychological structures that make him blind to his own failings on a micro level.

The Latin American participants perceived their surrounding church environment to be more supportive of such an option than their United States counterparts. The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, who has had great influence on pastoral agents in Latin America (Elias, 1994) maintains that neutrality is not possible in the struggle between justice and injustice. The role of the educator (in this case the youth minister) is to form young people who are critically aware. If he is not doing so, then he is forming them to fit in--in an unquestioning way--to the surrounding social system. Where the youth minister does not see the awakening of critical awareness as his role, there is a danger that the Gospel will be presented in a way that it is no longer the ferment in society, but is in fact itself being fermented by the dominant ideology. The opposite of critical awareness is naiveté. A well-known writer on youth ministry in the United States, Tom Zanzig (1983), refers to the need to

> actively engage young people in action on behalf of social justice, awakening within them a consciousness of how they are manipulated by the media and other dimensions of our culture, and then providing the guidance they need to combat these negative influences in their lives. No one can deny our Christian responsibilities in these areas. (p. 45)

A European theologian points to a danger in developed countries where Christians run the risk of more or less identifying "Christian existence with the 'natural' existence of the bourgeois. . . . Yet at what price? No less a price . . . than the abolition of Christianity itself, the Christianity of discipleship" (Metz, 1981, p. 5).

There is a close link between the previous discussion of the need for a social analysis of structural causes of social problems (which emerged from the

findings on personal expectations) and this discussion of critical awareness (which emerged from the findings on the expectations of others).

Involvement of parents. A third area that needs to be discussed further is the expectation that the youth minister's role extends to the involvement of families, especially parents. In the opinion of the United States participants, a youth ministry that does not seek to involve parents on some level is inconceivable. In the data supplied by the Latin American participants there is a surprising omission. This difference is also reflected in the literature on the role of the youth minister on both continents.

In the literature in the northern continent, the involvement of the family receives strong support. The official national guidelines for United States youth ministers (NFCYM, 1990) point to the competencies in this area that are necessary to fulfill their role: "Ability to design and implement intergenerational programs . . . ability to infuse a family perspective in different aspects of youth ministry programs" (p. 9). A national guideline to youth evangelization (NFCYM, 1993) argues strongly for the inclusion of the family as part of the youth minister's role:

> Therefore, evangelizing the family as a unit is an important task. Because the family is an interconnected system, changes in any one member affect all the others. For example, in families where a young person is evangelized but the rest of the families not, there exists the possibility of tension between them and even mutual rejection. On the other hand, the evangelization of the young person could well spark curiosity and interest in the faith on the part of all other family members. (p. 9)

The need to take into account the stresses on the young person caused by different family styles is an added motive put forward by the national guidelines on adolescent catechesis (NFCYM, 1992):

> Frequently stress, caused by separation or divorce, by living in a single parent or blended family, by unemployment or illness, or by family disunity, affects growth in faith. Adolescent catechesis acknowledges the varied family styles in the United States and the particular stresses experienced by the contemporary family and responds with new direction and strategies. (p. 6)

In the literature in the southern continent, the emphasis is more on involving youth in the local church community, especially small-base communities. The family is often seen as part of the local community and not needing special treatment. The lack of attention given by the Latin American youth ministers to young people's parents and families is confirmed by the literature. A recently updated 400-page official guideline to Latin American youth ministry (Conferência Geral do Episcopado Latino-americano, 1995), apart from a few passing references to the family, largely ignores this area of concern for the role of the youth minister. The official Latin American document on the role of the youth minister (Conferência Geral do Episcopado Latino-americano, 1994) also has only passing references to the family and no references to the involvement of parents. Further evidence on the lack of emphasis for the involvement of parents and the family by the youth minister can be seen in the documents produced by the Latin American youth ministry in their yearly continental assemblies. Since 1984 national coordination teams have been meeting yearly in these continental assemblies to reflect on different themes related to youth ministry. Each week-long meeting has ended with the publication of a document to guide youth ministers and youth leaders in their work. Parents and family have never been featured as a major concern.

