CONGREGATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICES:

LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES

by

Byungdeok Kang

(Under the Direction of Thomas Holland)

ABSTRACT

In the United States, the current social welfare policies emphasize local responsibility and faith-based organizations' involvement in social safety net systems. This study was to explore congregational leaders perceptions related to social services and examine congregational social services provided in the Athens metropolitan area of Georgia.

At two times of data collection, 109 local congregations participated in this study. This study collected various facets of congregational leaders' perceptions related to social services and congregational social service program information by paper-based questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and mean), independent sample t-tests, and bivariate/multivariate regression analyses were used to analyze quantitative data. General thematic analysis was used to examine qualitative data.

Local congregations were not only interested in social services but actively participated in them. Based on the programs identified by congregational leaders, the 109 congregations participated in 977 programs, an average of nine programs per congregation. The congregations spent a total of $1,883,440 annually: an average of $17,279 per congregation.

The main reason for congregations to engage in social services was to honor and obey God/Jesus. However, in most of the congregational social service programs, there were no spiritual or evangelistic activities. Congregations had an open attitude toward collaborating with other organizations including secular and government agencies. However, they did not want to receive public money to do social services because they did not want government control in any congregational activities.

The key determinant of congregational involvement in social services was congregational resources (people and money): the greater resources a congregation had, the higher involvement in social services. Having alternative programs to social services, theological orientation (liberal) and open attitudes of collaboration showed positive associations with the extent of involvement.

From the findings of this study, there were six recommendations to encourage congregations to engage in social services: (1) learn/study about the congregation, (2) build trusting relationships, (3) engage with the congregation, (4) establish common grounds of interest, (5) advertize social service programs, and (6) be flexible.

INDEX WORDS: Faith-based organizations, Congregational social services, Charitable Choice

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DEDICATION

To

Sunghye Park

and

Congregational Leaders with a Genuine Heart of Helping

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Roles of Religion and Religious Organizations

Religion and spirituality have a major influence on public issues as well as people's private lives in the United States. According to the General Social Study in 2004, the majority of Americans participated in religious and/or spiritual activities regularly: about 50% of Americans attended religious services at least once a month, over 70% of Americans prayed once a week (University of Chicago, 2004). Many Americans believe that God protects their country and that their religious belief is a foundation of the country's prosperity (Pew Research Center, 2002). Furthermore, religion is one of the important topics in nominating public officials, selecting presidential candidates, developing public policy, and so on. Religion and spirituality impact social services and welfare policies as well. Particularly since the 1980s when social scientists including social workers refocused their attentions on religion and spirituality, these factors have become central elements in caring for clients' needs and in delivering social services (Canda & Furman, 1999).

In terms of religious organizations, Christian religious organizations are the most prevalent among the various religions in the US. It is almost impossible to completely count all the religious organizations in the US; however, experts estimate there are at least 200,000 local religious congregations (Wolfer & Sherr, 2003). In 1986, Hodgkinson, Weitzman, and Kirsh (1988) identified 294,271 congregations by counting all the congregations listed in telephone directories. According to the Glenmary Research Center (2002), the total number of

congregations was 268,240 in 2000. Of these 268,240 congregations, over nine out of ten congregations were Christian churches such as evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic.

The roles of religious organizations in local communities and global societies are varied. Even though the primary role of congregations is to provide a place for worship services and to enhance their members' spiritual well-being, their roles are not limited to people's spiritual issues. That is, congregations serve important and diverse roles in communities, which include multiple opportunities for worship, cultural heritage, social fellowship, moral education, civic activities, and social services (Ammerman, 2001; Choi, 2003; Sernett, 1997; Smith, 2003; Uslaner, 2002; Wolfer & Sherr, 2003).

In social work, religion is important not only for assessing a client's system and developing his or her helping resources, but also for delivering social services: "Religious values, traditions, and beliefs significantly contributed to the establishment of American social welfare" (Cascio, 2003, p. 3). The Hull House services provided by Jane Addams, a well-know social work pioneer in the US, were based on her religious beliefs (Lander, 2004). In the initial phase of social services in the US, Christian and Jewish religious ideologies influenced private and governmental social service provisions and systems (Canda & Furman, 1999). Currently, there are many active faith-based social service agencies such as Catholic Charities, Jewish Family and Children's Services, and Lutheran Social Ministries. Many local churches provide social services in their communities (Wuthnow, 2004).

