Understanding Faith-Motivated Volunteerism: How a Four-Site Research Team Used ATLAS.ti to Develop Grounded Theory

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Social workers in diverse settings find themselves working with faith-motivated volunteers because of the social work profession's commitment to community-based services, the intention of government leaders to provide funding support for "faith-based initiatives," and growing awareness of the social services religious congregations provide. Consequently, social workers need to understand the factors that prompt, sustain, and deepen the commitment of volunteers who are motivated by religious faith.

Lilly Endowment, Inc., funded this project, entitled "Service and Faith: The Impact on Christian Faith and Congregational Life of Organized Community Caring." It was designed to help social workers as they seek to engage congregational volunteers and sustain congregational involvement in community service programs. The first phase of the project included surveys of 34 congregations in their regions by researchers from four universities --Michigan (Calvin College), South Carolina (USC), Texas (Baylor University), and Southern California (Whittier College), and a follow-up survey with congregants actively involved as community service volunteers. The second phase of the project involved in-depth qualitative interviews with congregational leaders and volunteers, who were known in the project as "helpers." Researchers conducted one-time interviews of one to two hours each with 29 congregational leaders over two years. The research team then completed interviews with 25 volunteers from these same congregations. Finally, they interviewed an additional 16 families who have been involved as family units in volunteer services.

Developing Interview Protocols and Conducting Interviews

The team of seven social work faculty members from the four institutions met in three two-day retreats during the first academic year of the project, with a fourth four-day retreat in the following summer. During the next two years of the project, the team met approximately once a quarter, often squeezing day-long meetings before or after professional conferences all were attending, or meeting for a 48-hour period in an airport hotel in Dallas. These retreats were critical for developing working relationships among persons, several of whom were not known to others on the team at the beginning of the project. We used retreats to develop instruments and

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protocols and to explore theoretical assumptions and approaches we brought to the project. Various consultants joined the team in the early stages of the project.

The six research team members conducted the interviews themselves, with some assistance in two institutions from two graduate students. The research team understood the protocols to be guides, attempting to address all the questions on the appropriate protocol in each interview but at the same time, allowing and encouraging interviewees to tell stories and share their experiences in the most natural way. Three different protocols were used for the three kinds of interviews—congregational leader, helper, and family. Appendix 1 includes one of these protocols as an example.

The qualitative work began with interviews of congregational leaders in each of the congregations that had earlier been surveyed for the quantitative wing of this project. At the outset, we had planned to conduct all three kinds of interviews—leaders, helpers, and families—concurrently. This approach became too difficult to manage, however, because analysis of the data also began soon after interviewing began, and the team had difficulty working on that much and different kinds of data at the same time. The interview protocols were somewhat different, resulting in very different data sets. Therefore, we decided to complete leader interviews and data analysis first, and then return to the congregations for the interviews of helpers and families. Transcripts of leader interviews ranged from 25-40 pages each, resulting in a total of approximately 900 pages of transcripts. Transcripts of the helper interviews were of approximately the same size. The family interview transcripts were longer because there were multiple persons in the interviews and the conversations were more complex, but there were only 16 interviews compared to the 29 leader and 25 helper interviews.

Developing Data Analysis Protocols and Conducting Analysis

The research team undertook a collaborative, grounded theory analysis of interview transcripts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The team selected ATLAS.ti (Muhr, 2003), qualitative data analysis (QDA) software for code-based theory-building (Weitzmann & Miles, 1995) to facilitate both individual and team analysis. To begin, one member introduced the team to a grounded theory method of analysis at a team retreat (Wolfer, 1998) and provided additional reading material. There was considerable conflict in these early stages of our work about the role of qualitative data analysis in the larger project and our choice of approaches. We considered breaking into teams, one to focus on the quantitative study and the other on the qualitative study, but for a variety reasons—commitment to the project, appreciation of the camaraderie that had developed, and perhaps even anxiety about missing out on something important—we agreed to continue to work as a whole. We revisited this decision several times over the following two years during times of conflict but continued to work as a whole. Differences slowed the processes, created frustrations, but also made our work more rigorous.

