

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

THE ROLE OF STRESS IN CHURCH VOLUNTEERISM

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## INTRODUCTION

I slept and I dreamed that life is pleasure;  
I woke and saw that life is duty;  
I worked and I noticed that duty is pleasure.  
Friedrich Nietzsche<sup>1</sup>

In 1961, in one of the most dynamic inaugural speeches of all time, John F. Kennedy spoke the words, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."<sup>2</sup> This was indeed a pointed call to volunteering. Two decades later, in October of 1981, President Ronald Reagan again referred to the importance of volunteering in our country. "Voluntarism is an essential part of our plan to give Government back to the people. Let us go forth and say to the people: Join us in helping Americans help each other!"<sup>3</sup> He then set out to appoint a thirty-five member Presidential Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives.<sup>4</sup> Along with this call to volunteers came some skepticism. Corporations and other sources of funds felt that it would require an 144% increase in voluntary donations to make up for Reagan's first Federal budget cuts begun the week of his statement. Also, businesses and charities were out of practice at doing the types of good works that government had gradually usurped from them.<sup>5</sup> From its inception, then, it seems that Reagan's expectations of the American public to come forward might be frustrated by attitudes toward the far-reaching effects of volunteer vs. paid work involvement. Possibility for stress, openness, resistance to this change (to a new respect given to the volunteer worker) was real.

At this point in time (1983) there is a fund of research on the subject of volunteering, and in 1980 the National Forum on Volunteerism was created to deal with the rapid change marked by the growing strength of volunteer institutions. Co-sponsored by the Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) and VOLUNTEER, the National Center for Citizen Involvement, research and opinions were gathered to: identify what makes people volunteer; apply a planning model for the future of volunteerism; to point out the critical role of volunteers; and to stimulate future volunteer involvement.<sup>6</sup> One of the poignant conclusions made as a result of this Forum was that volunteering is "a critical factor in society, and if properly organized, can exert a powerful influence."<sup>7</sup> But again, along with this power comes a sense of discomfort in those outside the volunteer community. The need for volunteers to be organized and directed as efficiently as any corporation has become a necessity and, in some cases, a reality. The profile of a volunteer in 1972 as an employed adult, under 65 years of age, affiliated male, married woman with children at home, middle and upper class educated and upwardly mobile persons, homeowners with long community residence,

and a history of volunteering in the parental family or by the spouse is changing. Now anyone can volunteer and does. John L Dutton, a member of the Forum, indicated his strong feelings of respect for volunteer work by saying that, "The challenge for the future is to get it (volunteering) listed with the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, a caring Society, faith in God, lower taxes, and hope for tomorrow!"<sup>9</sup>

Statistically, in 1974 37 million Americans volunteered regularly according to a 1975 Census Bureau Survey.<sup>10</sup> In his speech in 1981 Reagan reported that "one of every four Americans does some form of volunteer work."<sup>11</sup> In an ACTION report entitled "Americans Volunteer 1974" it was noted that the highest number of volunteers in the United States were in the religious institutions.<sup>12</sup> As in corporate structure, in order to deal with the volume of volunteers in the churches, consideration must be made of their needs in answering the call to volunteer, and a concerted effort must be made to meet those needs and to match talent and volunteer work in order to minimize stress and, therefore, keep those volunteers, and encourage others to volunteer.

*Unconcepts*

To clarify my purpose in this study, some standard definitions and an overview of the theories involved need to be made. First, a definition of volunteering is in order. According to Ivan Scheier of the National Forum on Volunteerism, volunteering is "any relatively uncovered work intended to help and done without primary or immediate thought of reward."<sup>13</sup> Also, a need to distinguish volunteerism from voluntarism can be explained as follows: "Voluntarism is an organized effort for the common good, the development of man's social structure and the enhancement of the quality of life through voluntary action. Volunteerism involves an individual or group effort voluntarily given."<sup>14</sup> One can think of voluntarism as the corporation and volunteerism as the individual or group effort that makes the corporation work.<sup>15</sup> I choose to use the second definition for this paper.

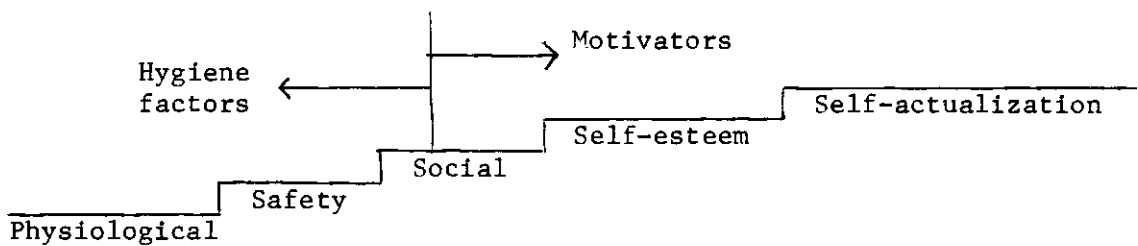
Also important to this study are definitions of stress and stressor. According to Hans Selye, "stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it." It is immaterial whether the agent or situation we face is pleasant or unpleasant; all that counts is the intensity of the demand for readjustment or adaptation.<sup>16</sup> A stressor may be defined as "an event or condition that may be purely physical, social or psychological - including anticipation and imagination - and that triggers a stress reaction."<sup>17</sup>