There are a number of reasons why Latin American youth ministers have not stressed the involvement of parents and families of the youth as part of their role. This option is partly a reflection of a larger debate in the wider Latin American church during the 1980s. Family movements have tended to be more conservative in their analysis of social problems. They have tended to see the family as the central cell of society and the moral disintegration of the family as the sole cause of social ills. Consequently the moral reform of the family, in this view, is seen as the only strategy for transforming society. More progressive sectors of the church have pointed out that society is more than the sum of its parts, the sum of individual families. There are social, economic, political, and cultural structures that exercise a strong influence on the family and shape its values and quality of life, and the moral reform of the family cannot be successful if these are not taken into account. The emphasis on the family has sometimes been seen as a strategy for distracting attention from the deeper causes of social ills in order to avoid a more conflictive pastoral

ministry. Progressive sectors have tended to emphasize a two-fold strategy for transforming society: involvement of the laity in the Christian community and in social organizations. This debate in the wider Latin American church has tended to influence attitudes of youth ministers with regard to their role.

The present pastoral, cultural, and political context of the Latin American youth ministry would seem to facilitate a step forward beyond an either/or debate to a more inclusive approach that involves community, family, and social analysis. The reflection on the role of the Latin American youth minister needs to do some serious evaluation in the area of involving parents and families, if their approach is to be more holistic.

Role Conflict

The findings on the role conflict were a final important step in putting together the pieces that make up role of the adult youth minister. A rich variety of situations and examples was presented by the participants where "role expectations interfere with each other or contradict one another altogether" (Smith, 1973, p. 27). Conflict of expectations is seen as a minefield and an ever-pervasive threat for the adult who wishes to work with youth. Role conflict is seen as having two main causes that must be dealt with in order to avoid burnout: role ambiguity and conflict of role expectations. The high degree of turnover of youth ministers revealed by the findings makes this an urgent task. How to map out these different expectations, define them in such a way that conflict is diminished, understand the model of church they are coming from, and how to deal with them is a key issue for avoiding burnout and being effective as a youth minister.

There are a number of steps that can be taken deal with the negative effects of role conflict. The first step is one of being aware of the existence of different conflicting role expectations that can seriously damage the success and job satisfaction of the youth minister if it is not dealt with in a systematic way. The interviews were an opportunity for some of the participants to reflect, in an organized way, on their role as youth ministers. A significant number were unaccustomed to taking into account the expectations of others and so had difficulty in identifying them.

A second step in dealing with role conflict is one of spelling out and thus clarifying the different role expectations. The literature on conflict

resolution points to the importance of an initial diagnosis to establish if in fact there is a conflict. Sometimes a conflict is only apparent--the result of misunderstanding about different roles. Clarification and improved communication can solve the problem (Owens, 1991).

A third step in dealing with role conflict stresses the need for education. The findings reveal that role ambiguity is frequently caused by ignorance of a theory of youth ministry. Many priests and lay leaders, and even youth ministers themselves lack a vision and methodology of youth ministry. There is little advantage in asking parish leaders to draw up a job description of the youth minister they hope to hire if their vision is restricted to "keeping kids off the street." Education in the role of the youth minister, however, is not a once-only event. The relevant theory is continually evolving to the extent that youth ministers network and meet to reflect on their role, and confront the theory with their pastoral praxis.

A fourth step in dealing with role conflict stresses the need for a strategy for navigating between different models of church while making an option for one of them. Role clarification and education may not be sufficient to help youth ministers define their role. The findings show that role clarification may reveal conflicting models of church. Two models of church emerge from the findings: a traditional model and a more participative, liberating model. There is an inherent conflict between both models that does not disappear with clarification. Behind the different language lurk different visions of the ideal type of young person to be formed and different methodological approaches or ways of arriving at this ideal. The differences reveal very different roles and profound changes in the way the adult youth minister is expected to function.

A traditional model is characterized by a top-down approach. Information tends to follow the hierarchical structure, circulating downward from those in charge. Little information flows in the opposite direction. Young people are not empowered. Paulo Freire (Elias, 1994), the Brazilian educator, describes this approach as a "banking method," whereby a certain amount of material is "deposited" in people's minds. The presupposition is that their knowledge and experience are not important. Such an approach forms passive people rather than leaders. Young people trained in this model experience difficulty in holding their own in debates in a pluralistic environment, since they have been trained to repeat rather than to create. This model tends to start

with abstract doctrine rather than with young people's experience. A traditional model of church is also uncritical of social structures that shape values and attitudes and marginalizes sectors of the population. In this model, the solution to social problems is seen in personal conversion. The church places the moral weight of the church and the Gospel on the side of maintaining the status quo. A youth minister who is working out of this model of church will see his role in a very different light from the participative, liberating model.

