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THE INTERFACE BETWEEN CAMPUS MINISTRY AND VOLUNTEER SERVICE

By Theresa MacIntyre, SSJ

INTRODUCTION

If service oriented ministry is vital to the mission of the Church, it is equally vital to ministry on campus. "Diakonia" or the concept of Christian Service is one component in the triadic view of ministry described by Madden.¹ Additional theological insight regarding service oriented ministry is expressed by Taylor:

In the Gospels the characteristic word for man's responsible relationship both to God and to his fellow was invariably 'diakonia,' a word which may be translated 'service,' or 'ministry.' But 'diakonia' means a particular kind of ministry, namely, an active, humble, self-effacing, humanitarian service aimed at meeting the real everyday needs of one's fellows...It is that spontaneous, uncalculating service which is the natural response of one who has known the love of God experientially, and who then spends himself or herself freely for God and fellows regardless of the cost...We need to recover the larger 'diakonia' ministry which Jesus, both by precept and example, taught his disciples, and which the New Testament so clearly sets forth as the daily obligation of the Christian.²

There are numerous ways to define and manifest Christian Service or "diakonia." This project focuses on the opportunities for service which can be generated through the mutual cooperation of Campus Ministers and Volunteer Service Coordinators. It is hypothesized that both ministry and volunteer service will benefit significantly through greater interaction.

Ross Scherer reveals that:

...While religious organizations have certain special features, religious self-understanding can be considerably enhanced by applying to religious organizations the "same" concepts and understandings which are being applied to organizations in general...³

This perspective is similar to that of the project director who seeks to develop an integration of the practical expertise of volunteer service coordination with the religious impulse which motivates Christian service. Jesus cautions His followers to be "...wise as serpents and simple as doves." (Matt. 10:16) Caring for others can be both altruistic from a motivational standpoint and intelligent from an organizational standpoint.

The research for this project, made possible by a grant from the Danforth Foundation, has taken place at four colleges in Kalamazoo, Michigan. They are Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo Valley Community College and Nazareth College.

Initial research for this project has revealed both a need for studies related to college volunteerism involving more than one campus⁴ and for those relating volunteerism to religious involvement.⁵

Three assumptions undergird the theoretical framework of this study. The first assumption is the acceptance of the theory that a maximum use of resources with minimal duplication of effort is a goal worthy of achievement. The second assumption is based on the belief that campus ministers are interested in providing service opportunities for the students in their congregations. Lastly, it is assumed that coordinators of volunteer service programs on college campuses and in community settings are willing to work with campus ministers in providing them with suitable opportunities for service.

The goal for this project, flowing from the previously stated assumptions, is to devise strategies which will assist campus ministers engaged on various kinds of campuses to develop more effective service programs by utilizing the resources and expertise of professional volunteer service coordinators.

PROJECT PHASES

The project contains six phases:

- (1) *the measurement of volunteer activity in student congregations during the winter semester of 1976.*
- (2) *the survey of a representative group of students at these institutions to determine their attitudes towards volunteerism.*
- (3) *the comparison of student profiles on volunteerism derived from each of these institutions with the other institutions in the survey and with non-collegiate volunteer profiles.*
- (4) *the utilization of these profiles to devise strategies for increasing student participation in volunteer activities which can be used by campus ministers.*

(5) *the description of the surveys and strategies to the campus ministers.*

(6) *the measurement of volunteer activity in student congregations during the winter semester of 1977.*

PHASE ONE

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Western Michigan University (WMU) is a state supported institution servicing approximately 20,000 graduate and undergraduate students. The university "... recognizes the necessity for providing educational opportunities to people of all ages and levels of educational preparation..."⁶

There are more than two hundred student organizations on Western's campus. Nearly every religious denomination and religious oriented group seeks and finds a means of religious expression at Western. Formal religious groups are recognized and/or coordinated by the Office of Religious Activities, which is a part of University Student Services.