In dealing with stress in volunteers, part of the definition of stress involves knowing what people's needs or expectations are and how well they are met - thus determining a level of frustration which may need to be lessened. One theory which explains well the needs of all people is Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs: physiological (basic needs for food, water, air, sex); safety (need to be safe from harm and have security); social (need for affiliation or closeness with others); self-esteem (need to be recognized as a person of value, to be rewarded); and self-actualization (the highest need for peak experience).<sup>18</sup> It is assumed that those who volunteer have already had their more basic physiological and safety needs met outside of the volunteer work.<sup>19</sup>

The second theory to be considered in this paper is Frederick

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory of job satisfaction. Herzberg divides satisfaction needs into two general categories - hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors are related to an individual's work environment. They involve the following: 1. policies, 2. administration, 3. supervision, 4. working conditions, 5. interpersonal relations, 6. status, 7. security, and 8. money. The presence of these factors does not motivate, but the absence of them may demotivate.<sup>20</sup> Motivators are "satisfying factors that involve feelings of achievement, professional growth, and recognition."<sup>21</sup> These include: 1. achievement, 2. recognition for accomplishment, 3. challenging work, 4. increased responsibility, and 5. growth and development.<sup>22</sup>

The two theories can be fit together in the following manner:



For my purpose, both theories are beneficial, but emphasis will be placed on the specific needs in Herzberg's theory. These job satisfaction needs were also used to categorize the 25 Need Statements for my pilot inventory of church volunteer work needs.

On April 17, 1983, I presented a Volunteer Work Needs Inventory to the congregation at St. John's Lutheran Church in Sycamore, Illinois. Of the 167 persons of all ages present at the two services, forty-one completed the forms. These persons ranged from 17 years of age to 63, with the majority in the mid-twenties to fifties. The format for this inventory was based on Dr. Marvin Fogel's Occupational Needs Inventory, used to determine need frustration and/or satisfaction in individuals in paid occupations. The procedures, results and implications of this inventory are discussed in the latter portion of this paper. (Future use of this inventory with other churches would definitely be possible.)

It is important to note that this paper does not deal with solutions to problems with negative stress factors. This subject would be a paper in itself, and with the fund of information available would be a worthwhile project to pursue.

At this time I would like to acknowledge the valuable help given to me Dr. Marvin Fogel, the Reverend Al Patten, the Reverend Loren Krout, and Ms. Eugenia Setchell of the Voluntary Action Center in DeKalb. All of these people realize that "our attitudes and values shape our entire lives and, most particularly, those things that we undertake to do voluntarily. The way we feel about ourselves, our work, our community, our relationships contributes to our willingness to help others to share our success with those in need. The constantly changing balance between altruism and selfishness in our society defines the nature and scope of volunteering."<sup>23</sup>

*Handwritten notes:*  
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## VOLUNTEERS IN SOCIETY

The importance of volunteers to the effective management of our country cannot be overestimated. "The ability and willingness of citizens to volunteer is directly influenced by many factors in society: those values of caring and sharing that are inherent in a willingness to volunteer; inflation, energy shortages; the resistance to volunteers by paid helpers; the growing role of government in service delivery; actions by employers which encourage or hinder participation; and a range of personal factors caused by changing values, expectations and lifestyles."<sup>24</sup> To be most effective and positive, the types of volunteer activities must meet the personal needs of the volunteers. Sensitive volunteer management is essential to achieving this end. The full acceptance of volunteers as valuable and skilled workers by paid helping professionals is also vital to the helping process.<sup>25</sup>

Citizen involvement in volunteering might be broken down into types of volunteer work: 1. service, 2. advocacy/issue oriented, 3. citizen participation, 4. governing/administrative (like boards of directors), and 5. self-help (like AA).<sup>26</sup> These types of organizations can again be broken down, and the climate of that volunteer activity categorized in the following manner:

1. Open - with a balance of meeting volunteers' social needs and maintaining high efficiency standards. This type of climate is characterized by high morale, high participation, shared decision making.
2. Autonomous - with the leader standing away from the staff and effective democratic decision-making is done. Pride of group involvement, high morale and participation characterize this type of climate.
3. Controlled - with little emphasis on gratification of social needs of volunteers; with a task-oriented leader who is efficiency oriented. The morale level is neutral here.
4. Familiar - with social concerns being emphasized, few rules exist and business is carried out ineffectively, and few rules exist, and there is disregard for organizational goals.
5. Paternalistic - with an overbearing leader, high staff conflict, low morale. Cliques form and there is a hierarchy formed within the organization.
6. Closed - with an absence of effective leadership, low morale, neither meeting the goals of the organization nor the satisfaction of social needs.<sup>27</sup>

It seems, then, that effective leadership and management of volunteers is essential to a successful program. Problems of ineffective communication between leadership and individuals, relevant and important information being found out outside the organization, no personal communication, unclear directions given, and lack of "yes" or "no" answers from the program director are a few of the negative influences upon volunteer programs.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, if these negatives can be reversed with the volunteer director giving clear and concise directions, informing volunteers well, being tactful, being understanding and cooperative in his communications, being willing to listen and discuss problems, and showing personal interest in the volunteers, many problems within an organization can be helped.<sup>29</sup>

