



F: Formation and Training of Leaders

F/4

Teamwork of Leaders is the “Clearest Sign and Strongest Aid”, for Community Building.

Adapted from Lumko No.10 Towards Non-dominating Leadership

TOPICS OF ASIPA TEXTS:

- A: GOSPEL SHARING(7 Steps)**
- B: SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES**
- C: A PARTICIPATORY CHURCH**
- D: TRAINING FOR PARISH TEAMS**
- E: SPIRITUAL FORMATION**
- F: FORMATION AND TRAINING OF LEADERS**

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Teamwork of Leaders is the “Clearest Sign and Strongest Aid”, for Community Building.

Introduction

In this session we wish to emphasise that leaders should learn to work as a team. Today, all over the world, we have a new phenomenon in all the areas of work. If you go to any hospital with some ailment, there are several procedures. You must register, meet a person who will prescribe several tests depending on the complaint. After getting the reports there is a team of doctors who interact if the ailment is grave. A team of workers with different tasks are involved.

In the political sphere too in all the areas there are teams of workers, councils of ministers, groups of elected members who interact and arrive at any decision. Even in dictatorial regimes there is apparently a team of consultants.

A. WHAT WE MEAN BY “TEAMWORK”?

Take turns to read aloud section A and B. Stop to discuss when there are questions:

In the Church, after the Second Vatican Council, in a special manner, we have teams in various hierarchical structures, such as Ecumenical Councils, Bishops' Synods, the Bishop and his consultants, the diocesan synod, Council of priests, Diocesan Pastoral council, Parish pastoral council, Finance committee etc.

Even in pastoral ministry today if there is more than one priest in a parish, teamwork among them is emphasized, even when the main responsibility lies on the parish priest. The same thing holds good also regarding other pastoral workers. We have a team of catechism teachers, team of extra-ordinary ministers of the Eucharist etc. When we speak of emergent leaders, teamwork becomes all the more important since these leaders perform one task together or several tasks. In these teams planning is done, difficulties are solved, and training is conducted. These leaders may come from different small Christian communities.

In this session let us try to find out the advantages of this approach and learn why this is important as per the mind of Christ.

B. THE SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUE OF SUCH TEAMWORK

1. God is a community

Since God is a community, we were created to reflect his way of life. Although selfishness and individualism have led us to separation from each other, Christ as the new man, the man-living-with-others, is leading us back to togetherness. Today, when new challenges of modern life demand that we develop new ways of governing our large societies; the Church has to develop a leadership which follows the life of the Risen Christ. This Spirit calls us to togetherness, to a family-style, and to communal responsibility among equals. Therefore, not only the bishops, but all leaders must live this aspect of collegiality and Christians as a whole must, in all that they do, live and signify this message of community.

2. Not domination – but service

This service attitude is displayed through several ways such as:

- The way in which ministers listen to people.
- The way in which they avoid symbols of status.
- The way in which they join the ranks of all others when no special function is required.
- The way in which they say a word of authority where it is required.
- The way in which they invite others to take initiative.
- The way in which they welcome and accept inspirations which arise without them in the community.
- The way in which they want rituals to be conducted as communal celebrations. Etc.
- These details could be called as “style” of ministry. All these details will signify that they understand their office as assistance to community-life.

3. Teamwork shows that the essence of the Church is COMMUNITY

- Jesus had 12 apostles with him as a team.
- We also find that among them there were three in the inner circle, so to say, who were very close to him.
- There were a group of 72 disciples who were with him occasionally.
- There were also a team of women who took care of their needs.

When the early Christian communities looked for forms of leadership which were suitable for them, they chose to imitate the structure of having a team of seven elders in each community. Those who consider teamwork as a priority will always look for ways of expressing this value. It is the teamwork of leaders which proclaims the message that the Church is a community.

C. PRACTICAL ADVANTAGES OF TEAMWORK.

Read the following passage of the Gospel and find out the practical advantages for teamwork:

Lk 10:1-11

Supplement:

- It avoids the over-burdening of one person.
- It makes it possible to represent the different kinds of people present in the community.
- It makes easier to replace somebody.
- Young people can more easily join a team than take over alone.
- Shy characters with valuable talents will more easily come forward.
- Over-dominating characters are discouraged or kept in check.
- Temporal withdrawal from office becomes possible when necessary.
- Mutual correction is easier.
- Training is more likely to take place.
- The odd sides of a leader's character or style are less prominent.
- Adaptation to the changing times is more likely.
- It avoids providing paid employment to a single person etc.

D. IMPORTANT SUGGESTIONS TO TRAINERS, PARISH PRIESTS AND THE BISHOP

1. *Give the example of teamwork. Communal responsibility and sharing yourself.*
2. *Present the ideal to the leaders and to the communities, again and again.*
3. *Train people only in teams.*
4. *Refer questions and problems only to teams, not to individual leaders.*
5. *Give tasks to pairs or groups, not to individuals.*
6. *When publicly installing leaders, never install one single leader. But only more than one.*
7. *Stress equality; avoid status symbols and distinctions as far as possible.*
8. *Encourage rotation of office.*

N.B.

While following the team-work approach we are likely to encounter difficulties. The temptation to fall back into monopoly will be ever present. We should remember that teamwork and togetherness will always remain a challenge. However, it is a realistically possible ideal.