Two student volunteer services offices are sponsored by the University. They are "Student Volunteer Services," which is located in the Office of Student Activities, and "Pegasus Tutors," which is coordinated by the Department of Directed Teaching. The former provides opportunities for volunteer service in all human service areas while the latter specializes in placing volunteers in educational settings. Both programs are staffed by graduate assistants.

Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC), established in 1966, serves approximately 6,000 students in the greater Kalamazoo area with programs of education, training and service. The college professes that "...it should be difficult to determine where the College campus ends and the community begins..."⁷

As in many community colleges, the Campus Ministry area is in the developmental stages. Volunteerism at Kalamazoo Valley Community College assumes a variety of forms. The Director of Student Activities publishes information concerning volunteer service opportunities, as compiled by the Kalamazoo Voluntary Action Center. Volunteer service projects are performed on specific occasions by the dozen or more student activities groups.

Students at KVCC have the option of earning academic credit for volunteer experience by participating in the Experience Based Education Program.

Kalamazoo College (KC), a private college with a strong liberal arts tradition, serves approximately 1,300 students. "The primary task of the College is the intellectual and humane development of men and women."⁸ While the College "... actively maintains its historic connection with the American Baptist Churches..."⁹, it "seeks to respect the religious integrity of every student."¹⁰

Campus religious organizations originate with the students and are assisted by the Dean of the Chapel or his assistant. A Christian "Interdenominational Fellowship" group and a Jewish "Haverim" association are presently active. A weekly chapel service for all campus constituencies is offered on Friday mornings. Because of the college's close proximity to WMU, many students are also serviced by religious groups from the University.

Students at Kalamazoo College are made aware of opportunities for volunteer Service through the Volunteer Bureau, which is sponsored by the Student Commission. The Bureau serves as a liaison between students and community social service agencies.

Nazareth College (NC) is a co-educational Catholic institution. Since its foundation by the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1924, the school has demonstrated an institutional commitment to both ministry and volunteerism.

A formal Volunteer Services Center was established at the college in 1968. In 1974 a conscious administrative effort fused both volunteer services and campus ministry into one office in the hope that this visual linkage would impact student awareness with the inter-relatedness of ministry and service more effectively than a verbal affirmation between the two offices.

Volunteer Services of Greater Kalamazoo, Inc. is the key agency in the city which works with the Volunteer Service Coordinators from all four college campuses. One of the most valuable contributions which this agency has made to the campus programs is the compilation of the College Student Volunteer Opportunities booklet.

PHASE TWO

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ATTITUDES

The assessment of student attitudes towards volunteerism comprised the second phase of the project.

Random samples of first and second year students at the four institutions were made with the cooperation and assistance of the respective registrars.

In October, 1976, the surveys were mailed to the students randomly selected. A cover letter, explaining the nature of the project, was included. Two weeks after the initial mailing, student volunteers from religious affiliated campus groups conducted a telephone follow-up.

Upon reception of the data, survey responses were transferred by hand to computer cards, and processed in four ways:

- (1) *responses of students according to the school attended.*
- (2) *the combined responses of all students, regardless of the school attended.*
- (3) *responses of students as either active or inactive volunteers according to the school attended.*
- (4) *the combined responses of all students as either active or inactive volunteers regardless of the school attended.*

PHASE THREE

PROFILE COMPARISONS

The third phase of the project consisted of the analysis of data derived from the student survey conducted in the Fall of 1976. According to the statistical analysis there is a correlation between the school which a student attends and whether or not he or she is an "active" volunteer. (Table 1)

The clarification of terms will be helpful to the understanding of this report. "Perceptual Recruiting," a concept developed by the National Information Center on Volunteerism, views every person as a potential volunteer in either a formal or informal sense. This theory provides the rationale for dividing the survey respondents in this study into two categories, namely Inactive Volunteers, (I.V.) and Active Volunteers, (A.V.)

Not all of the college students in this study are between the ages of 18 - 24. Kalamazoo Valley Community College and Nazareth College in particular show more extensive age ranges. (Table II). In fact the highest percentage of active volunteers at KVCC is in the age 29 and over category.