A participative, liberating model emphasizes the community aspect of the church and the need to be socially relevant. Baptism is seen as giving a basic equality to all Christians. All are co-responsible. Rather than a hierarchical model, a church of many ministries is emphasized. The youth minister sees his role as one of training young Christians as leaders in the ideological pluralist environment of modern culture. In this second model of church a methodology of active rather than passive learning is adopted. This model of church makes an option for social justice and places its moral weight on the side of social transformation. The youth minister sees his role as one of insisting on personal conversion, but also on the necessity to transform unjust social structures.

At this level of role conflict an option is usually made by most youth ministers for the more participative, liberating model of church. This is seen as being more coherent with the biblical origins of the community founded by Jesus. But local church leaders or other youth ministers may believe in a more traditional model of church. It is not of little importance and consequence which model is chosen. Campolo (1984) points out that when youth ministers are prevented from translating their vision into reality "a loss of integrity debilitates these youth workers so completely that they get out of youth work, if for no other reason than to save themselves" (p. 6).

The role of the youth minister will be seen as one of advancing the model of church that he sees to be most credible. Here strategy is an important adjunct to role clarification. The conflict between models of church is not eliminated. It is not possible to eliminate the existence of models. But there can be a positive aspect to this conflict. K. Thomas (1976) observes:

> The confrontation of divergent views often produces ideas of superior quality. Divergent views are apt to be based upon different evidence, different considerations, different insights, different frames of reference.

Disagreement may thus confront an individual with factors which he had previously ignored, and help him to arrive at a more comprehensive view which synthesizes elements of his own and other's position. (p. 891)

In summary, the different issues discussed are all intertwined. Central to these issues is the type of young person the youth minister hopes to form. Is it his aim to form passive followers or leaders? The often unconscious beliefs have to be spelled out and examined. Related to this theme is the whole question of the empowerment of young people, the importance of networking, and the role of the young person in the youth organization versus the role of the adult. The different pedagogical approaches to youth work are also central here: the top-down or the participatory paradigm.

Also central to these themes is how the adult minister and others see his role with regard to the mission of youth ministry in society. Connected subthemes are the option for the poor, the need to form youth with critical thinking skills, the question of systematic injustice, of maintaining the status quo or transforming society. Subjacent to this theme is an understanding of the relationship of the church to the world.

These themes are so intertwined that the discussion of one inevitably involves connecting with aspects of the other. There is however a unifying theme. Participants' comments indicate a struggle between different models of church that shape how people deal with these themes. And this struggle is not between both continents but within each continent. Youth ministers are challenged to see as central to their role to work for the building of a more participative, liberating model of church through their work with young people.

Implications of the Research

As one of the few (if not the only) empirical research project conducted on the role of the Catholic youth minister, this study offers a framework for evaluating and improving the efficacy of ministers both on parish and diocesan levels. The findings offer insights, point to possible shortcomings, question unreflected practices, promise job satisfaction and success when roles are clarified, and present a road map that illuminates the way forward.

The clarification of the role of the youth minister that emerged in the findings could be an important help for many diocesan and parish ministers who are confused about their role. A central aspect of the conclusions is the international aspect of the research project that makes it possible for youth ministers to learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses. The conclusions can serve as resource material for both church leaders and youth ministers themselves in elaborating job descriptions. They can also help to avoid pitfalls that have frequently rendered youth work ineffective. The findings can have important implications for diocesan and parish policy in involving adults in youth work. This writer intends to publish these findings in modified form so that they can reach a wider audience.

The major differences that emerged do not so much reflect competing models between the Latin American and the United States church as much as an ideal toward which youth ministers in both continents need to work. The weaknesses of each group were challenged by the strengths of the other group. A nomenclature of various levels of youth ministry instead of differences would be a more appropriate terminology. Differences do not necessarily mean disagreements but rather levels of youth ministry at which not all have as yet arrived. They are goals to be aimed at together rather than differences that separate into opposing camps.

An important conclusion that emerged from the data was the need not only to clarify roles but also to educate youth ministers, clergy, parents, and laity, and raise them to higher levels of understanding of the vocation to which the adult who works with young people is called. This process of continuous education can be facilitated by talks, workshops, courses, networking between youth ministers, a process of mentoring, and resource material.