Socio-political Changes and Congregations in Social Services

American society has tried to maintain a separation between politics and religion as a primary pillar of the American Constitution. However, the law passed by the Clinton

administration in 1996 and expanded by the Bush administration, which is called Charitable Choice. This expanded eligibility for public grants for social services to include local congregations and ignited new debates about the separation of politics from religion. Many charitable and social services organizations in America have religious roots and have been influential players in American social welfare systems. Even before Charitable Choice, the U.S. federal and state governments funded millions of dollars for social service programs run by faith-based non-profit organizations and some local churches (Unruh & Sider, 2005). Furthermore, for some of the faith-based nonprofit organizations such Catholic Charities, Jewish Family and Children's Services, and Lutheran Social Ministries, a major funding source has been the government (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999). Many local churches had already been providing social services for their communities without any governmental support (Wuthnow, 2004). Why, then, have faith-based social services recently became such a controversial issue in America? The answer is seen in another political movement: devolution.

Devolution means that the responsibilities of public social service provision are being transferred from the federal government to the local and private sectors. "Responsibility for the poor and needy is being shifted from the federal government to the state, and from the state to the local level, primarily to the private and nonprofit sectors" (Cnaan, 1999, p. 279). There are two assumptions supporting the devolutionary movement: perceived ineffectiveness or incapability of federal governmental systems in dealing with social welfare issues and a preference for local social welfare systems and local solutions (Unruh & Sider, 2005).

In American history, especially through the New Deal and Great Society policies and programs, the U.S. government became deeply involved in creating and maintaining a social safety net (Wineburg, 2001). However, since the Regan administration, the roles and spending of

the federal government have been reduced though budget cuts and consolidations of public social service programs. The welfare reform act of 1996, when the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was replaced by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), resulted in social welfare benefits becoming short-term and temporary. Since 1996, the US government has legally been opening the door for funding faith-based organizations, including local congregations, to get financial support from the government for social service provision. In addition, when the federal government allocates money to the states for their social welfare systems, the federal government uses the block grant system as a way of enhancing local choice. In this way, the U.S. government clearly and continuously stresses "the need to reduce government efforts and increase self-help, voluntary, religiously based, and locally designed and delivered efforts" (Wineburg, 2001, p. 4).

Since large faith-based nonprofit organizations had already been in strong collaboration with the government, the main purpose of the Charitable Choice Act was to include local churches among formal social service providers (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001). The law says that churches cannot use public money for explicit evangelical activities and that they must compete for grants with secular social service agencies. Also, the law allows service recipients to choose alternative service providers. The federal government considerably opened possibilities for local churches to become social service providers with public financial support. Churches can keep their religious identities while providing services, and they may hire service providers based on religious criteria. Since the door was opened, as Cnaan (1999) and Unruh and Sider (2005) suggested, the questions for the current debate should be *which* faith-based organizations government would partner with and *how*, rather than *whether* the government supports the faith-based organizations. Rather than debating the appropriateness of

public spending on church social services, our attention should focus on finding how/why churches provide social services and how we can encourage more churches to provide better services.

Even though local congregational social service provision can be valuable and beneficial to communities, there are several continuing concerns, particularly related to the appropriateness of spending public money for congregational social services. By enacting Charitable Choice, the federal government is trying to expand social service provision through local congregations. However, secular social service providers doubt the practical productivity of congregational social services and fear such efforts violate the principle of keeping church and state separate. Since the majority of local congregations are small, they tend to provide comparatively few social services and have few resources for service expansion (Chaves, 2004). Due to their limited capacity, many local churches are not ready or qualified to use governmental funds for the provision of social services.

There are still some voices that argue that the Charitable Choice bill is inconsistent with the First Amendment, separation of church and state, because congregational programs may proselytize service recipients directly or indirectly (Unruh & Sider, 2005). For some churches, even though it is possible to differentiate the ultimate goals of congregational social service programs and methods of delivering the services, social service provision is an implicit type of evangelical activity: “a faithful response to God’s will, an expression of devotion, and a tangible demonstration of God’s love” (Unruh & Sider, 2005, p. 257). Indeed, it is questionable whether or how churches can differentiate the spiritual part from any of their organizational activities. Furthermore, each state has its own different legal/social/cultural policies related to Charitable

Choice. Even though the federal government has opened a door, many states have chosen not to walk through it.