Comparison of the sex distribution of the active volunteers at the four schools reveals that two of the institutions negate

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF VOLUNTEERS ACCORDING TO SCHOOL ATTENDED

SCHOOL ATTENDED	ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS (AV)	INACTIVE VOLUNTEERS (IV)	TOTAL SURVEY RESPONDENTS (TSR)
Western Michigan University (WMU)	50 (35%)	92 (65%)	142 (100%)
Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC)	33 (29%)	80 (71%)	113 (100%)
Kalamazoo College (KC)	42 (33%)	87 (67%)	129 (100%)
Nazareth College (NC)	46 (54%)	39 (46%)	85 (100%)
$\chi^2=14.83$; 3 df; $P < .01$			469 = Total

TABLE II
AGE RANGES OF ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS

SCHOOL ATTENDED	17-20	21-24	25-28	29+
WMU	44 (88%)	5 (10%)		1 (2%)
KVCC	8 (25%)	10 (30%)	3 (9%)	12 (36%)
KC	42 (100%)			
NC	32 (70%)	4 (8%)	3 (7%)	7 (15%)
Row totals equal 100%				171 = Total

$\chi^2=38.93$; 9df; $P < .01$

the commonly held stereotype that women tend to volunteer more than men. The percentage of male students who are active volunteers at both Kalamazoo College and Nazareth College is from 3-5 per cent higher than the percentage of males in the total survey response from these institutions.

At Western Michigan University and at Kalamazoo College the majority of the active volunteers in the study are not married. Approximately one fifth of the active volunteers at Nazareth are married and almost one half of the active volunteers at Kalamazoo Valley Community College indicate marital status.

Comparison of the employment status of the total survey respondents with that of the active volunteers reveals that students attending the state university and the community college who do not work tend to volunteer more than those at these institutions who are employed. Students attending the two private colleges tend to volunteer whether they are employed part time, full time, or not at all.

Students who rate themselves as "good" academically form the largest segment of active volunteers at each institution.

In an effort to study the relationship between the religious attitudes of students and their actual participation in service activities three questions were asked. The first identified the religious tradition in which the student was raised. The second inquired about the religious tradition presently preferred by the student, and the third question asked students if they were affiliated with a religious group on campus.

Approximately one third of the active volunteers at WMU and KC indicated that they were connected with a campus religious group. None of the student volunteers at KVCC claimed such an affiliation, and almost half of the Nazareth volunteers said that they were associated with the campus religious organization. The study does not indicate whether the volunteer work in question is directly sponsored by the designated religious group.

Some areas of volunteer activity have equal appeal or lack thereof to students. Other concerns vary in popularity from campus to campus. This phenomenon may be due to any number of reasons, including curriculum stress, programs which have long standing traditions and/or special interests of coordinators. Students showed particular interest in volunteer activity in the areas of corrections, world concerns, and educational activities.

Many techniques are available for the recruitment of volunteers. An average of 67 percent of the students surveyed rate the personal contact of a friend or an active volunteer as being the most effective recruitment tool.

Fourteen reasons why people might volunteer were listed on the survey. Five of these reasons are discussed here in the hope that they will be of particular interest to campus ministers.

Volunteerism as a Valuable Learning Experience. An average of 81 percent of the students view volunteering as a valuable learning experience.

Volunteerism as a Viable Means of Providing Human Service. Serious reflection on the past twenty or thirty years of world history reveals to the most uncritical of thinkers that money alone will never provide a total solution to the problems facing the human race. People, the most powerful energy resource, need training in order to utilize their energy and power effectively to improve the less than human situations confronting them. It is gratifying to note that an average of 82 percent of the students surveyed view volunteering as a viable means of serving humanity.

Volunteerism as Expression of a Religious Commitment. While an average of 79 percent of the students interviewed claim to have a religious preference at this time in their lives, only 47 percent see a possible connection at least "some of the time" between religion and the extension of themselves in service to others.

Volunteerism as a Means of Coping with Loneliness and Volunteerism as a Means of Improving Self-Image. Campus ministers, interviewed in the preliminary stages of this project, agree that the students whom they counsel are frequently searching for a true identity in their lives and for meaningful interaction with significant others. An average of 35 percent of the survey respondents consider service activity as an effective means of coping with loneliness, and 22 percent recognize it as a means to improve self-image.