Also, the needs of the individual volunteer must be assessed, acknowledged and satisfied whenever possible. There are many types of assessment tools available or tools can be developed to fit a specific organization's needs (The adaptation of my Volunteer Work Needs Inventory is such an example.) "When people come to work in organizations, they do not come 'empty-handed'...they bring various needs or motives which predispose them to release their energy or behave in particular ways - ways which seem to them likely to satisfy their needs."<sup>30</sup> In many cases William Glasser's "positive addiction" concept is applicable here. A positive addiction is "something that people choose to do, physical or mental. They believe it has some value for them, and it is something that they can do on their own. It is something they believe has enough worth to put about an hour a day into doing, perhaps in one period, usually in no more than two... something that they think they can be proficient in..."<sup>31</sup> In the public sector of volunteering, a Gallup Survey on Volunteering indicated that 43% of those who volunteer do so because someone asks them personally.<sup>32</sup>

In my information search for determining the needs of volunteers in society, there were many lists available, some using Maslow's or Herzberg's theories as a basis, some for use with specific types of volunteer organizations (in education, for instance), some general and some specific. Because they all seemed quite similar, I will include only one within the body of my paper. This list of eighteen statements originated with a survey done in Psychology Today and was used to assess job factor importance.

1. Chances to do something that makes you feel good about yourself
2. Chances to accomplish something worthwhile
3. Chances to learn things
4. Opportunity to develop your skills and abilities
5. The amount of freedom you have on the job
6. Chances you have to do things you do best
7. The resources you have to do the job
8. The respect you receive
9. Amount of information you get about your job performance
10. Your chances for taking part in making decisions
11. The amount of job security you have
12. The amount of pay you get (might apply in some cases)

13. The way you are treated by the people you work with
14. The amount of praise you get for a job well done
15. The amount of fringe benefits you get
16. Chances for getting a promotion
17. Physical surroundings of your job
18. The friendliness of people you work with 33

Comparing this list to the list of 25 Need Statements on my Volunteer Work Needs Inventory gives some significant information for correlation of paid employment and volunteer work needs. The statements related to pay, fringe benefits and promotion chances are the only ones which would need to be modified in order to make the two lists the same. "Volunteering is, after all, simply at a different point on the same work continuum as paid employment. Both affect and are affected by attitudes toward work, the work place, and each other."<sup>34</sup>

But often, when these needs are not met either by the home situation or by paid work, an individual will look to having these needs met by a volunteer program in healthy combination with other work activities.<sup>35</sup> It is even quite possible and, perhaps, probable, that an individual can learn new skills in his volunteer work which can enhance his need satisfaction to the extent that the volunteer work will enrich paid work skills or even lead him into a change to employment more suited to his needs. If an effective connection can be noted between the skills learned in volunteer work and a paid job applied for, it is even possible to use volunteer experience as one would use previous paid employment skills to obtain employment.<sup>36</sup>

When considering satisfaction needs of volunteers, it is also important to consider reasons why people are dissatisfied, suffer volunteer "burn-out", and actually leave a volunteer situation. "Mental tensions, frustrations, insecurity, and aimlessness are among the most damaging stressors, and psychosomatic studies have shown how often they cause migraine headaches, peptic ulcers, heart attacks, hypertension, mental disease, suicide, or just hopeless unhappiness."<sup>37</sup> The term "revolving-door" syndrome has been coined to describe this negative tendency among volunteers. Because of lack of motivation, a volunteer may walk in the door, work for a short time, and then walk out - forever. Each volunteer needs to be treated positively, as a unique human being with his own set of attitudes, beliefs, needs and knowledge.<sup>38</sup> Often these frustrations can be traced to untrained leadership. In Paul Ilsley and John Niemi's book Recruiting and Training Volunteers, ten roadblocks to volunteer-leadership communication read as follows:

1. Inaccessibility to leader
2. Distortion of information
3. Lack of trust
4. Hidden agendas
5. Ineffective listening
6. Formulating conclusions prematurely
7. Belief in absolutes
8. Right-and-wrong syndrome
9. Traditional beliefs





## VOLUNTEERS IN THE CHURCH

"Not sleeping, but half-awake. A giant in size and influence, yet only partially awake to current trends and changing perspectives. This image of today's voluntary effort on the part of religious groups reveals both its existing power and its unfulfilled potential."<sup>41</sup> Individuals looking for relief of job stress or stress with family in church volunteer work take note! Work is work is work... If for any reason one takes sanctuary or looks for a miracle in relieving personal stress in church volunteering, the church is an organization too - just as paid employment or family is. Assess your own personal needs; look at the church's needs; look at leadership; look at jobs available; look at potential for new programs you might implement; look at the whole picture. With society's influence, church volunteer work requires effective management in order to fulfill its spiritual purposes, sustain itself, and fulfill the needs of its members.

The history of church volunteering dates back to Biblical times with the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, Jesus' disciples, and Paul's call to and training of seven individuals. Today, as in times past, we are called to commit ourselves to use our talents, our time and insights, and our energies. This may come about as we teach in the church school, become involved with administration and leader development, and as we find ways to enhance our own ministry and that of others in churches of both small and large memberships.<sup>42</sup>

As to the history of the clergy's influence on the workings of the church, in the past, ministers were expected to recruit and direct the volunteer energies of their congregations... It is only recently that several major denominations have openly recognized the need for their clergy to develop the skills of volunteer administration in order to be effective religious leaders today."<sup>43</sup> Depending upon the scope of a pastor's knowledge and experience, these leadership skills might not have been developed. And it is possible that delegation of many duties has been made to capable members of the congregation. In this case, leadership skills need to be developed in these persons also. Already the picture is complicated in structure.