Congregations are not a homogeneous group. The “one-size-fits-all” type of public support may not effectively cover the diverse needs of faith-based organizations, particularly local congregations, when they want to plan and deliver services (Unruh & Sider, 2005). In starting a social service or providing more social services, local congregations may have many different needs and interests. For some churches, money is the primary need, while for others, more intangible resources such as planning skills or delivery skills are important.

Regardless of whether one is for or against Charitable Choice, it is likely that Charitable Choice will change the American social welfare delivery system. Local congregations will play significant roles, but they are quite unlikely to become the major social service providers and replace the public sector (Chaves, 2004; Cnaan 1999; Wineburg, 2001).

Public Concerns about Charitable Choice

Initially, the Charitable Choice provision was a part of a new welfare policy introduced in 1996. With Charitable Choice, faith-based organizations including congregations can compete for government social service contracts while keeping their religious characteristics. Charitable Choice became the major new social welfare policy in the Bush administration in 2001. The Bush administration supported this approach by establishing the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives and similar centers in five cabinet departments: the Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Justice, and Department of Labor (White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiative, 2001). The expansion of Charitable Choice covered diverse

welfare service areas including mental health, economic development, juvenile justice, and drug treatment (White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiative, 2001).

American society continues to debate Charitable Choice. The main issues of the debate include separation of church and state, congregational capacity, religious freedom for the service recipients, and accountability (Van Slyke, Horne, & Thomas, 2005). In terms of church-state separation, the pro-Charitable Choice advocates state that it is constitutional. It is the right decision to include faith-based organizations in social service delivery systems while allowing them to maintain their religious identities and to hire staff based on religious identity (Knipperberg, 2003; Van Slyke, Horne, & Thomas, 2005).

The opposition argues that such openings violate the first Amendment of the US Constitution, separation of church and state (Van Slyke, Horne, & Thomas, 2005). That is, the government supports religious activities at least indirectly through funding congregational social services. For example, when a church applies for a job training program, the church may request money for repairing a building to use as a classroom. The classroom for the job training program during the week days could also be used for Sunday school classes. In such indirect ways, public tax money would support religious activities. In addition, the government's financial support means that faith-based organizations may receive tax money. That is, tax payers are forced to support religious activities regardless of their wishes: "American citizens will no longer have the freedom of deciding on their own whether to support religious organizations" (Wilson, 2003, p.35).

In terms of congregational capacity, in the Philadelphia Region Census (PRC) study, a congregation's average monthly replacement value of social service contribution was found to be $10,076.61 (Cnaan, 2006). An average congregation contributed over $120,000 yearly including

direct and indirect services. Even though the majority (84%) of congregations in Philadelphia was not familiar with Charitable Choice, about 62% of the congregations answered positively about collaborating with the government (Cnaan, 2006). However, the against-Charitable Choice side argues that the majority of congregations do not have enough financial, physical, or human resources to participate effectively in delivering social services (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001; Printz, 1998). In the National Congregation Study, only 6% of congregations had congregational staff who spent at least 25% of their time for social services (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001). The median number of congregational size was 75 or fewer regular attendants, and the median amount of direct church support for social services was $1,200 (Chaves & Tsitsos). In addition, many congregations have no or little experience related to social services and do not have enough capacity to prepare grant applications to compete with secular social service organizations (Farnsley II, 2001).

In terms of religious freedom, the pro-Charitable Choice advocates argue that the Charitable Choice provision supports service recipients' religious choice since the law states that there should be no discrimination against different religious beliefs, allowance for service recipients to refuse the religious component of the social services, and provision of alternative secular services for people who do not want services from the faith-based organizations (Knippenberg, 2003). However, advocates opposed to Charitable Choice disagree, stating that services from faith-based organizations, particularly congregations, may force or entice the recipients to participate in the religious activities to get better or more services (Wilson, 2003). In addition, for some impoverished areas, it is realistically impossible to have an alternative secular service provider within the same neighborhoods.