At a subsequent retreat, the entire team received two days of initial instruction in the use of ATLAS.ti from Nick Woolf, an outside consultant. Next, the team coded the same two transcripts to develop shared understanding and skills, developing codes as they worked and then sharing that work. Subsequently, five research partners began coding the data, continuing to develop new codes throughout the process. The coding continued over a two-year period.

The team developed a two-week rhythm, subject to the changes of the academic seasons. During each two-week period, each researcher independently coded a portion of the database. On the "due date," all researchers e-mailed the "hermeneutic unit," the ATLAS.ti term for the coded database, to the Primary Investigator (PI). The hermeneutic unit (HU) is actually an overlying document of the codes (much like a transparency) that correspond to the underlying "primary documents" (transcripts). Therefore, all researchers had to maintain the same primary documents—without editing them—once the coding began on those documents. Documents themselves could be added to the database throughout the process, and were. Interviewing continued throughout the data analysis, and was informed by it.

ATLAS.ti has a method of "merging" the different HUs that correspond to the same primary documents, so that all the codes of all the team members appear in the newly merged HU. The PI conducted this merge and e-mailed it to the team in preparation for the bi-weekly 90-minute phone conference call. With everyone looking at the same database on their computers, the conference call focused on discussing new or modified codes that researchers had created and their definitions.

The research team carried out an extensive, simultaneous analytic process over an extended period of time and across multiple sites. To organize and document the ongoing work by multiple analysts, the team evolved a shared coding protocol (see Appendix 2). Initially, each analyst open coded the same two transcripts. Subsequently, the team continued open coding with individual analysts coding separate transcripts, often but not always of interviews they had conducted themselves.

The early rounds of data analysis consisted primarily of open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), essentially separating out and labeling text segments of varying lengths. Upon identifying a new code, the analyst named it with a "?" and his or her initials and a descriptive word or brief phrase. Within the ATLAS.ti code list, the use of question marks and initials had the helpful effect of clustering all new codes by each analyst and flagged new codes for team discussion. The analyst was also responsible for concisely defining each new code in a comment window associated with each code. As needed, analysts also included additional comments about the code in the comment window. The team agreed to date and initial each definition or comment to document how our understanding developed over time and to facilitate communication between team members.

The research team discussed the newly proposed codes in the bi-weekly conference calls. When analysts agreed that new codes were appropriate for use by the team, the question mark and analyst initials were replaced with an exclamation point in the code name. In ATLAS.ti, this had the effect of moving codes to the top portion of the code list.

Whenever possible, analysts used existing codes from the approved code list for open coding. However, when an existing code did not quite apply to new text segments, analysts used the existing code but raised questions or added comments in that code's comment window. Sometimes, a proposed revision of the name or definition expanded what the code covered or contained so that it could also apply to the newly encountered text segments. At other times, a proposed revision narrowed what a code covered or contained to better distinguish it from related codes. In either case, analysts often sought to rename or redefine codes to make them more precise, thus reflecting increased understanding of the data. For all proposed revisions, analysts added comments to the comment window and flagged the particular code for team discussion by adding "**" and their initials to the end of the code name.

The team's bi-weekly conference calls ensured that analysis of the transcripts had some consistency among analysts and facilitated the growth of team understanding and insight. Almost immediately, the bi-weekly conference calls focused on both new codes and revisions to previous codes. As with new codes, the research team discussed any proposed revisions to current codes, whether an analyst sought to change a code name, definition, or both. When the team agreed to a change, the PI entered these changes in the HU. Occasionally, upon discussing their colleagues' comments and reviewing the relevant text segments, the team developed new codes and definitions during the conference calls. When the team could not reach consensus, proposed changes were simply left in the HU for future consideration.

After the conference call, the PI made all the changes to which the team had agreed, including "promoting" those proposed codes that the group was ready to use as bang codes. The PI then made a copy for each team member, and electronically mailed the revised HU to each team member for the next round of coding. The resulting code list for the leader database alone exceeded 500 codes, and 700 codes for the helper database.

Returning to their individual analytic work, if no current codes seemed appropriate for text segments, analysts simply developed new codes as described previously. These new codes were brought back to the team for discussion, and so on.