Recommendations

Although this research was limited in terms of the size of the sample chosen, nevertheless some very clear ideas did emerge for helping define the role of the adult youth minister. Based on the review of literature and the findings of this research project the following recommendations are suggested:

Using the methodology of this research project further study might be done with a different sample population from a different region of the United States church to evaluate the results of this study. A further study could verify

the validity of the conclusions for a larger population. The sample for this project was taken from the church on the east coast of the United States and is considered by many to have very distinctive characteristics and to be more conservative than the church in other parts of the country. Also, the expectations of parents, youth, lay leaders, and clergy with regard to the role of the adult lay minister were limited to those expectations as perceived by the ministers who participated in the research project. A further study could include separate interviews with these categories as they view the youth minister's role from the outside.

Further study needs to be done on the Latin American situation where there are almost no full-time, salaried lay ministers. Unlike the United States scene the youth minister is not seen as a viable life and professional option. The research revealed that the professional youth minister has been an important advance for youth ministry in the experience of the United States participants. The lack of full-time, salaried lay ministers is a <u>weakness</u> of the Latin American experiment. An obvious problem in Third World churches is the lack of financial resources. Nevertheless the situation needs to be further studied and possible solutions investigated.

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APPENDIX A

ENGLISH INTERVIEW GUIDE

ENGLISH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research question: What is the role of the adult youth minister in Youth Ministry?

1.   Tell me *something* about yourself. How did you get involved in this work with young people?

2.   When you explain your work as youth minister to people **what image** do you seek to communicate?

3.   Who are the people you most admire and were **most influential** in your life as a youth minister? Why?

4.   What is the **image other people** have of the youth minister?

5.   What are your **expectations** as youth minister?
        What are the expectations of **church leaders**?
        What are the expectations of the **young people**?

6.   List up to five **important characteristics** that help youth ministers to be effective in the church.

7.   How do you see the relation of adult youth ministers to the **overall diocesan organization** of youth ministry?

8.   What is the place of **spirituality** in the role of the adult youth minister? What are the theological and spiritual ideas that motivate you and give meaning to your work with young people?

9.   What are the major **difficulties** that prevent the adult youth minister from being a catalyst for the evolution of a more effective Youth ministry?

10. How is the initial **selection and ongoing training** of adult youth ministers conducted?
    What is lacking?

11. What gives you most satisfaction in your work as youth minister?

12. What are the **successes** of adult youth ministers in your diocese?

13. What are the **principles** that guide your work with young people?

14. How do you see the roles and relation between **professional and volunteer** adult youth ministers?
    What is the relationship between the lay adult youth minister and the **ordained clergy**?

15. What is the rate of **burn-out** among adult youth ministers and what are its causes?

16. **Recommendations** for the future?

APPENDIX B

SPANISH INTERVIEW GUIDE

SPANISH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Pregunta de Investigación: ¿Qué es el papel del asesor adulto en la pastoral juvenil?

1.   ¿Dígame algo acerca de usted mismo. ¿Como usted entró en este trabajo con gente joven?

2.   ¿Cuando explica usted su trabajo como asesor de pastoral juvenil qué imagen trata de comunicar?

3.   ¿Quienes son las personas que usted más admira y que han sido más influyentes en su vida, como asesor?

4.   ¿Cual es el imagen que otras personas tienen del asesor de pastoral juvenil?

5.   ¿Cuales son sus expectativas como asesor de pastoral juvenil?
      ¿Cuales son las expectativas de los líderes de la iglesia?
      ¿Cuales son las expectativas de la gente joven?

6.   Haga una lista de cinco características importantes que ayudan al asesor de pastoral juvenil a hacer un trabajo eficaz en la iglesia.

7.   ¿ Como ve la relación del asesor adulto con la organización de pastoral juvenil diocesana?

8.   ¿Cual es el lugar de espiritualidad en el papel del asesor adulto?
      ¿Cuales son las ideas teológicas y espirituales que motivan usted y dan significado a su trabajo con gente joven?

9.   ¿Cuales son las dificultades mayores que impiden al asesor adulto de ser un catalizador para la evolución de una pastoral juvenil más efectivo?

10.   ¿Como se hace selección inicial y entrenamiento del asesor adulto?
      ¿Qué hace falta?