Obstacles to Student Volunteering. Obstacles to volunteering on the part of college students in Kalamazoo fall into two basic categories, present commitments and lack of transportation. Generally speaking, lack of confidence in skills and abilities, lack of motivation, lack of interest and lack of knowledge of the

programs available are not viewed as obstacles. Students find that commitment to their studies often limits the amount of time which they have to give to others. Awareness of the fact that even two to four hours a week may make a significant contribution to a volunteer program can encourage students to greater involvement.

Agency coordinators frequently express frustration at the inability to retain college volunteers for great lengths of time once they are trained. The aspects of orientation, training, evaluation and recognition are crucial areas for agency success in this regard. Students are more likely to take volunteer placements seriously if the agencies are in turn concerned and aware of specific student needs. One fact to be faced by agencies is that students will be most faithful to commitments at the beginning of the semester/quarter. Volunteer assignments should be designed with that fact in mind, allowing time at the end of the semester/quarter for students to apply themselves fully to their academic pursuits, namely papers and exams.

Students agree that orientations should include:

<i>description of the purpose and expectations of the job required</i>	94%
<i>adequate training and information for the job required</i>	90%
<i>information on the rights and responsibilities of the volunteer</i>	90%
<i>a tour of the agency and an opportunity to meet the staff and clients</i>	87%
<i>allowances for advancement in the type of service required</i>	63%

In determining the types of evaluation and recognition which would be most helpful to students engaged in volunteer work, it is significant to note, that while students do appreciate both written and verbal evaluations, 75 percent prefer the evaluation which comes directly from the person receiving their services; and 55 percent place high priority on self-evaluation of the volunteer experience.

The most plentiful and carefully guarded resource is time. When asked about specific time commitments, most students indicated three or four hours per week for one semester or quarter as their preference. About 25 percent prefer to be "on call" for "one time only" involvements. Only 12 percent indicate that they would not be willing to volunteer for any project at any time during the year. Summer is the preferred

time of year for student volunteer commitments.

PHASE FOUR

GENERAL STRATEGIES

The project identified strategies applicable to any volunteer service program and those specifically relevant to the campuses being studied. Strategies intimated in the data analysis of the student survey are recapitulated here for purposes of clarity and emphasis. Since some of the suggested strategies are already in progress on the campuses, it seems logical to affirm the good that is happening and to make positive suggestions for improvement and growth. General strategies are discussed under the headings of recruitment, motivation and program needs.

The most successful vehicles for recruitment are:

- (1) *personal contact*
- (2) *the example of active volunteers*
- (3) *campus newsletters*

Students may be motivated to volunteer because it is:

- (1) *a valuable learning experience*
- (2) *a good way to test a career goal*
- (3) *a viable means of providing human service*
- (4) *experience in job preparation*
- (5) *an expression of a religious commitment*
- (6) *a humanizing experience*
- (7) *a worthwhile leisure time activity*
- (8) *a means of improving self-image*
- (9) *an effective way of coping with loneliness*

Campus volunteer service programs need:

- (1) *stable, year-round coordinators to insure continuity of programs and sufficient familiarity with community needs and resources*
- (2) *intensive preparation and publicity preceding and during orientation and registration periods*
- (3) *articulation with the educational and philosophical mission of the institution*
- (4) *a realistic budget*
- (5) *adequate transportation facilities*

- (6) *constant evaluation and updating to capitalize on student interest and to relinquish projects which are no longer productive*
- (7) *enough general appeal to attract the greatest possible number of students and enough uniqueness to project an image as a distinct entity*

PHASE FIVE

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES

The purpose of the project's fifth phase was to begin the implementation of the strategies devised. The first step in this implementation was to share the information contained in the previous phases with the people involved. Three methods were selected for this purpose: a major workshop, private consultation and the present report.