In terms of accountability, those supporting Charitable Choice state that it provides clear boundaries for faith-based organization not to use public money for any religious activities (Gill, 2004). However, the against-Charitable Choice side argues that Charitable Choice cannot, in practice, prevent faith-based organizations, particularly congregations, from using tax money to support religious activities such as buying Bibles and from proselytizing service recipients (Gill) . In addition, since Charitable Choice allows faith-based organizations to hire staff according to their religion, this also violates the principle of non-discrimination in employment (Wilson, 2003).

In the summer of 2001, Van Slyke, Horne, and Thomas (2005) conducted a telephone survey of almost 800 Georgia residents about the issues related to Charitable Choice. Most of the participants (86%) were not familiar at all or only slightly familiar with Charitable Choice. The majority of participants (65%) agreed that faith-based organizations should be able to apply for public money for social services while maintaining their religious identity, but 23% disagreed. In terms of the constitutional issue, the majority (55%) disagreed that governmental support for faith-based organizations is unconstitutional, while 27% agreed. In terms of service recipients' religious freedom, there were no dominating opinions: 32% agreed that Charitable Choice does not uphold the religious freedom while 36% disagreed. In terms of accountability, more participants trusted faith-based organizations in using the public money: 51% agreed that faith-based organizations would use the money appropriately, while 28% disagreed. Compared to secular social service organizations, faith-based organizations were considered as better in providing social services. Overall, even though the survey participants recognized a risk for service recipients' religious freedom, the majority agreed that faith-based organizations can do better than government and other nonprofit organizations in providing social services, and that

faith-based organizations should have access to public money for social services without any discrimination.

Congregations have a unique position in society. They are religious organizations; however their various services go beyond their members' spiritual development to include meeting community members' cultural, moral, physical, psychological and/or social needs. The composition of membership is more diverse than any other social organizations: Anybody can be a member regardless of age, race, ethnicity, sex, education level, or income level. In delivering social services, their religious values support helping people's needs, their members participate in the services voluntarily, and/or they provide cash and in-kind support. Their locations are geographically dispersed. Some of them are located in disadvantaged areas.

Congregations have a variety of resources for communities, which could be a rich repository or additional supplement in social welfare systems. Now, federal and local governments want to collaborate with them to deliver social services for those who are in need. Thus, understanding congregational social services is critical.

Examples of Congregational Social Service Programs

Regardless of Charitable Choice, participating in social services is not new for congregations. Even though Charitable Choice is not available in Georgia, local congregations in Athens, Georgia have participated in diverse social service programs including operating their own social service programs and supporting programs operated by other organizations, which included faith-based, secular and/or government organizations. This section describes several exemplary programs operated by congregations and supported well by congregations: Sparrow's Nest Dream Center (a congregation's own program), Relay for Life (participation in a secular program) and Interfaith Hospitality Network (an ecumenical program), International Friends and

Our Daily Bread (participation in a denominational program), and The Ark and Area Church Together Services (participation in a faith-based program). The descriptions of these programs include brief summaries of interviews with program directors and published program information.

Sparrow's Nest Dream Center

Sparrow's Nest Dream Center is a social service program in the Sparrow's Nest Mission Church which is located near the downtown area of Athens, Georgia. This church clearly expresses that one of its main church missions is to love neighbors in practical ways. This church has various social service programs to help people in need including Sparrow's Nest Dream Center. People come to the church to receive financial assistance for emergency situations, to eat meals, to get food, clothes, and/or furniture, to take showers, and to do laundry. This center opens two days every week for everybody in the community. The main service recipients are the homeless and poor. One of the congregational leaders' concerns for this center is a negative response from neighbors around the church. Since the center is a gathering place for the homeless and poor for a few times a week, the neighbors feel uncomfortable or endangered. For this center, this church always needs more resources and volunteers. When providing help, there is a bible study, but participating in the bible study is not a requirement to get help.

Relay for Life

This is a signature fundraising event for the American Cancer Society. This is a nationwide and international event. It is an overnight event, which signifies that a cancer patient is having sleepless nights while having fear for their treatment process or thinking about how to pay for the treatments. Event organizers form teams from local churches, families, friends, business, and schools. It takes several months to prepare for the event. Every year for each event,

teams do their own fundraising, whether it is solicitations, bake sales or car washes to name a few. Even though the event is not specifically church-based, organizers allow churches to bring their religious background (prayer, religious songs, etc.). Many congregations get involved because their members feel this is a way they can help any and all cancer patients whether they are from their own congregations or not. This is a family-friendly community event. In a Clarke County, 10 congregations were involved in the Relay for Life in the past year.

Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN). IHN began in October, 2004 in Athens with supports from various faith-based organizations including congregations. Even though a majority of supports for the program is from congregations, IHN is not affiliated with a single denomination but based on an ecumenical approach. IHN is an aspect of the national program of Family Promise. IHN provides intensive case management services for homeless families in crisis, for 365 days a year. IHN helps families to find permanent housing and jobs and to meet other needs. While IHN works with the families, congregations provide facilities for the homeless families to stay, volunteers to cook meals, to give them rides, to do special activities for families and children, and money to help the program financially. Currently 24 congregations are involved in and around Clarke County: 13 congregations are host sites which provide places for the homeless families to stay (rotated on a weekly basis) and volunteers to serve the families, while the other 11 congregations provide volunteers to the host congregations. The IHN policy is that it does not preach to guests and does not tell them that they need Jesus. According to the director, the church can invite a guest family to attend worship services or prayer meetings but should not do more than that. If the guest family wants to participate voluntarily, the church can invite them to come to religious services. It is up to the family. IHN also advocates for affordable housing and child care for families.

International Friends. International Friends is a ministry to the needs of people with different cultural backgrounds through providing English language classes. This is a nationwide program operated by the Southern Baptist Convention. It started in Athens in 1982. The English class is available every Thursday. The program director emphasized that this is an English language class, not a Bible study or an evangelism meeting. However, the services provided by the program director and volunteers are more than just English teaching. Volunteer English teachers may invite their students to social or religious activities outside of the classroom. International people may have various stresses in their lives such as feelings of isolation, need for health care, or marital conflict, particularly while adjusting to American culture. When English class students bring up such problems, the director and volunteers try to help them. Thus, International Friends is a place to learn English, to make friendships with other international people and Americans, and to get help with any kinds of problems. The supporting congregations are mainly Southern Baptist, but not limited to them. Over 50 congregations in the Athens area support International Friends by providing volunteers and refreshments for classes, donating money, and contributing other supplies needed.

Our Daily Bread. Our Daily Bread is a part of Athens Urban Ministry which is affiliated with the United Methodist Churches. However, over 50 congregations and civic organizations around Athens participate in this program. The congregations and organizations come on a regular basis to bring food, prepare it and serve it. The main service of Our Daily Bread is to serve the community with meals. The program director stated that they did not want government money because there would be complicated paper work and restrictions on receiving services: “This is Christ’s table: no need for paper work to get food; anyone can come to have food.” In addition, people may receive basic health screening services and/or legal assistance. Our Daily

Bread has two purposes: one is about feeding hungry people in Athens and the other is about providing opportunities for local congregations to practice their faith in positive and practical ways. While eating at Our Daily Bread, if someone wants to talk about faith issues, a volunteer or staff member may respond. In Our Daily Bready, program staff and volunteers do not proselytize or push their faith on people. The staff and volunteers believe that their faith is shown by their actions.

The Ark. The Ark opened its door on January, 1989 in Clarke County with 22 supporting congregations. Local congregational leaders responded to perceptions of tremendous needs in Athens for short-term financial assistance and worked together to develop a program to respond. People had been going to congregation to congregation, pastor to pastor, to ask for help. Congregational leader did not have enough time to take care of them all and realized the importance of a coordinated service to take care them. Basically, the Ark provides direct, short-term financial assistance for basic needs such as rent, utilities, and prescription medicine with case management services in emergency situations such as loss of income or illness. When the Ark provides support, it looks for specific reasons why the person is not able to pay a bill. If the person quit a job or was fired, they do not provide help. Their goal is to help people who accept responsibility for their decisions. The Ark is a product of collective efforts by local congregational leaders.

Currently, 37 congregations support the Ark by providing volunteers and donating money. The Ark is an interfaith organization. It is not limited to any single denomination but is trans-denominational including non-Christian religions. The Ark does not carry out any proselytizing activities. There are two requirements to be a supporting congregation: one is that the congregation has a delegate who is the connecting point between the Ark and the congregation

and the other is that the congregation regularly contributes financially (no minimum amount). The Ark does not want government money because it does not want to be controlled by government or to be required to have specific programs which the government may want but the Ark does not want. The keys for success are two-fold: one is that there continues to be a huge need for its services and the other is that top level leaders have worked together the start in operating the Ark.