Now - add the individual volunteers and their needs. Many are looking for a "traditional" volunteer organization which looks like what they need, often using the following six criteria:

1. Participants label themselves "volunteers"
2. It has structure and organization
3. It has a leader role person
4. It is service oriented, not advocacy oriented
5. It is a part of the human service delivery system
6. It has a long unchanging history in the above <sup>44</sup>

But when looking at these six points in view of church work, numbers 1, 2, 3, and sometimes 5 are often lacking. It seems essential that the churches learn to handle themselves as the organizations that they have pretended not to be in order to separate themselves from what they believe to be "the outside world." But their members live in that world, and many aspects of this involvement are positive, and worth cooperative effort. These people who are part of society outside of the church are the church's leaders, assistant leaders, teachers, and policymakers (board and committee members). These people are the problem solvers, ready to be taught how to couple their worldly gifts with their support of the church and its teachings, to make their lives meaningful whichever sector they enter. How can the church handle this effectively?

It is interesting to note that although change of any sort, positive or negative, causes stress, the church as an organization is obligated to change, to challenge, and to motivate in order to reach people with its teachings. And yet, many churches resist change because of its "seemingly" ill effects (internal dissension, lack of persons to carry out change, lack of coping tools, security seeking in the status quo), not realizing that these effects will pass as they mourn the old and excite in the new. Even the new will one day be old.

To be obvious, people are human and have needs, as illustrated by Maslow's hierarchy and Herzberg's theory. And the people who are volunteering in the church are the same human beings who get up in the morning, expecting certain needs to be met - not necessarily selfish needs, but just to get through the day, the year, and life in general. The degree of these needs may change from time to time, but they are always there. When these needs are met or exceeded, the volunteer does not experience stress. When these needs are not met, frustration and distress are experienced. Even Paul, who eventually became an effective volunteer leader, felt that because he had been "chosen" as a leader that he should set out to control the Israelites - that his way was entirely right and theirs was all wrong. It took the words of God himself in a burning bush to help him realize that he was human too.<sup>45</sup> Paul's needs kept changing until the point when his need to be self-actualized became a need to be God-actualized.<sup>46</sup> (Perhaps in the church setting, this could be a sixth need to be added to Maslow's hierarchy.) But - it takes many mental and physical steps to reach that point - and all of the steps are necessary. It may be felt by some that there is an over-emphasis in self-growth needs, but look at Paul, as a man of this world with special talents, special missions. Paul learned these skills through instruction and experience. He grew to accept his place in life, whatever circumstances befell him, and fulfilled his mission in life, in this world, voluntarily.

In every respect, the pastors and other clergy are intimately involved with the strange dichotomy of working with church volunteers and dealing with the world outside the church, even though these worlds are undeniably connected. A climate in which these two worlds can comfortably work together can prove difficult for clergy. But the clergy are human too, and have their own set of personal needs. Being that they are human, this set of needs is the same list that the

individuals in the congregation hold. The pastor as a volunteer leader, in many instances, shares many needs with his parishioners. Some of the shared concerns and needs of clergy and laity are:

- "1. Freedom to be creative.
2. Time to do important things.
3. Affirmation as individuals.
4. Acceptance as persons with needs.
5. Support from others.
6. Recognition of their achievements.
7. Clear definition of role.
8. Inclusion as part of the team.
9. A chance to grow as persons.
10. A chance to be heard.
11. A chance to be understood."<sup>47</sup>

Assessment of these needs in both clergy and laity should be made periodically, determining where frustration and distress are evident. Whether this assessment be formal or informal, done by the pastor or someone else, it needs to be done by persons trained in the identification of stress and in methods of dealing with stress.

At this point it is appropriate to deal with the reasons why some people leave their church volunteer work. A significant list of such concerns as related to clergy follows:

1. lack of clearly stated goals
2. role confusion and lines of authority and responsibility unclear
3. inadequate job descriptions
4. fear of conflict
5. role reversals of clergy
6. resistance of newcomers
7. burn-out of "faithful few"
8. protecting "pastoral turf"
9. manipulative or exploitive use of lay volunteers
10. importance of "feelings" in decision-making <sup>48</sup>

This list was made by the twenty-five clergy and laity (Catholic, Lutheran, Disciples of Christ, and Presbyterian) who attended Iliff and the 1977 summer seminar to learn church management skills.<sup>49</sup>

Another point of frustration, distress can be found in the person who wants to perform a task but lacks skill or has skills but does not want to perform a task, and has somehow been obliged to perform that skill anyway, whether by accident, pressure, or choice.<sup>50</sup> This, in organization-related language would be known as lack of job fit, and is also found to be a problem in church work. In this case, motivational needs would be unfulfilled. An assessment of needs and talents might prove valuable in this area.

Looking at the church as a whole is awesome for my purpose here. Unlike the workplace where everyone is paid for time spent, there are usually only a few paid positions - pastors, secretaries, organists, choir directors, and custodians. The rest are volunteers bringing in their own ideas and needs - trying to come to comfortable

*Handwritten note:*  
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solutions to everyday problems - bringing in past experiences with other churches in other parts of the state or country - sometimes churches of other denominations. It is amazing that a church can function as well as it does - using the various talents of these individuals to handle religious instruction, financial matters, decision making, fund raising and creative activities. There is often an excess of ideas and a deficit of effective communication and use of these ideas.

