

The Impact of Volunteering on Christian Faith and Congregational Life: The *Service and Faith* Project¹

Annotated List of Publications from the Service and Faith Research Project Team

This document provides an annotated listing of publications from the Service and Faith Project, as well as related articles published by the research team. Unpublished papers presented at various conferences and meetings are provided on this website if they have not been published elsewhere. Those unpublished documents are listed in the second section of this document. The final section lists documents that are currently being drafted and will be available at a later date.

PUBLICATIONS

Hugen, Beryl, Wolfer, Terry A., Garland, Diana R., Myers, Dennis R., Sherwood, David S., and Sheridan, Paula M. (forthcoming). Service and faith: The impact on faith of community ministry participation. *Review of Religious Research*.

Increased attention currently is focused on the role of faith communities (congregations) in addressing community problems and persons in need. This attention raises questions about the relationship of faith and voluntary community ministry, specifically what effects community ministry has on faith development. Data from two survey instruments explores the relationship between faith and community ministry. A *Congregational Survey* measures faith and includes a newly constructed faith measurement scale, the *Practices of Christian Faith Scale*. The survey was administered to a sample of congregational members (n=7,403) from 35 congregations, nearly half of whom report participating in community ministry. A *Volunteer Survey* inquires of respondents who participate in community ministry (n=946) how their community ministry activity effects their faith and the means in which their congregation supports the relationship between community ministry and faith. Findings offer both conceptual and programmatic mechanisms related to strengthening the relationship of faith and community ministry.

Garland, Diana R., O'Connor, Mary Katherine, Wolfer, Terry, and Netting, Ellen (2006) Team-based research: Notes from the field. *Qualitative Social Work: Research and Practice*, 5 (1).

This article reviews the literature on research using teams, including interdisciplinary teams, teams that span universities and are geographically distant, and teams using qualitative and mixed methods. It reports experiences of two multi-year, externally funded, multiple-university research teams that used both qualitative and quantitative methods. It concludes with suggestions for others undertaking team-based research.

Sherr, M., & Wolfer, T. (2004). Teaching content on Charitable Choice and religious congregations. *Advances in Social Work*, 5(2), 197-210.

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This study represents an initial effort to implement and evaluate use of a curriculum module on Charitable Choice and professional social work practice in a religious congregation. Using a nonequivalent control group design, repeated measures MANOVA showed significant differences between the treatment (n=54) and comparison groups (n=53) on knowledge and degree of comfort at posttest. Despite the use of a small sample (n=107) of MSW students at a single public university in the Southeast, the findings provide initial support for further use and future evaluations of curriculum modules on professional social work practice in faith-based settings.

Garland, Diana R. (2003). Recruiting religiously-motivated volunteers. Website of Faith and Service Technical Education Network. www.fastennetwork.org

Many social service agencies rely on volunteers from congregations to staff their programs. In fact, most community volunteers in the United States are actively involved in a congregation.. They have learned from their congregation about community needs and have been given opportunity to identify with persons in need. Congregations therefore make excellent places to seek volunteer involvement in community social service programs.

Sherwood, David A. (2003). Churches as contexts for social work practice: Connecting with the mission and identity of congregations. *Social Work & Christianity*, 30 (1), 1-13.

Faith-motivated volunteers engage in social services in part because: a) it is something they believe “ought” to be done; 2) they believe it fits their personal capacities, gifts, or “calling;” and 3) it gives them experiences that lead to persistence in the activity. As contexts for practice, congregations: 1) are “host” settings; 2) are social communities; 3) sometimes spin off programs and services to their social context; 4) may become advocates; 5) are voluntary organizations; 6) are mission-driven organizations; and 7) are cultural groups. Issues for social workers include: 1) professional role and identity; 2) competent handling of personal beliefs, values, and social work ethics; 3) confidentiality and multiple relationships; 4) “good-enough” fit; and 5) pastoral/prophetic role conflicts.

Hugen, B., Wolfer, T. A., Garland, D. R., Myers, D., Sherwood, D. A., & Sheridan, P. (2003). Reconceptualizing faith and its relation to community ministry: A model of Christian faith practices. *Social Work & Christianity*, 30, 234-255.

Increased attention is currently focused on the role of faith communities (congregations) in addressing community problems and persons in need. This attention raises questions about the relationship of faith and community ministry, specifically, how volunteerism may affect the life of faith of congregations and congregational members. This article offers conceptual definitions of faith and community ministry, explores a variety of psychological and theological measurements of faith, and begins to explore their relationship. A conceptual model of Christian faith practices, along with a newly constructed measurement scale (Practices of Christian Faith), is described. The scale was administered to a sample of congregational members (N=7,403), nearly half of whom reported participating in community ministry, from 35 congregations. Findings and implications are explained.

Wolfer, T. A., & Sherr, M. E. (2002). American congregations and their social programs. In Terry Tirrito and Toni Casio (Eds.), *Religious Organizations in Community Services: A Social Work Perspective* (pp. 23-49). New York: Springer Publishing.

This chapter provides information about religious congregations in American life. In the first part, it defines congregations, outlines their major purposes and activities, and briefly argues for their centrality in understanding American religion. In the second part, the chapter reviews empirical research on the ways congregations contribute to American life and the extent of these contributions. Using a systems perspective, it identifies and summarizes measures of congregational inputs, outputs, and community linkages. In short, it locates congregations within the broader context of religious and social service organizations.

Sherr, M. E., & Wolfer, T. A. (2003). Preparing social work students for practice with religious congregations within the context of Charitable Choice: The Grace House ministry. *Social Work & Christianity*, 30, 128-148.