Area Church Together Services (ACTS). Like the Ark, ACTS was initiated voluntarily by local congregations to provide material and emotional support for people with emergency needs in Oconee County (directly adjacent to Athens-Clarke County). People come in ACTS to get mainly food and, sometimes, clothes and money for emergency situations. When ACTS started, it was open two days each month. Now, it is open two days a week. Currently, over 15 local congregations in Oconee County participate in the program. Congregations provide volunteers and donate money and goods (food and clothes). There is no paid staff and activities are carried out solely by volunteers. Even though ACTS is a faith-based program, secular organizations (schools) and government agencies (County departments) support ACTS. Local schools supply donated foods to ACTS, and a county department pays the rent for its building and its electricity. ACTS also has connections with other government service agencies like the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) and ACTION Inc. Those agencies often refer their clients to ACTS to get services until the clients can begin receiving public services. While working with secular and government agencies, evangelism has not been addressed at all. Nobody asks ACTS about what it does while helping people. Even if government agencies were to cut their support, ACTS would continue to help people. When there is a disagreement among congregations about ACTS, there is a voting system to resolve the issue. Participating congregations agree that their

goal is to help people who are in need and that how they do so is not as important as doing it. Even though there is no paid staff, ACTS is growing to meet local needs by promoting collaboration among faith-based, secular, and government organizations.

Problem Statement

Given the participation of congregations in social services and the overall devolutionary movement in the social welfare system, local information is important for local governments and community service providers in planning social services, generating public supports, and implementing their plans. That is, in order to make appropriate plans and to provide needed services for local people, empirical information about local needs and resources is essential. Several studies on congregational social services have focused on local communities; however, most of studies have been conducted with data from the Northeast states or nationwide in the US. There are very few studies conducted that have included any areas in Georgia.

Several studies have been done to show the current status of local congregations' social service provision (Ammerman, 2001; Bedford, 2004; Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001; Cnaan & Boddie, 2001). They have used different approaches to studying congregations engaged with such efforts. Few studies have been grounded in any social theories. That is, most studies have used a descriptive, exploratory approach. Although such approaches can give descriptive information related to congregational social services, such studies are limited in explaining why the congregations are involved in social services or what might be done to strengthen their efforts. In order to understand congregations better, this study used an explanatory survey approach based on well-known socio-psychology theories, as well as an exploratory component.

Purpose of Study

The primary purpose of this research was to explore and examine social service contributions made by faith-based organizations, particularly the predominant Protestant congregations in local community, Athens, Georgia. Specifically, the study aimed to (a) explore congregational leaders' perception related to social services, (b) assess the current status of local congregations' contribution to services in local communities, (c) find theory-driven and empirical-based characteristics of congregations that actively participate in delivering social services, and (d) explore congregational leaders' attitudes toward Charitable Choice.

Significance of the Study

With respect to theory, this study was grounded in social exchange theory to examine congregational social service involvement. In addition, social cognitive theory and an ecological model were employed for parts of the study. The combined theoretical concepts allow for an examination of congregational social services from multiple perspectives: from the micro to the macro. Thus, this study provides a more realistic and extensive view of the factors that influence congregational social services and why they do so.

This study focused on congregations in the Athens metropolitan area in Georgia. The Georgia state government has been preparing to include Charitable Choice in state legislation (The Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy, 2005). Even though legislators do not agree on all the details, basically, politicians in both the Democratic and Republican parties generally agree to support the adoption of Charitable Choice in this state. In preparing for adoption of Charitable Choice, local data and studies can provide practical and current information for policy makers and community service providers.

It is important to explore how to enhance social capacity from all public, private, and faith-based organizations in order to increase the well-being of people who need or want help. In order to make inclusion of local churches in the social service delivery system successful, it is not enough just to wait for churches to change their attitudes and to establish more social services. It is necessary for helping professionals, social service organizations, governments, and whole communities to become better informed about church social services and to learn about the churches' engagement in alleviating social problems.