## VOLUNTEER WORK NEEDS INVENTORY

To test the meaningfulness of the information I have gathered on the subject of the role of stress in church volunteerism, I formulated an inventory to be administered to individual churches who showed interest in assessing the stress levels of their volunteers. Hopefully, the results of this inventory would help the individual church to pinpoint any high levels of stress in a given area of need, and also point out strengths, low levels of frustration, which could serve as positive comparisons when working to alleviate the identified negative stressors. This inventory was based on an Occupational Needs Inventory format developed by Dr. Marvin Fogel. Dr. Fogel helped me to rework his format to fit the volunteer work needs which I found to be significant and slightly different from the paid work needs.

This inventory consists of twenty-five Need Statements to be rated as to level of need: 1. Not at all, 2. Minimally, 3. Moderately, 4. Very much, or 5. Extremely so. (A copy of this inventory is included with this section of the term paper. The rough draft was presented to the pastor and Board of Administration of St. John's Lutheran Church in Sycamore at the monthly Board meeting on April 7, 1983. This presentation was made in order to receive permission and approval to present the inventory to the congregation on April 17, the first day of National Volunteer Week.) The Need Statements were divided, using Herzberg's breakdown of Hygiene factors and Motivators - 13 of the statements fit into the Hygiene category (1. Policies - #'s 12, 14, 15, 22; 2. Administration - #19; 3. Supervision - #23; 4. Working conditions - #'s 9, 13; 7. Security - #25; 8. Money - #10), and 12 fit into the Motivator category (1. Achievement - #3; 2. Recognition for accomplishment - #'s 2, 18; 3. Challenging work - #'s 6, 11, 17, 21; 4. Increased responsibility - #'s 4, 5; 5. Growth and development - #7, 11, 20).

The pilot inventory was presented with a cover letter to those attending both services, ages 12 and older. My instructions were: Please look at the Inventory. Turn it on its side and fill out the information (Name of church, date, age, male or female, time spent in church volunteer work), and put a check mark next to any volunteer work you participate in. You may check as many items as necessary, and/or add items if they are not included. Then, please turn the inventory straight up and read the directions along with me... Now look at the 5 categories or levels of need fulfillment at the top of the chart. Now look at the first Need Statement (To experience friendship with my co-volunteers.). First place an X in the box which most closely expresses how important that friendship need is to you. Then go back and read the same statement again, and place an O in the box indicating how well this need is being fulfilled by your church volunteer work. Your O can be in the same box as the X, to the left or to the right of the X - whatever is appropriate for you. Then complete the rest of the form in the same manner - first placing your X's

and then your 0's. Then, when you leave the church, please place the completed forms in the box in the narthex. Anonymity was assured.

I left the reading of the cover letter, which was written at the suggestion of the Board of Administration of that church, and was almost too lengthy for my purpose, to the discretion of the individuals present. I indicated that reading the letter might help them to understand what the Inventory could mean to them as individuals, to the church, and to me. A copy of this cover letter is also included in this paper.

Of the 167 total persons of all ages who were present at the two services, 41 turned in fully completed forms. In looking over the 22 partially completed forms turned in, it appeared that those 55 years of age and older had difficulty in completing the work in the time available at the end of the service. There might have been various reasons for this, but I felt, as I viewed the outward reactions, that the older people found this type of task cumbersome and somewhat confusing. For some it may have been a number of years since they last filled out such a form, or taken a test of any kind. Also, at the end of each service, especially the 8:00 before Sunday School, everyone is always in a hurry to leave.

Each individual Inventory was scored according to Dr. Fogel's formula -  $2X - 0 = \underline{\quad}$ . If the X and the 0 were in the same box, or if the 0 was to the right of the X, the score for that item was zero. If the 0 was to the left of the X, a level of frustration or stress was assumed, and the formula was used. Using this method, the lowest possible score was a 0 and the highest was a 9 on any one item. The frustration scores could range from 3 - 9. Then the 25 scores were totaled. These scores ranged from 0 - 156 (highest possible was 225).

Then, using a graph, I charted the total scores of all of the 41 subjects on the 25 Statements. Following are these statements, in rank order of frustration level - from highest to lowest. Included with this list is the mean score for each item, (indicated to the left of each item.) The top five Statements are those items of highest frustration for this individual congregation. The bottom five Statements are those items of lowest frustration for this group.

| Mean Score | Statements  |
|------------|---|
| 2.9 - 1.   | #22, To feel that my opinions make a difference.                                  |
| 2.8 - 2.   | #2, To feel my work is considered important by people meaningful to me.           |
| 2.6 - 3.   | #6, To engage in work which in and of itself is enjoyable.                        |
| 2.6 - 4.   | #13, To be part of an organization of which I can feel proud.                     |
| 2.5 - 5.   | #8, To have the chance to help others through my work.                            |
| 2.5 - 6.   | #1, To experience friendship among my co-volunteers.                              |
| 2.4 - 7.   | #21, To feel that my talents are being effectively used.                          |
| 2.4 - 8.   | #7, To experience personal growth.  |
| 2.3 - 9.   | #24, To have a manageable workload that can be done in the time I have available. |
| 2.2 - 10.  | #11, To have opportunities to be creative.  |
| 2.1 - 11.  | #3, To feel I have achieved importance in life through this work.                 |
| 2.0 - 12.  | #18, To receive recognition for work well done.                                   |