The social work profession has a remarkable opportunity and challenge to reconnect with its religious roots and develop services in partnership with religious congregations. The professional literature, however, has provided social work educators with limited guidance in terms of resources and curriculum strategies for preparing students and practitioners for competent practice in religious settings. This paper posits the efficacy of a decision case module for covering content on Charitable Choice and working with religious congregations. The Grace House Ministry (A), a decision case written specifically for the curriculum module, is included in an Appendix.

Sherwood, David (2001). Integrating faith and practice: Growing up into the image of Christ through the practices of faith. *Social Work and Christianity*, 28(2), 94-105.

Christian faith is not generic “belief” but is has specific content with ethical and practical consequences. Faith is expressed in practices such as worship and prayer, but also in practice more directly relating to social work, such as “hospitality and care to strangers,” “specific faithful acts of service,” “suffering with and for all whom Jesus showed us to be our neighbors,” “resisting abusive and destructive powers,” and “maintaining and creating life-sustaining social structures and institutions.”

Sherwood, D. A. (2001). Testing time for Charitable Choice: Can we turn good goals into good practice? *Social Work & Christianity*, 28(1), 1-5.

The election of a president committed to the concept of Charitable Choice and the establishment of the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives signal that the time has come for major testing of the ambitious good intentions of Charitable Choice. Christian social workers have a stake in developing programs which honor all of the good intentions of Charitable Choice, a commitment to genuine pluralism in the public square that includes individual freedom, noncoercion, and protections of minorities against both the powerful interest groups of society and “majoritarian” ideas of democracy. This would mean a place for faith-based groups to provide services, but also protection for the freedom of recipients of services, regardless of their beliefs.

Sherwood, D. A. (2000). Charitable Choice: Still an opportunity and challenge for Christians in social work. *Social Work & Christianity*, 27(2), 98-111.

The “Charitable Choice” provisions of the 1996 welfare reform legislation hold out the hope for being a just and effective way for government and faith-based groups to collaborate in providing social services to the poor without compromising the constitutional principles of “free expression” of religion or the prohibition of “establishment” of religion. Are they a way that a pluralistic democracy can involve religious communities in public welfare service while preserving both the integrity and character of religious communities and the religious freedom of recipients who must be presumed to be quite diverse in their beliefs? Charitable Choice offers real possibilities for accomplishing great good, but also for working serious mischief.

PAPERS AVAILABLE ON THIS WEBSITE

Garland, D.R. (2003b). When the service delivery system is a congregation. Website of Faith and Service Technical Education Network. www.fastennetwork.org

Congregations often are the only voluntary organizations to which the poorest persons in our society have access, including access to opportunities to develop leadership skills such as chairing a meeting, speaking in public, and expressing their opinions in a public forum. Congregations benefit their communities by providing meeting spaces, vans for transportation, bulletin boards, copying machines, public address systems, and ways for mobilizing and strengthening a community. Most congregations also offer one or more social service programs. Congregations differ in significant ways from social service agencies, however. Those who plan, lead, and/or work collaboratively with congregations who provide social services need to understand these differences so that they can build on the strengths and characteristics of congregations.

Garland, D.R. (2003). The role of faith in the service of Christian volunteers. Website of Faith and Service Technical Education Network. www.fastennetwork.org

Most religious communities expect followers to love their neighbors and to give themselves in service. In turn, it is through serving others that faith finds expression and is deepened. Research with volunteers in Christian congregations suggests how congregational and social service program leaders can help volunteers to make the connections between service and faith and thus strengthen their motivation to serve in ongoing, meaningful ways.

Garland, D. R., Wolfer, T. A., and Myers, D. (2005). Self-reported outcomes of service in the lives of congregational volunteers. Paper presented at the Association for Research on Nonprofit and Voluntary Associations, Washington, D.C., November 19; and at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Convention, Rochester, NY, November 5.

This paper explores the consequences for congregational volunteers of being involved in five types of community social services. Findings draw on in-depth interviews with 29 congregational leaders and 25 individual volunteers from 35 Christian congregations. The paper concludes with implications for congregational leaders and social service professionals who seek to increase the positive impact of volunteer service on volunteers.

Garland, D. R., and Wolfer, T. A. (2004). Understanding faith-motivated voluntarism: How a four-site research team used ATLAS-Ti to develop grounded theory. Paper presented at the Religious Research Association, Kansas City, MO, October 22, 2004.

This paper described in detail the methodology the project used to analyze the in-depth interviews with congregational leaders and volunteers to derive grounded theory about the stimuli, motivations, philosophy, and results of involvement of volunteers in community ministry.

PAPERS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

(Available in 2006)

Garland, D. R., Wolfer, T. A., and Myers, D. (2005). Self-reported outcomes of service in the lives of congregational volunteers. Revision of the paper presented at the Association for Research on Nonprofit and Voluntary Associations, Washington, D.C., November 19; and at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Convention, Rochester, NY, November 5.

Garland D. R. (draft). How congregations become involved in community service.

Garland, D. R. (draft). What motivates and sustains reliable and persistent volunteers.

Garland, D. R., Myers, D., and Wolfer, T. A. (draft). Conceptualizing faith practices and community service.

Garland, D., Myers, D., Wolfer, T.A. (draft). Social work with religious volunteers: Activating and sustaining community involvement.

Garland, D.R., and Wolfer, T.A. (draft). Faith-motivated families and community service.

Garland, D. R. (draft). *Social work with congregations*. St. Davids: North American Association of Christians in Social Work Press.

Myers, D., Wolfer, T. A., and Garland, D. R. (draft). Service learning and faith transformation of congregational volunteers.

Wolfer, T.A., Myers, D. (draft). Community service and evangelism.

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