E. FIVE MORE AREAS WHERE PRECAUTIONS ARE NEEDED:

1. Need for incentives other than issuing of certificates:

- Issuing certificates implies a systematic syllabus. For emergent leaders it may do more harm than good.

- The desire to grow spiritually should be emphasized. Spiritual ideals must be put before the leaders.
- The emphasis should be to make the whole community to grow. The training should involve practical work in this line.
- The skills which they learn should be used in the community. They should learn by doing.
- Regular evaluation to show progress and shortcomings should be emphasized.
- Long term planning for training and working together could be a great help.

2. Examinations should be disconnected from rituals of induction:

- If the emergent leaders are inducted into the ministry as and when they pass an examination after the training, it may give wrong signals. They should not feel that they have become fit to perform the task and look for promotions etc.
- Even if examinations need to be conducted to personalize what they learn, it should be delinked from the rite of commissioning.

3. We should avoid fixed intervals between different liturgical inductions:

- It is harmful to publish a pre-determined plan of “advancement”, e.g. by stating that after two years of formation the leaders will be invested in a certain office and after one further year they will be installed in another office.
- The criteria should not be the duration of training, nor passing of an examination, but detection of how the community co-operate with the leaders.
- The majority of the community should feel happy that one among them has emerged to exercise a ministry.
- The community members should be involved in the selection of the leaders and suggest suitable candidates for the ministry.
- Any kind power struggle among leaders should be avoided.
- The leaders should develop a genuine christen motivation.
- The leaders show a sense of responsibility and initiative.
- The leaders show a willingness to co-operate with each other and to share tasks and responsibility.
- The leaders have an attitude to recruit new leaders.

4. No pre-determined “time-schedule of advancement”

- Emergent leaders should therefore be told from the beginning that they should not regard the commissioning as their aim, but the ability to serve within their community.

- They should be told that there will be no end at all for their training. It is continuous, even after completion of any subject and will continue even after being commissioned.

5. The meaning of induction rite, other than ordination, should be made clear:

We should note that there are three different aspects regarding its meaning.

1. Such rites are a prayer of the whole Church over the leader.
2. They are a commitment of the leader to God and the Church.
3. They affirm and deepen a relationship between the leader and those whom he serves, to the extent that the Universal Church gives recognition to this relationship.
4. With the induction rites there could be danger where the emerging leaders are led to class-thinking and status-thinking. It could also lead to a lesser degree of lay involvement in general. As a safeguard:
 - a. We commission only teams of leaders.
 - b. We stress communal work and communal responsibility and equality.
 - c. We avoid distinctions as far as possible with special liturgical dress etc. We avoid places of honour and encourage free mixing of leaders with the whole community.
 - d. We discuss with the whole community as far as possible when we deal with issues pertaining to all.
 - e. Most important we pray for all our emergent leaders.

CONCLUSION

End this session with a discussion on main learning points. Ask each one to reflect on their thinking on team work after this session.

Pray spontaneously and ask the Lord to help us in our pastoral efforts.

METHOD OF AsIPA TEXTS

AsIPA TEXTS are compiled for Christian men and women at grass root level of the parish. They can be conducted most fruitfully in Small Christian Communities, Neighbourhood Communities, Parish Pastoral Councils or any other small groups in the parish.

AsIPA TEXTS can also be used with larger groups, e.g. in the parish hall - provided the "participatory method" is maintained in smaller working groups.

Features of the "AsIPA approach"

1. AsIPA TEXTS adopt a "participatory approach" in which all participants of a group search and discover for themselves as far as they are able to.
2. The texts are compiled in such a way that the facilitator can use them with a minimum of preparation.
3. The facilitator is requested to follow the text as closely as possible and allow the participants to contribute when indicated in the text.
4. The facilitator is not content with one answer to a question but he/she encourages as many participants as possible to search for an answer. "Buzz groups" of 2/3 are helpful to achieve maximum participation.
5. The SUPPLEMENT can help add to the findings of the participants and summarize them.
6. The SUMMARY is meant to be used as 'input'.

AsIPA: As-ian -I-ntegral -P-astoral -A-pproach

The Asian Bishops declared in the Final Statement of their Fifth Plenary Session in Bandung: The Church of 1990s has to be a "Participatory Church", a "Communion of Communities", a Church that "witnesses to the Risen Lord" (FABC5,#8).

The question was, how to promote this "new way of being Church". Therefore, late in 1993, jointly sponsored by the FABC Offices of Human Development and of Laity, a consultation meeting was held in Malaysia. It was during this consultation that the pastoral process for promoting a "Participatory Church" in Asia was termed AsIPA: Asian Integral Pastoral Approach.

AsIPA TEXTS (training programmes) follow this directive:

ASIAN

They want to implement the vision of the Asian Bishops and help Asian Christians face Asian life in the light of the gospel.

INTEGRAL

They aim at achieving a balance between the "spiritual" and the "social", between the individual and the community, between hierarchical leadership and the co-responsibility of the laity.

PASTORAL

They train the laity in their pastoral mission in Church and world.

APPROACH

The process of AsIPA TEXTS can be described as a pastoral approach which is "Christ- and Community centred". It involves the participants of workshops to search for themselves and allows them to experience a "New Way of Being Church."