Since this study includes diverse theoretical perspectives and uses local data, the findings will be beneficial for various local and state stakeholders including policy makers, social service professionals, and religious congregations in developing empirically-supported policies and delivering evidence-based social services.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Characteristics of Congregations in the United States

There are diverse religious organizations in our society including congregations, denominational organizations, and religiously affiliated nonprofits (Chaves, 2002; Loewenberg, 1988). Congregations are local community-based organizations centered on regular religious worship and include churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques. Denominational organizations are not local congregations but are "religion producing organizations . . . that serve, are supported by, or have authority over local congregations: Catholic dioceses, mission agencies, regional and national offices of denominations" (Chaves, 2002, p. 1523). Religiously affiliated nonprofit organizations are "working in nonreligious functional fields" as "secular nonprofit organizations do: schools, hospitals, child care centers, drug rehabilitation programs, community development corporations" (Chaves, 2002, p. 1524). Most denominational organizations and some religious nonprofit organizations have national and/or international networks. All of the three types of religious organizations are directly and/or indirectly involved in religion-sponsored social services (McCarthy & Castelli, 1998).

It is almost impossible to have a single, complete list of all the religious organizations in the United States. However, the experts estimate the number between 200,000 and 450,000 (Ammerman, 2001; Cnaan & Boddie, 2001; Dudley & Roozen, 2001). When they created a sampling frame in 1986, Hodgkinson, Weitzman and Kirsh (1988) identified 294,271 congregations by counting all the congregations listed in telephone directories. Bedwill and

Jones showed that there were approximately 396,000 congregations in 1992 (as cited in Cnaan & Boddie, 2001). According to the Glenmary Research Center (2002), the total number of congregations was 268,240 in 2000.

Table 1. Congregations in the US by Denomination in 1990 and 2000

	Congregations		
Religion & Denomination	2000 (All Religions)	2000 (Only Judeo-Christian Religions)	1990 (Only Judeo-Christian Religions)
Catholic	21,791 (8.1%)	21,791 (8.3%)	22,441 (8.8%)
Evangelical Protestant	139,872 (52.1%)	139,872 (53.1%)	129,180 (50.6%)
Mainline Protestant	83,229 (31.0%)	83,229 (31.6%)	86,379 (33.7%)
Orthodox	2,039 (0.8%)	2,039 (0.8%)	1,163 (0.5%)
Other Christianity	12,514 (4.7%)	12,514 (4.8%)	12,035 (4.7%)
Jewish	3,727 (1.4%)	3,727 (1.4%)	3,975 (1.6%)
Other Religions	5,068 (1.9%)		
Total	268,240	263,172	255,173

Based on the Glenmary Research Center (2002) report, of these 268,240 congregations, most are Christian churches which are evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic (see Table 1). Even though there are various religions, Christian-based congregations are the most prevalent in the US. In terms of denomination, the evangelical Protestant is the biggest group, followed by the mainline Protestant and Catholic. Based on a comparison between 1990 and 2000 data, the number of evangelical Protestant congregations increased, while Catholic and the mainline Protestant congregations decreased. The evangelical Protestant growth was also described in the *Faith Communities Today* (FACT) report (Dueley & Roozen, 2001). Since 1945, over fifty percent of the new churches have been developed by evangelical Protestants.

The Glenmary Research Center report includes estimates of congregations in Athens Metropolitan Area, Georgia, which covers three counties, Clarke, Madison, and Oconee counties. In 2000, there were 134 religious congregations in Athens. As seen in the national data, the evangelical Protestant category was the biggest, followed by the mainline Protestant (see Table 2). The percentage of Catholic congregations was smaller than the national figures, while the percentage of evangelical Protestants was larger. Based on a comparison between 1990 and 2000 data, the Athens area also showed the same trend: the number of evangelical Protestant congregations increased while the mainline Protestant decreased.