Once the initial coding was complete on the leader database, coding on the helper database began. The team began by transferring the codes they had developed in the leader database to this new database rather than beginning coding from scratch, hoping for some comparability between the databases. Because of the difference in the two kinds of interviews, however, many of those codes were used little or not at all, and 200 new codes were created. Nevertheless, having some overlap and a shared structure between the two databases has helped the team to integrate findings from these two databases. The cumulative code list has also in turn been transferred into the family database.

In part as a means of managing the proliferation of codes during open coding, the team began axial coding while still open coding the leader database (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The team used three different strategies to begin identifying relationships between codes: creating code stems, writing memos, and creating graphic networks.

First, the team developed a set of "stems" for grouping open codes, or what we also called "parent" codes. These codes were not used in actually coding transcripts but instead consolidated a group of related codes. For example, the parent code "challenges" included a set of codes that described the various challenges or barriers helpers and leaders faced in their community ministries (see Appendix 3). By placing the stem "challenge:" at the beginning of each of these codes, they fell together in the alphabetical code list and were easier to find and scan. Eventually, each of the 697 codes in the helper database was connected to one of the 25 parent codes. Examples of other often-used stems included:

> cong org support (congregational organizational support): A variety of institutionalized policies, procedures, activities, and/or resources offered by congregations as organizations to enrich, increase, and/or sustain congregation members' involvement in

community ministry. N=51 codes (helper database) E.g., “facilities: existing,” “facilities: new,” “leadership,” “official sanction,” and “publicity.”

motive: Psychological factors that propel congregational (and individual member) involvement in community ministry. These reflect personal agency (e.g., intentionality, desire). Can be in response to external stimuli. N=72 codes (helper database) E.g., “called to serve,” “evangelism,” “feels good,” “gift to use,” and “guilt.”

results: Outcomes of a congregation's involvement in community ministry. N=121 codes (helper database) E.g., “compassion for marginalized,” “confidence,” “fear overcome,” “helping leads to more helping,” “joy,” and “recipient benefits.”

stimulus: Environmental and relational factors that motivate (motive codes) community ministry involvement by individuals and/or congregations. N=30 codes (helper database) E.g., “church teaching,” “family,” “location,” “need: local,” and “retirement”

As a second approach to axial coding, the team began writing memos and comments about emerging relationships. Some of these were minutes recorded in the “comments” section of the database for codes during the team’s conference calls. Others were named, free-standing memos in the HU.

For this team, a third and less successful approach was the use of ATLAS.ti’s capability for creating graphic networks to represent relationships. This approach to axial coding would probably work better for an individual, or perhaps a pair of researchers, working with this software. We found it difficult to build upon one another’s networks and decided that our use of parent codes and related codes worked much better as a narrative rather than graphic depiction of relationships for this multi-researcher project. It is possible that graphic networks will yet prove useful in later stages of data analysis, to represent emerging theoretical relationships.

After completing open coding the entire set of transcripts, the team engaged in more focused “axial” coding. During one of its retreats, the team brainstormed dimensions that could be used for understanding and sorting parent codes. For example, the dimensions we brainstormed associated with “challenges to community ministry” (both those within the congregations, leaders, and helpers, as well as challenges in the recipients of service and the larger community) were as follows:

Personal vs. systemic

People resources vs. other resources

Us (congregation/helper) vs. them (community/environment)

Keep from involvement in the first place vs. shut-it-down

Intrapersonal vs. interpersonal

Too much of a thing vs. too little of a thing

Theological vs. secular

The team then assigned one person to apply the dimension to all the codes related to the parent code and their quotations. The team chose dimensions to explore that seemed particularly relevant to the research objectives of the project; not every dimension received this kind of in-depth exploration, which involved an in-depth review of groups of codes and associated text segments to develop dimensions further and to elaborate relationships. The team member then wrote a report of findings, including summaries and particularly illustrative direct quotations. Appendix 3 contains the outline for these reports, and Appendix 4 illustrates this work, based on the parent code "challenges" and the dimension "us vs. them."

The team is now looking for common dimensions of contrast across parent categories, and these will become the "grand themes." Again, team members write reports to one another about these relationships, which become the foundation for future publications.

What We Have Learned

What works for some projects may not work for others. But these are lessons we have drawn from our collaboration:

Working with a team took far more time than we initially anticipated. Several of us have thought quietly that if we could just take this database off and code it on our own, we would have finished a year sooner.