11.   ¿Que te da mas satisfacción en su trabajo?

12.   ¿Cuales son los éxitos de los asesores juveniles en su diócesis?

13.   ¿Cuales son los principios que guía su trabajo con gente joven?

14.   ¿Como ve usted los papeles y relación entre los asesores salariados y los asesores voluntarios?
      ¿Qué es la relación entre el asesor laico y el clero ordenado?

15.   ¿Cuanto agotamiento hay entre los asesores juveniles? ¿Cuales son sus causas?

16.   ¿Cuales son sus sugerencias para el futuro?

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF PRESENTATION

614 Central Avenue
Cedarhurst
New York 11516

<div align="center">Cedarhurst, 1994</div>

Dear N:

 When we spoke on the phone, I promised to send you a letter explaining better who I am and what I am doing, before our interview on Thursday night.

 I have worked with youth ministry in Brazil for 24 years and was national youth director for the Brazilian Bishops conference for 7 years. At the moment I am doing a PhD course in Fordham University. I have chosen "The role of the Youth Minister in Youth Ministry" as the topic to be researched in my PhD dissertation. As part of my research project I need to interview a number of youth ministers on the this topic. The diocesan youth minister, N., suggested that you would be willing to cooperate in this project.

 You yourself are well aware of the importance of this topic for developing an effective youth ministry. I have been unable to find any scientific research done on this issue so I believe this research project may be the beginning of a more scientific approach to understanding youth ministry. The perspective and experience of people who are working in the field is important. Many people have a rich experience and stimulating ideas. Important ideas, however, are continually being lost as there is little accumulation of experience. Lessons learned from mistakes are forgotten and newcomers tend to fall into the same traps as their predecessors. My hope is that this research project will bring some of these ideas and experiences together so that together we can begin to build a more efficacious and dynamic theory to improve our work with young people.

 I assure you that any sensitive information shared will be kept confidential and names will not appear in the report which is not intended for publication. I am open to any suggestions that may improve the research plan to make it more useful for our common work with young people.

 Many thanks for your interest and support. Looking forward to an interesting chat on Thursday night.

<div align="center">Yours sincerely,</div>

<div align="center">George Boran</div>

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF THE ADULT YOUTH MINISTER
IN YOUTH MINISTRY

George Boran, PhD
Fordham University, New York, 1996
Mentor: John L. Elias, EdD

This study was designed to research the role of the adult youth minister in youth ministry. The investigation sought to build a theory that could help define the role of the youth minister by interpreting the data supplied by people who have been successful in this role. The study involved youth ministers from both the United States and Latin America.

Role theory provided an important theoretical basis for the research project, especially the concepts of role expectations, role ambiguity, role clarification, and role conflict.

The research strategy employed a qualitative research approach which used guided interviews to collect data from a sample of 21 youth ministers from the United States and Latin America. While the United States participants were selected from three Catholic dioceses on the east coast of the country, the Latin American participants came from nine different countries.

Based on the theoretical framework of the study and the categories that emerged from the data, a theory of the role of the adult youth minister in youth ministry was developed. The findings were presented under three main frameworks: personal role expectations, the expectations of others, and role conflict. There was remarkable consensus among participants from both continents within these frameworks. Nevertheless important contrasts emerged in the following areas: visions of youth organization, empowerment of young people, mission of youth in society, establishment of boundaries with regard to relationships between adults and adolescents, critical awareness, involvement of parents, and models of church.

The major differences that emerged did not so much reflect competing models between participants from the Latin American and the United States churches as much as an ideal toward which youth ministers in both continents need to work. The weaknesses of each group were challenged by the strengths of the other group. Differences did not necessarily mean disagreements but rather goals or levels of youth ministry at which not all have as yet arrived.

VITA

VITA

Name	George Boran
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High School	Christian Brothers School Kilkenny, Ireland Graduated June 1959
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Diploma for Teaching Physics and Chemistry in High School	Blackrock College Dublin, Ireland Conferred July 1962
Master of Divinity	Holy Ghost Missionary College Dublin, Ireland Conferred June 1968
Doctor of Philosophy Educational Administration and Supervision	Fordham University New York, New York Conferred May 1996
Positions held before starting doctoral studies	National Youth Director Brazilian Bishops Conference Brazilia 1984 - 1990
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