Low  
Return  
rate  
TRM or  
work

Foster  
Church

- 2.0 - 13. #19, To feel my church gets things done efficiently.
- 2.0 - 14. #17, To feel excitement in this work.
- 1.9 - 15. #23, To respect individuals who direct my volunteer activities.
- 1.8 - 16. #15, To have clear expectations of what is expected of me.
- 1.7 - 17. #14, To engage in activities that agree with my conscience.
- 1.6 - 18. #4, To have responsibility for carrying out important activities.
- 1.5 - 19. #20, To have a significant change from what goes on in my personal life.
- 1.5 - 20. #9, To be looked upon as one of the best in my volunteer work.
- 1.3 - 21. #25, To have a sense of belonging or group membership.
- 1.3 - 22. #12, To have freedom in what I do rather than follow set rules.
- 1.0 - 23. #16, To have a pleasant physical environment.
- 1.0 - 24. #10, To attain experience for future employment outside of volunteer work.
- 1.0 - 25. #5, To engage in volunteer leadership.

My own interpretation of these results would indicate that some element is keeping a significant number of church volunteers from either voicing or implementing their opinions. They do not feel a part of the decision-making process, though there is a Board of Administration and open Voters' Meeting where opinions can be voiced. This "roadblock" needs to be identified and dealt with effectively. As for #2, either the work is <sup>not</sup> meaningful (as indicated by 3rd ranked #6) or there is not <sup>feedback</sup> from the support group <sup>at</sup> to the meaningfulness of work performed. Third ranked #6 deals with enjoying the work itself. Perhaps there need to be choices of types of work added to the possible choices which exist now - meaningful work. Or perhaps job fit determined by a talent search would help lower this mean score. Fourth ranked #13 involves a general impression of the individual's feelings toward the church of which he is a member. The high level of distress felt in this area might be dealt with by determining, especially among leadership like the Pastor and Board of Administration, why this need is not being effectively met. Perhaps a leadership training or a stress management workshop would be helpful. Also, each individual volunteer activity within the church should have a written statement of purpose and evaluate adherence to this periodically. The fifth highest item involving the most stress is #8. Helping others is most often thought to be the church's primary calling to volunteers. Yet in this congregation this need is not being met effectively. Perhaps more opportunities and suggestions for how to help people need to be introduced. Or, perhaps this need frustration is connected to the stress felt in #22 dealing with opinions not being used. Also, determining what kinds of help (services, monetary, etc.) can be defined here.

As for the five items at the low end of the frustration scale, #25 dealing with group membership and belonging was near the bottom, and

*Handwritten notes:*  
 The church is not doing a good job of listening to the members.  
 The church is not doing a good job of listening to the members.  
 The church is not doing a good job of listening to the members.



item #1 dealing with friendship with co-workers was tied with #8 for 5th place. This seemed somewhat contradictory to me, unless this group feels more satisfaction with their relationship with the congregation as a whole than with a one-to-one communication and working together. Perhaps individuals would like to, but do not feel the unity of individuals working together for a common cause. This item would merit some brainstorming by leaders. #12, related to being able to have freedom in what can be done, is low in frustration level. The Constitution of the church does set rules, but these have been agreed upon by the voters, and can be amended if necessary. The church environment itself seems to be satisfying. Work has been done to improve its usefulness and aesthetic value to the members. It might be helpful to assess why and how this work has been effectively carried out, and perhaps apply these principles to dealing with the high stress items. Because there was a low number of young people completing the survey, I feel that #10 dealing with using volunteer work to lead to future employment was a low stress. Or, perhaps, individuals had not even considered this as a possibility, and, therefore, were not stressed by it. The lowest item - referring to engaging in leadership was interesting to me as being at the bottom of the stress list. Is it that individuals do not want to strive for leadership because of lack of skill, lack of pride in the organization, or a feeling that their opinions will not be used, or is this a truly satisfied need? Again, discussion among leaders is in order.

*What was the x 2  
Do the not develop  
the ability to  
succeed at something  
the system*

My comments are somewhat speculative, but based on knowledge of stress management, and Herzberg's theory. Using his Hygiene factors and Motivators, the frustrations of this congregation are spread evenly. This means that both areas of work satisfaction needs should be addressed, especially in the specific categories of policy-making, interpersonal relations, status, recognition for accomplishment, and challenging work.