The team approach or "investigator triangulation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Glesne, 1999) brings increased validity to the QDA process (Creswell, 1998). We may have been able to finish much sooner working alone, but having six sets of eyes on the data, and having to convince colleagues in a consensual process that one's open and axial codes have merit, provided a rigor unparalleled in individual work. It is important to work as a team—and to allow the appropriate time for that work.

The coding protocol required to organize and document our collaborative analysis provides an excellent "audit trail" for the project (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Phone conference calls and electronic mail have made this collaborative project possible. But face-to-face meetings have made it more enjoyable and have created a depth of relationships that have held us together through more than three years of work and inevitable differences of ideas and approaches.

The "networking" feature is one of the signature features of ATLAS.ti (Weitzman & Miles, 1995), although we unsuccessfully spent quite a bit of time trying to make it work for us. In fact, multiple graphical networks created by analysts and small changes in these networks apparently caused an exponential growth in the file size of the HU that required prohibitive e-mail transmission time.

"Grounded theory" has different connotations for different researchers, including those who teach it and do it (e.g., Charmaz, 2000; Glaser, 1978, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). We had a mix of opinions about grounded theory analysis, as well as several colleagues who had never undertaken this kind of research. For some team members, learning to do grounded theory analysis and also learning to do it collaboratively required more time than we anticipated. Nevertheless, time in retreats to establish working procedures and to agree upon methodological processes was essential. This kind of work needs to be done face-to-face, not on the phone.

For this project, team members agreed that we would each participate in all aspects of this multi-method (e.g., quantitative survey, semi-structured interview) and multi-level (e.g., congregation/helper surveys, leader/helper/family interviews) research project. While the team's broad involvement created shared understanding and commitment, it did not sufficiently accommodate for the individual strengths, weaknesses, and interests of team members. This seemed especially problematic regarding QDA.

The broad involvement of team members also taxed their abilities to keep up with multiple aspects of the project simultaneously. As we learned, team QDA worked more effectively and efficiently when we were all able to concentrate on it.

The team member who merges data and orchestrates the processes must be committed to details. Keeping an ever-burgeoning code list and HU "clean," finding and applying organizational strategies for the minutiae of such a project, watching for duplication of code assignments to the same quotation, keeping everyone using the same format—these were somewhat tedious but very necessary steps that could not be farmed out to a secretary or research assistant.

Working with a multi-site team requires creative time management of different academic calendars and commitments. Setting a regular time for conference calls up to six months in advance and retreats up to a year in advance was absolutely essential.

A team needs people who both know and like one another, or for whom there are some linking figures who can tie the group together relationally. Trusting one's qualitative work to trusted colleagues is one thing; trusting this kind of work to a stranger would be frightening.

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Appendix 1

Congregational Leader Interview Protocol

1. What initially prompted the congregation's involvement in community ministries? [*Probe: what are current reasons, if different?*]
2. How, if at all, does the congregations prepare people to participate?
3. How has the congregation's involvement with community ministry affected the faith of the people who actually participate? [*Probe:*] Their relationship with God? [*Probe: beliefs, trusts, commitments*] Their relationships with one another? Their relationships with others outside the congregations? [*Probe: beliefs, trusts, commitments to people/community*] How, if at all, have these effects changed since the congregations first became involved? How else?
4. Here are things that people of faith sometimes do. [Lay our stimuli with named practices of faith]
5. Has the involvement of your congregations with community ministries affected their faith in any of these areas? [*things that people of faith do?*]
6. [*If yes*] How has it been affected? Can you give me an example (or tell me a story) of how it was affected?
7. Has the congregation's involvement with community ministry affected any other of these?
8. Has this effect changed over time? If so, how? [*Probe:* You are reaching for how, in general the effects in faith changed for the congregations over time]

Note: Have Leader select the ministry s/he thinks is most meaningful for the participants and use this as the referent for the remaining questions.