PHASE SIX

PRESENT PARTICIPATION

Each college experienced a 9-17 percent increase in the percentage of active volunteers during the second year of study. This increase may be due to many factors including greater familiarity with the programs available, the ability to generate and utilize leisure time more effectively and/or the increased desire to gain experiential knowledge.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the relationship between Campus Ministry and Volunteer Services has been studied from the vantage point of four unique institutions of higher learning. Students from all of these institutions, and people who work with them in varying capacities have participated. A model has emerged of the total community involvement which can be achieved; when educational, religious and social service agencies cooperate and share resources. The study has pointed out, that the key to effecting this symbiosis, lies both in the conviction and competence of the coordinators and ministers, and in the philosophical and monetary support provided by the institutions involved.

The project director is aware of people on various levels of the educational ladder, who support her views regarding the concatenation of ministry and service, and who are striving to implement them. While numbers are definitely of assistance to program planning and in making budget allocations,

the phenomenon of volunteerism can scarcely be measured solely in quantitative terms.

The implementation of strategies has meant something different for each group involved. This is commendable. No two programs are organized in exactly the same manner, for the same reasons, perceive the same needs or respond in the same way. Thus, the concept of integrating ministry and volunteer service has received a wide range of exposure and affirmation; while the uniqueness of individual programs has been preserved.

The tetradic results of this project have been:

- (1) *an increased awareness among the various campus constituencies of existing community needs, the opportunities available for college students to respond to them and the values inherent in this response.*
- (2) *an established foundation on which to continue building the service dimension of ministry programs.*
- (3) *an increased confidence level among campus ministers and volunteer service coordinators in their own abilities to create and direct successful service programs.*
- (4) *an increased participation by college students in Kalamazoo in volunteer service activity.*

Two of the questions which remain arise from the consciousness of the realist and the idealist respectively. The former lies in the realm of finances. While the programs under discussion are concerned with the coordination of volunteers, these programs are generally not directed by volunteer help. Who will take the ultimate responsibility for the funding of these programs in the future? Will they continue to manifest their viability and validity by servicing the needs of others? Will the institutions to which they are attached view them as worthy of the support required for their maintenance?

The second question deals with the motivation behind volunteer service. In the last analysis, motivation is an extremely personal matter. No one can determine the "why" of an activity other

than the person performing it. In fact, persons themselves may be unable to verbalize the reasons for specific responses. In perusing the account of the final judgment scene, we read that Jesus invites those to share the happiness of his Kingdom, who have fed the hungry, visited the lonely, etc... He doesn't appear particularly disturbed when the people being judged don't recall "when," "where" or "how" they recognized him while performing these actions. His response is enlightening: "...in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." Matthew, 25:40.

¹¹Ivan H. Scheier, "People Approach: Three New Strategies-Shah, Co Minimax and Perceptual Recruiting," (Boulder, Colorado: NICOV, 1975).

FOOTNOTES

¹Rev. Lawrence J. Madden, S.J., "The Role of Campus Ministry in the Catholicity of the College or University," Occasional Papers on Catholic Higher Education, Vol. 1, No. 1 (July, 1975), p. 12.

²Theophilus Taylor, "Reflections on Christian Worship in a Bicentennial Context," Spiritual Life, Vol. 22, No.1, (Spring, 1976). P. 21

³Ross P. Scherer, "The Church as a Formal Voluntary Organization," Voluntary Action Research, 1972, ed. David Horton Smith (U.S.A.: D.C., Heath and Co., 1972), p. 81.

⁴Athena Theodore, "The Voluntary Participation of College Students as a Catalyst for Change," in Voluntary Action Research, 1973, ed., D. H. Smith (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1973), p. 314

⁵Alice M. Leppert, "Religious Groups in Volunteerism," in Volunteerism: An Emerging Profession, ed., John G. Cull and Richard Hardy (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, Pub., 1974), p. 91.

⁶Western Michigan University, Bulletin, Undergraduate Catalog, (1976-77), p. 14

⁷Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Catalogue (1975-77), p. 13

⁸Kalamazoo College, Catalogue (1975-76), p. 45.

⁹Ibid, p. 21

¹⁰Ibid.