

**MINISTERS' AND BIBLE COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS
OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CHRISTIAN SERVICE CAMP
IN RECRUITING CANDIDATES TO MINISTRY
– by Doug Delp (2003)**

Thesis Question Proposal: "Is the Christian Service Camp Effective at Recruiting Candidates to Ministry?"

Two Issues of Concern:

1. The Call to Ministry

How does God raise up those He chooses to lead into ministry?

- i. Jeremiah 1:1-9
- ii. Isaiah 6:1-8
- iii. Matthew 4:18-20
- iv. Acts 9:1-6
- v. Acts 16:1-3

2. Effectiveness of being away from regular routines and comforts of home, or with spiritual mentors, that may enhance our ability to "hear" God's call.

- a. Is there something about being amidst a major life transition that accentuates our listening?
Genesis 32:22-30
- b. Is there something about being away from normal comforts that accentuates our listening?
Leviticus 23: 39-43
- c. Is there some kind of relationship or activity that accentuates our listening?
2 Kings 2:7-15

Dominate Factors:

1. Camp- Relationship vs. Experience
2. Church- Personal devotions, Relationship building, Ministry task involvement

Survey Research:

1. 80 Churches ranging from 1000+ to 50 in attendance = 113 responses
2. 5 Bible colleges = 412 responses

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Do ordained ministers and ministerial students perceive life relationships and activities as being effective in helping them consider a commitment to full-time Christian ministry?
2. Do ordained ministers and ministerial students perceive specific church or church camp programs as effective for developing their interest in full-time Christian ministry?
3. Do ordained ministers and ministerial students perceive some church camp relationships more effective than others for developing interest in full-time Christian ministry?
4. Do ordained ministers and ministerial students perceive specific characteristics about camp leadership as more effective for developing interest in full-time Christian ministry than others?
5. Do ordained ministers and ministerial students perceive some common topics or events of learning in church camp programming as more effective in developing interest for the full-time Christian ministry?
6. Do ordained ministers and ministerial students perceive intentional use of various emotions as effective in developing interest for the full-time Christian ministry in the church camp programming?

Significant Findings from 2003 Survey of 525 Ministers and Bible College Students Concerning the Church Camp's Influence on their Call to Ministry – By Doug Delp

1. Bible college students see **missions trip** as being much more effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who went on missions trips and are currently in the ministry. (B.C.S.-2.5, M.-3.5)
2. Bible college students see being a **church camp teen worker** as being much more effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who are currently in ministry and participated as a camp teen worker. (B.C.S.-2.9, M.-3.5)
3. Bible college students see going to **regional camp events** like CIY and NYR being more effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who are currently in ministry and participated in the same program. (B.C.S.-2.7, M.-3.7)
4. Bible college students see the church camp **family leader** relationship as being more effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who are currently in ministry and participated in the same kinds of programs. (B.C.S.-2.4, M.-2.8)
5. Those in ministry see the church camp **vespers speaker** as being more effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who are Bible college students. (B.C.S.-2.9, M.-2.5)
6. Bible college students see the camp leader characteristic of being a person demonstrating **"profound faith in God while facing some personal crisis"** as being more effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who are currently in ministry and have participated in similar kinds of camp programs. (B.C.S.-2.1, M.-2.9)
7. Bible college students see the camp leader characteristic of having in common a **"life experience or similar background"** as being more effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who are currently in ministry and have participated in similar kinds of camp programs. (B.C.S.-2.6, M.-3.2)
8. Bible college students see the **camp devotional times** as being more effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who are currently in ministry and have participated in similar kinds of camp programs. (B.C.S.-2.0, M.-2.4)
9. Those in ministry see the **camp competition events** as being less effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who are currently Bible college students and have participated in similar kinds of camp programs. (B.C.S.-3.3, M.-3.8)
10. Bible college students see the **camp service projects** as being more effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who are currently in ministry and have participated in similar kinds of camp programs. (B.C.S.-2.5, M.-3.0)
11. Those in ministry see the **camp vespers /evening preaching services** as being more effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who are currently Bible college students and have participated in similar kinds of camp programs. (B.C.S.-2.5, M.-2.2)
12. Bible college students see the intentional use of the emotion **"unconditional love"** in its programming as being more effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who are currently in ministry and have participated in similar kinds of camp programs. (B.C.S.-1.8, M.-2.1)
13. Those in ministry see the intentional use of the emotions **"fear/guilt"** in its programming as being less effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who are currently Bible college students and have participated in similar kinds of camp programs. (B.C.S.-3.7, M.-4.2)
14. Bible college students see the intentional use of the emotion of **"hope"** in its programming as being more effective in recruiting them to ministry than those who are currently in ministry and have participated in similar kinds of camp programs. (B.C.S.-1.9, M.-2.2)

What does all of this suggest?

1. Either church camp programming is using camp activities such as service projects, family meetings, devotional times, and competition events more effectively. Or those that are currently younger (which tend to be Bible college students) are more impressionable by activity types of learning and spiritual challenges than those that are currently in ministry.
 2. Preaching activities and a relationship with those leading the evening preaching services are not as effective in helping potential ministry candidates to consider ministry.
 3. The Bible college population tends to respond better to a higher level of unconditional love, fear/guilt and hope than the minister population.
 4. A surprise for me was that the intentional use of excite was rated around a "2" and showed no significant difference in opinion between the Bible college and minister populations.
 5. A verified expectation I found was that the general use of "activity oriented learning" rates higher in effectiveness for the recruiting to ministry with the Bible college population than the minister population. Those currently in ministry tend to want to sit and listen or discuss ministry while those that are in Bible college tended to want to get out and do it!
 6. The high rating of camp devotional times instills further confidence in the need to have young people develop "quite times" with God. It's a lesson taught as far back as Old Testament Elijah- God speaks loudest in the still small voice being alone with Him.
 7. The camp leader characteristic scores tells me that younger recruits sense the need and follow the opportunities to have open and honest mentors in faith and ministry.
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8. If we want to win new recruits to ministry we must:
 - a. Provide opportunities to "work at" developing their ministry abilities.
 - b. Encourage and carve out times for personal devotions in our camp and youth group activities
 - c. Emphasize open and honest relationships between old and young that provide good examples and mentors in ministry.