9. What keeps the congregations involved? [*Probe: reaching for persistence, longevity*]
10. What keeps you involved as their leader?
11. What would persuade you to reduce or end the congregation's involvement with ____?
12. What would it mean for the congregations to end their involvement with ____?
13. As a leader, how have you helped those involved make the connections between their service and faith?
14. How else might you enhance the effects on participants' faith?
15. How has the congregation's involvement with _____ affected you as their leader? [*Probe: How else?*]
16. Is there anything else you would like to tell me? [*Probe:* Anything else to help me understand your congregation's experience with _____?]

Appendix 2
Open Coding Protocol

!Code *or* !!CODE (Bang Code)

Official codes that have been accepted for use by the whole team. Comments can and should continue to be added, but an individual cannot change the code name itself cannot once it has been adopted as a bang code. Bang codes can be changed in the following way: Write a comment describing how and why you think the name should be changed. Put your initials and an asterisk at the end of the code name. It will then show up as a new code in the team merge just below the original bang code. The team will discuss your recommendations during the next team conference call. Alternatively, you can create a new code with the name you want as a proposed code with the suggestion in the comments of merging it with the old code and retaining the new name. (2) If you need to change the name to fit your own work and you don't want to wait until the next group discussion, create a new code with the name you want. Write a comment in the bang code arguing that your new code and the bang code should be merged under your new code name.

nn-code

Unofficial code, where nn is the person's initials. Code whole meaning units rather than overlapping or small units. All codes must have definitions.

?Code (Discuss Code)

Team leader will merge all the individual HUs ("hermeneutic units") bi-weekly, then add a ? to the names of codes ready for group discussion. Usually, this will be all the nn-codes.

!Network

Official networks that have been accepted for use by the whole team. Comments can and should continue to be added, but the !network itself cannot be changed by an individual, once it has been adopted as a !network. If you need to change a !network to fit your own work and you don't want to wait until the next group discussion, create a new network and write a comment that you think it should replace the old !network.

nn-PARENT CODE

These are higher order codes (see parent concept below) and should have no quotations attached to them. Used parent codes to organize a class of codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For example, BARRIERS has the following definition: "Congregations and congregational leaders may encounter a variety of barriers to the development and implementation of community ministry programs." We identified 18 barriers in the Leader data, such as "barriers: burnout" (definition: Perseverance in community ministry may be deterred by the difficulty of the work. There may be many demands on participants with what appears to be little result, leading to discouragement), and "barriers: systemic causes" (definition: The systemic causes of social problems and human needs may be difficult for congregations to address on the local level and may give a sense of futility to the provision of direct services which are easier for congregations to provide.) We actually began to call these "stem" codes, because they were followed by colons and a subcategory.

Comments to codes

Follow each comment with your date and initials. Comments should be added AT THE TOP of the list but after the definition, so that the definition always appears first, and then the most recent comment. If you want to emphasize that we need to discuss a particular code and its comments, perhaps to merge it with another or to turn it into a !Code, begin your comment with ?? (before the date and your initials).

Comments should define the code, relate it to other codes, relate to the framework we are developing. Comments should not relate to a specific quote or interviewee. Those comments should be attached to the quotation, not to the code.

Appendix 3

Axial Coding Protocol

Name of Dimension (e.g., Formal vs. informal)

Definition, Comments and Observations

Put your definition of the dimension here, followed by your initials and date in 10 point font, which can then be copied and pasted after each paragraph that follows. (DRG 06/15/03)

Comments and observations that summarize the more detailed work.

Array of Codes

One end of the continuum (e.g., formal)

List the codes here that fall toward that end of the continuum. If you are like me and need to note that some clearly extend to both ends of the continuum, note that by putting (continuum) after the code name.

The other end of the continuum (e.g., informal)

List the codes here that fall toward this end of the continuum, as above. Assess capacity (continuum)

Discussion of codes

Code name (don't include stem, since that is given) (e.g., Assessing capacity)

Put your discussion of the code in "normal" format. Discussion should relate to the dimension, if you have something to say about it. You may also note connections you see to other codes—and anything else you want to note for thinking about or writing about later. Feel free to point, too, to particular quotations that are meaty for this discussion. Note by PD number and line (e.g., P8, line 0636).

Appendix 4

A Sample of Axial Coding with the Parent Code "Challenges" for the Dimension "Us vs. Them"

Definition

The definition of "Challenges" is: Congregations, congregational leaders, and helpers may encounter a variety of barriers/challenges to developing, implementing, and sustaining community ministry.