Some questions which might be addressed in meetings to discuss alleviation of stressors are as follows:

- "1. Where are we now? (base line assessment)
2. Where do we want to go? (goals and objectives)
3. How will we get there? (resources, strategy)
4. How long will it take? (time line)
5. How will we know when we get there? (evaluation - face to face with volunteer)"51

Then it would be well to look at the development of volunteer potential, to involve more people in more meaningful tasks. This could be accomplished with the aid of the following guidelines:

1. Develop goals and objectives
2. Write job descriptions
3. Gather information on potential volunteers
4. Identify and match people with responsibilities
5. Recruit and provide orientation
6. Develop leaders
7. Evaluate thoughtfully
8. Affirm and show appreciation 52

*Handwritten notes on the left margin, partially obscured and difficult to read.*

*Handwritten notes on the bottom right margin, including the word 'potential' and other illegible text.*

*Don't list  
sentences with  
a connective*

And each job description should include the following elements: objectives of job, responsibilities (general and specific), abilities needed, support system understanding, to who responsible, time commitment, term of service, training opportunities, and by whom elected or appointed.<sup>53</sup>

Also of help might be these useful suggestions to leaders, as recommended by the Iliff course in church management:

1. Be aware of training events
2. Modify training materials and management tools to use in volunteer programs
3. Recommend a volunteer coordinator to be added (paid or unpaid)
4. Design seminary courses in church volunteer management principles
5. Plan joint training sessions with other congregations 52

Since several of the extremely dissatisfied individuals seemed to be youth in the congregation, it might be well to assess possible needs in this area.

April 17, 1983

Dear Members of St. John's,

The week of April 17-23 is National Volunteer Week. The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod is observing this week by asking that individual congregations gratefully acknowledge and thank all who have served in volunteer work in their churches. They have also made suggestions as to how this might be done, ways of celebrating this week. One of these suggestions involves taking a survey of the talents of those within the church for possible referral to appropriate volunteer jobs.

Almost everyone volunteers in some capacity - whether it be as an officer on the Board of Administration or driving someone to a church activity. Some feel that they are not doing enough; others feel they are doing more than they can handle; still others may feel that their volunteer work fulfills all of their needs and that they are perfectly matched to the jobs they perform. In any case, there is no one kind of volunteering which is more or less important than any other kind of volunteer work. To function effectively the church needs whatever time or talents members have to give. Everyone is important and equal in the sight of God. And individual needs will vary, among members and among sister congregations. What is important is that the needs of the congregation as a whole match as comfortably as possible the needs of the individuals within that congregation, keeping in mind that our work is done with the help of God and on His behalf.

My purpose here today is to provide a tool, this Volunteer Work Needs Inventory, to help assess the personal needs felt with whatever volunteer work you do. This Needs Inventory is based on an inventory used to assess the needs within varying occupational work settings and has been used effectively by its originator, Dr. Marvin Fogel, a professor in the Department of Community Mental Health at Northern Illinois University. I am now taking a class in Occupational Stress and Stress Management with Dr. Fogel, and hope to eventually receive a degree in CME. My term paper for the semester deals with the role of stress in church volunteerism. To enhance my research for this assignment, I have worked with Dr. Fogel in rewording the inventory to fit the significant work of volunteering. The possibility of using this assessment tool to help other congregations is a real one. What began as a simple term paper has become a workable idea, far beyond my expectations.

Today you are being given the opportunity to use this tool to your advantage, and to the advantage of this church. Under the supervision and guidance of Marvin Fogel, I will provide you with the findings and what they mean for us. This information will be included in the June church newsletter.

I wish to offer my thanks to the Board of Administration for their support in this study. I thank you for your contribution to a meaningful assignment. I pray that this project will be helpful for all involved in carrying on God's work within our congregation.

Yours in Christ,

Martha Windelborn

## CONCLUSIONS

Don Osgood in Pressure Points: The Christian's Response to Stress summarized the role of stress in life. "If we agree that stress is within us and that it is caused by any number of pressure points that make us uncomfortable, to say the least, and even desperate at times, then we begin to see that it is our response to stress that makes the difference, not the pressure itself. That is the key to stress management. It isn't what goes into a person or what touches his life that is so important. It's what comes from the person..."<sup>55</sup> Stress is a fact of life. Some stress is positive, motivating. Some is negative and demotivating.

Where is help to be found to deal with negative stress? What is to be done to help make church volunteer programs work efficiently and in fulfillment of everyone's needs in a time when volunteers are a necessity? In my bibliography I have placed an asterisk (\*) beside some of the outstanding references which could be used to help organizations of any kind with problem solving and/or initiating volunteer involvement.

The implications of this study are far-reaching and significant. The connection between volunteers in society and volunteers in the church, and the vital interchange of information available for helping to alleviate stress and make volunteer organizations run efficiently is boundless. More research, more studies, more specifically church-oriented materials need to be uncovered and/or developed. Assessment tools, evaluation methods, leadership training, stress management training - all of these areas and more would be of great value to the future of church volunteerism, as they are to volunteer involvement in society now.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Hans Selye, Stress Without Distress (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1974), p. 100.
- 2 Michael Reese, "Let Volunteers Do It," Newsweek, October 5, 1981, p. 26.
- 3 Phyllis Gillis, "Making It as a Volunteer," Parents, November 1981, p. 47.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Reese, "Let Volunteers Do It," p. 26.
- 6 K. Kenn Allen et al., The Shape of Things to Come: 1980-1990. A Report from the National Forum on Volunteerism (Appleton: Aid Association for Lutherans, 1980), Introduction.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Aida K. Tomeh, "The Value of Voluntarism Among Minority Groups," Phylon, March 1981, p. 88.
- 9 Kerry Kenn Allen and National Forum on Volunteerism, Shaping the Future: A Report of the National Forum on Volunteerism (Appleton: Aid Association for Lutherans, 1982), p. 5.
- 10 Paul J. Ilsley and John S. Niemi, Recruiting and Training Volunteers (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), p. 1.
- 11 Kurt Anderson, "A Vision of Voluntarism," Time, October 19, 1981, p. 47.
- 12 Alice Leppert, "Volunteering by Religious Groups: the Half-Awake Giant," Voluntary Action Leadership, Winter 1978, p. 26.
- 13 Allen et al, The Shape of Things to Come, p. 1.
- 14 Joyce M. Black, "As I See It: The Four 'Isms' (Voluntarism, Pluralism, Volunteerism and Privatism) and Their Effect on the Voluntary Sector," Voluntary Action Leadership, Summer 1979 p. 2.
- 15 Ibid. and Allen, Shaping the Future, p. 16.
- 16 Selye, Stress Without Distress, pp. 27-29.