Some of the barriers and challenges are within the congregation itself or within the leaders and volunteers; other barriers are "out there" in the community, or as a characteristic of recipients. Most of these codes fell rather cleanly into "us" (challenges in the congregation or helpers or leaders) or "them" (challenges in the recipients or community). Burnout fell on both categories of this dimension, but it was different in both cases and so this does not really point to a continuum. All of the "us" challenges seem to refer to a "lack of" something—not enough volunteers, ability to meet expectations, time, etc. They referred to challenges in both individuals—feeling like not able to meet expectations, not enough time—and in the congregation itself—overwhelming need, and lack of ownership.

Codes, Definitions, Comments, and Sample Quotations

Us (congregation/helper)

Burnout. Perseverance in community ministry may be deterred by the difficulty of the work. There may be many demands on participants with what appears to be little result, leading to discouragement. For leaders, the fatigue that comes from constantly having to ask others to volunteer, trying to get help (also P27: 1009), of feeling like one has just "stuck a finger in a dike" but not being able to fix the larger system problems (P15: 0316), becoming cynical because one "didn't have it to give in the first place" (P15: 373), of trying to lead people who are "high maintenance" (P17: 570), becoming too involved and neglecting family and other responsibilities (P26: 1032), being alone without others to help carry P26: 998). Four leaders talked about burnout and it almost all had to do with a lack of resources—people time—except for one leader who talked about being faced with overwhelming need.

Energy. Physical tiredness is a challenge to overcome (and may hinder some) in community ministry.

"I don't have any good reason not to do it. You know, we do our counseling on Thursday night and by Thursday night I have probably been out at other kinds of night time commitments at least twice that week already, sometimes more often whether church or children or athletic events or what not. And you know I work 8-5 and by Thursday night I am so tired. There is a not a Thursday night when I think maybe I want go tonight, I'm tired. But pretty much every Thursday night I drag myself back down there and I leave an hour and « later feeling absolutely reenergized and revitalized. So I guess I am just self-serving" (Laugh). (P4: 126; volunteer teaching budgeting and job skills in a homeless shelter).

Health problems. Health problems create a challenge to be overcome and/or may hinder involvement.

*"*What the main problem now is my health, but you know, when I come to church and I see people that tell me, you know, 'If it wasn't for the health fair, I'd be . . . I didn't know that I was a diabetic. And if it wasn't for the health fair, you never know what would have happened to me because I, I was not feeling well, but I did not know that I was a diabetic. And I didn't have the money to do the tests or go to a doctor'" (P8: 52; a nurse who has organized an annual health fair and free clinic for predominantly immigrant population without health insurance, and is herself in poor health).

Helpers. Community ministry (CM) is challenged or hindered by lack of volunteers. Although many spoke of the need for more volunteers, there is a continuum from a lack of the needed help to more than the CM can accommodate. Here is the volunteer director of a shelter for homeless persons that moves from church facility to church facility during the cold months.

"And they bring their kids along to help and, you know, so . . . I think it just sort of spreads, you know. . . . And I have to say in all the years now that I've worked on the shelter, almost no one who has helped us once has not wanted to come back. I mean my biggest dilemma now is we have so many volunteers who want to help, especially with dinners because that's the easiest time. But last night we did the dinner and an adult Sunday school class helped. Now we had 12 people in the kitchen, I mean my biggest task now is to give everyone an important job" (P15: 101).

Leadership. Lack of effective leadership may be a challenge to the development and implementation of community ministry.

"Unfortunately, it's not functioning well because we just haven't had somebody who would take it and somebody who will spark plug it." (P9: 32; fundraiser and visionary for the congregation's community ministries).

Material resources. Insufficient resources may be a barrier to the development and maintenance of effective community ministry. This may include finances, facilities, materials, and in-kind support.

"I don't have enough resources to get the things done that I think need to be done. Such as the computer lab being open 8-10 hours per day, internet services not being available, no phone lines in here, all that stuff. That's the hardest part." (P7: 07; volunteer teacher of computer skills to Mexican immigrants).

Training. Individuals may not have adequate training to successfully perform their ministry. It requires a different kind of leader training to work with volunteers in a congregation (P23: 1368), as well as referring to a lack of training of volunteers (P27: 303).

Time. Congregational leaders may struggle with lack of time to fully pursue their visions for community ministry because of all the other demands on their time. There is a frustration about this on the part of both leaders and members—they *want* to do this but finding time is difficult. On the other hand, some have found the balance, as this helper describes:

"We too often think in terms of black and white, we can either do this or we can do that, but we can't do both. So instead of the either or thinking, I have been trying to move toward the both and. So this applies to what you were saying about my sense of call and of ministry. I can't –I can't give up all my other commitments in life as a wife and a mother and a professional and someone who needed to bring money into the household to get kids through college, and all of those kinds of things. So I can't just go off and do that role of ministering and ignore all of these other responsibilities but that doesn't mean that I can't also be involved in ministry to some degree. That is the both and, I can take care of these responsibilities and find a way to minister to others in kind of fulfill the sense of call. . . . You know it's kind of like saying you are going to go on a diet and never eat chocolate again, you know, I'm finding a way to get my candy kisses. I don't have to go eat the whole bag although heaven knows I have done that. But, you know, it is a balance I guess it's a balance it's both and, not just either or (P4: 121; volunteer teacher of budgeting and job skills in a homeless shelter).

Unity. Lack of unity within the congregation. Lack of unity may come about because of many things, such as differing goals, differing priorities, and personality and relationship difficulties.

"This is really new for us to have community kids coming in on Wednesday night. And we've even had one or two families leave because their kids don't fit--they didn't feel they were quite ready to fit in with that kind of thing 'cause they're different kids than our regular church kids, a lot of them." (P18: 18; volunteer tutor in a local public elementary school).

Ownership. Community ministry can lose momentum and become uninspired if helpers are not invested in making ministry relevant.

Size. Difficulty maintaining community or connectedness among members of the congregation because of increased size may affect members;' involvement with community ministry.

Them (comm./environment)

Burnout (from overwhelming need)

"I think that they certainly did influence that desire to stay involved, but I think one of the things that we found a little bit with the community ministry is that it can take a lot out of you. Because it does take quite a bit of time and these kids that we were working with do have their high need kids and so I can also see, it does increase your desire to continue to work in those ministries. But there are sometimes times that you need to sort of take a little break, almost a sabbatical to sort of reenergize yourself and refocus sometimes so that you continue to have the energy you need physically, spiritually, and otherwise to continue to deal with those sort of high stress high need kids that you are working with. (P10: 65; volunteer in an activity program for neighborhood low-income youths).

Disillusionment. One of the challenges leaders may face in developing and maintaining community ministry in congregations is personal disillusionment regarding the difficulties of bringing about change.

Distrust: community. Suspicion and distrust of congregation by community members. One leader spoke of not being an "indigenous" church, and consequently having to earn the trust of the community, and also governmental and other community leaders (P18: 1151). Another spoke of others being "envious" of what the congregation was doing (P26: 671).

Distrust: recipient. People may be reluctant to receive services/help because a perceived risk outweighs the perceived benefit.

"I think it's uncomfortable for the residents. They have to meet with us and so—but most people would not sit down and just tell someone—I mean they have to save their receipts every week of everything they spent. They have to give us their paycheck receipts. I mean, they don't always do this but this is the idea; is that they're—it's not that they are accountable to us really but we are just trying to help them see where money goes. But anyways I have had this experience. I felt like we didn't do all that but we did talk about—in general—we didn't show receipts to people but we did talk about things. So I knew it could be uncomfortable" (P5: 19; volunteer teacher of budgeting and job skills in a homeless shelter).

Fear. Fear, not feeling physically safe, creates a challenge or barrier to helpers or potential helpers. Although this could be considered an "inside" challenge, it is in response to the environment or the recipients. It is, in fact, the *interaction* of who the helpers are and the context or population of the community ministry. But fear may also be simply frustration, or worry that the one doesn't have the requisite skills, or a level of discomfort, being "outside one's comfort zone."

"I'm definitely--you know, I'm not afraid to go to these people's houses and try to get, you know, to see what they need, although I do make my husband come with me. I'm not that brave to go by myself" (P19: 32; volunteer linking families of children in an after-school program with community resources).