- 17 Daniel A. Girdano and George S. Everly, Controlling Stress and Tension: A Holistic Approach (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979), p. 14.
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- 23 Kerry Kenn Allen, Steve McCurley and Doug Mosel, Will Volunteering Survive?: A Personal Guide to the Future for Individual Citizen Leaders, Volunteers and Volunteer Administrators (Washington, D.C.: VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement, 1981), p. 16.
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- 25 Allen, The Shape of Things to Come, p. 6.
- 26 Allen, Shaping the Future, p. 17.
- 27 Ilsley, Recruiting and Training Volunteers, pp. 34-42.
- 28 Donald L. Hadfield, "Humanizing the Human Service Agency," Volunteer Administration, Summer-Fall 1976, p. 37.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Wilson, The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs, p. 42.
- 31 William Glasser, Positive Addiction (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), p. 52.
- 32 Joseph R. Schubert, "Training Volunteers," Voluntary Action Leadership, Fall 1982, p. 15.
- 33 Dorothy L. Briggs, "On Satisfying the Volunteer and the Paid Employee: Any Differences?" Volunteer Administration, Winter 1982, p. 2.
- 34 Allen, The Shape of Things to Come, p. 15.
- 35 Briggs, "On Satisfying the Volunteer and the Paid Employee: Any Differences?" p. 6.
- 36 Gillis, "Making It As a Volunteer," p. 32.

- 37 Selye, Stress Without Distress, p. 108.
- 38 Dorothy Kelly, "The Human Energy Crisis," Voluntary Action Leadership, Summer 1978, p. 23.
- 39 Ilsley, Recruiting and Training Volunteers, pp. 93-94.
- 40 Marlene Wilson, "Volunteering in Times of Challenge and Change," Voluntary Action Leadership, Fall 1982, p. 21.
- 41 Leppert, "Volunteering by Religious Groups: the Half-Awake Giant," p. 26.
- 42 Maxine Marshall, Volunteers: Hope for the Future (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1980), pp. 1-2.
- 43 Susan J. Ellis and Katherine H. Noyes, "How Did We Get Here?" Volunteer Administration, Spring 1980, p. 3.
- 44 Allen, Shaping the Future, p. 34.
- 45 Osgood, Pressure Points: The Christian's Response ..  
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- 47 Nancy D. Root, "The Clergy as Enablers of Human Resources: A Report on the Iliff School of Theology 1977 Summer Seminar," Voluntary Action Leadership, Winter 1978, p. 33.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Ibid., p. 30.
- 50 Wilson, The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs, p. 42.
- 51 Root, "The Clergy as Enablers of Human Resources," p. 35.
- 52 Marshall, Volunteers: Hope for the Future, p. 16.
- 53 Ibid., p. 5.
- 54 Root, "The Clergy as Enablers of Human Resources," p. 37.
- 55 Don Osgood, Pressure Points: The Christian's Response to Stress (New York: Christian Herald Books, 1978), p. 215.

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\* Outstanding references which could be used to help organizations of any kind with problem solving and/or initiating volunteer involvement.

900 Somonauk Street  
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October 23, 1987

Dr. Ivan Scheier  
Yellowfire Press  
1705 14th Street - Suite 199  
Boulder, CO 80302

Dear Dr. Scheier,

Greetings from the midwest! I was very pleased to meet you in person at the National Conference on Volunteerism earlier this month. Addressing you as "Dr. Scheier" almost seems out of line; it seems more appropriate to address you as "Ivan". I am impressed with your vigor and enthusiasm.

Since the conference, the Volunteer Coordinator Support Group from Rockford, Illinois with which I meet monthly has met. I shared the information about DOVIAS with them. One of the Rockford V.C.'s is going to handle the details. They all felt it was an excellent idea that we hook up with the network.

Enclosed are two of my most lengthy projects from years past. The Comprehensive Project written in June of 1985 is the paper you asked me to send to you. It deals specifically with the use of the volunteer coordinator function in the church. The second paper was the work that motivated me to seek this specialized line of work/ministry - in church volunteerism. "The Role of Stress in Church Volunteerism" as offered to you is somewhat imperfect, but, I feel, worthy of your reading. Since these 2 papers were written, of course, my knowledge and experience have expanded. I realize that revisions should be made, and I am willing to do that work.

I would appreciate any comments you might have and any assistance you might offer in indicating a market for my writing. If you would be interested in knowing more about what I am doing now, or any other information, please let me know.

Thank you for your interest.

In peace and joy,

*Martha Windelborn*

Martha Windelborn (Mrs. Wm.)

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*The Role of  
Stress*

*P. 2. Unconcerned  
Inventory  
low return rate  
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FAITH*

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been  
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