Government regulations. Ministries may not be allowed to continue if governmental ordinances are violated. Government regulations shut down ministries as they are beginning (P22: 196), are a source on ongoing conflict (P22: 232).

We have been approached by some of the homeless advocates down there recently in the past month, telling us that the city wants to now start preventing handouts of food by organizations for whatever reason. Now the first reason that had been given to me was that we would need permits. And this is just word of mouth from advocates I've seen, nothing in the media or anything. Even though one of my church members called me yesterday and is bringing an article telling me that what has been informed, provided to me by these advocates down town, is really true. So she's bringing me an article to the church this week to explain to me what is going on and what the councilpersons are saying they want to stop. In other words, as I perceive it right now, they're saying they want to provide better means of taking care of the homeless. And they want to stop the handing out of food in that area. (P6: 10; volunteer who prepares and delivers food to homeless persons on the street and in homeless and battered women's shelters).

Individualism. The cultural value of individualism, each person for him/herself, undermines interest in, commitment to and involvement with groups (especially beyond one's own family). Individualism refers to *institutions* or organizations not wanting to work together (P24: 257), as well as individuals (P24: 696)—interesting that this makes it hard to connect to people in need, not wanting to "invade privacy" (P26: 497). These codes really refer to troubles connecting to others, both other institutions to work together as well as to potential recipients.

Overwhelming need. The apparent magnitude of need may overwhelm and deter prospective helpers. This is related to "systemic causes," as well as to the overwhelming number of potential recipients.

"I guess that there is always somebody to feel the vacancy. There is just so many that need our help. You know, if you manage to be with a resident for his or her entire stay at he house, in other words if they manage to stay in the program for the complete program, and if you manage to get them to that graduation night, often times they will give testimony at that night and it will bring you to tears every single time every single time. But the thing is the next week there will be another person in that seat across from you starting right from scratch and so, you know, you think of it that way and it seems so overwhelming but you just have to focus on each and do what you can for that one person." (P4: 122; congregational leader).

Recips not like us. The extent to which the recipients are culturally or socio-economically or otherwise different from the helper and/or cong.

"But what I'm able to do in community ministry is be reminded or to relearn to see people as God sees them. To have understanding and compassion and to forgive. And it's easy to reach great judgments about people and their situation in life without really knowing who they are what they've actually gone through. This keeps me grounded. This gives me an ability to see. Ability to understand a toleration for others that I perhaps didn't have or wouldn't have otherwise."(P22: 52; volunteer teacher of English and GED classes to Mexican immigrants).

Systemic causes. The systemic causes of social problems and human needs may be difficult for congregations to address on the local level and may give a sense of futility to the provision of direct services which are easier for congregations to provide. Leaders sometimes feel overwhelmed by the systemic causes they confront. There is a connection to the "individualism" barrier in one case—organizations/churches need one another to confront these causes (P24: 256).

"So I persuaded the missions committee to pay this educational expert to come in and evaluate the program. She spent a whole week watching, and her specialty was underachieving kids. So she spent a whole week watching what we did, observing the tutors doing what they did, analyzing what I gave her about the way the structure thing was set up. And when the week was over, she came into my office and said this is the best tutoring program I have ever seen. And I said that's the wrong answer. You know, I know what's good about it. What I need to know is why it doesn't work. And she said, oh you can't do anything about that, because these children are in the dumb class at school. And so when you have them, you've taught the tutors to believe and tell the children that they are able to do whatever it is, whatever little reading skill or whatever. And I had. I even had these teachers filling out forms on these kids. And the teachers would tell me, so and so can't do whatever reading skill, phonetic skill, or math skill or whatever it was. And I had seen the child do it the day before, and the teacher would tell me that what this child's problem is, is that the child can't do X. And so this expert said of course, they can do it while they are here, but when they go to school, they are in the dumb class, so they are dumb, so they can't do it. And you can't do anything about that because you can't go with them everywhere they are, and encourage them. So, give it up. (laughs) Why, I mean, keep doing what you're doing, what you're doing is good. But the message to me was, it's not ever going to really work. I mean, it's not really ever change." (P12: 31; volunteer tutor and director of the tutoring program).