In terms of congregational size, published data make use of somewhat different definitions. Some studies counted only adults, while others counted all people including children. Some studies collected registered membership size, while others collected the average number attending worship service. Regardless of definitions, on average, congregations in the US tend to be small. In the FACT report, half of the congregations in the US had fewer than 100

Table 2. Congregations in Athens Metropolitan Area by Denomination in 1990 and 2000

	Congregations		
Religion & Denomination	2000 (All Religions)	2000 (Only Judeo-Christian Religions)	1990 (Only Judeo-Christian Religions)
Catholic	2 (1.5%)	2 (1.5%)	1 (0.8%)
Evangelical Protestant	82 (61.2%)	82 (62.1%)	75 (60.5%)
Mainline Protestant	42 (31.3%)	42 (31.8%)	44 (35.5%)
Orthodox	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.8%)	1 (0.8%)
Other Christianity	4 (3.0%)	4 (3.0%)	3 (2.4%)
Jewish	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)
Other Religions	2 (1.5%)		
Total	134	132	124

regular adult attendants and another thirty three percent had between 100 and 349 regular adult attendants (Dudley & Roozen, 2001). In the National Congregation Study (NCS), almost six out

of ten congregations in the US had fewer than 100 regular attendants including both adults and children. When counting only adults, over seven out of ten congregations had fewer than 100 attendants (Chaves, 2004). According to the Organizing Religious Work (ORW) project data (Ammerman, 2001), half of the congregations participating in the project had fewer than 75 weekly attendants. In terms of location, urban congregations had a bigger average weekly attendance than rural congregations: over fifty percent of rural congregations had fewer than 50 attendants and only few churches had over 500 attendants while only twenty percent of urban congregations had fewer than 50 attendants and ten percent had over 500 attendants. In the Philadelphia Religion Census (PRC) study (Cnaan, 2006), the average size of attendants who participate in religious services at least once a month was 322 people, including adults and children.

Regarding congregations' financial resources, although congregations have diverse sources, their main income source is individual donations (Chaves, 2004). Additional income comes from the sale or rent of buildings or property and from their denominational centers, other foundations, and/or government. As many congregations have small congregations, according to the PRC, many of them have small annual budgets: 31% of the congregations had less than $ 50,000 as their annual budget; 26% of the congregations had between $50,000 and $100,000; 23% of the congregations had between $100,000 and $200,000 (Cnaan & Boddie, 2001). According to the FACT report, there was a positive association between congregational size and financial health: the larger the congregation, the stronger the financial health (Dudley & Roozen, 2001).

Congregational Social Services

Although religion and spirituality have seen renewed interest from social scientists since the 1980s, enacting the Charitable Choice provision in 1996 stimulated many conceptual and empirical studies on faith-based organizations, particularly congregations. In reviewing the research literatures related to faith-based social services, Scott (2003) identified forty studies. Only three of them were published or presented before 1996. In terms of sample location, more than half of the studies (28 studies) focused on one location such as a county, a city or a state. Eleven studies were based on a multi-state sample, and another eleven studies were based on a nationwide sample. In terms of types of organizations, twenty five of the studies included congregations and seventeen studies included other faith-based organizations. In this section,

Table 3. Selected Studies of Congregational Social services

Author(s)	Published Year	Sample Location	Sample Size (congregations)
Ammerman, N. T.	2001	7 Sites (Albuquerque, NM; Nashville, TN; Chicago, IL; Hartford, CT; Seattle, WA; rural counties in AL & MO)	549
Chaves, M., & Tsitsos, W.	2001	Nationwide	1,236
Cnaan, R. A.	2006	Philadelphia, PA	1,392
Dudley, C. S., & Roozen, D. A.	2001	Nationwide	14,301
Printz, T. J.	1998	Washington, DC MSA	266

five most widely recognized studies are chosen to review the scope and scale of congregational social services (see Table 3).

Types and Volume of Congregational Social Services

Many congregations in the US participate in social service programs. According to the five studies, a majority of the congregations provided at least one social services: from 58% to almost 95% of the participating congregations (Ammerman, 2001; Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001; Cnaan, 2006; Dudley & Roozen, 2001; Printz, 1998). While the NCS study showed that only 58% of the congregations participated in offering social services, all the other studies showed that over 90% of the congregations did so. In terms of the average number of social services, congregations were involved in three programs in the NCS and Philadelphia study and in more than five programs in the FACT study. The NCS reported the highest number, twenty services.

Congregations provide a variety of social services for their community members, serving all ages from babies to seniors and all nationalities. Congregations provide direct and indirect support which cover diverse areas such as community development, counseling, education, employment, health, parenting, poverty, recreation, and technology. The most common type of congregational social service is helping people meet their immediate needs such as food, cash, clothing, and shelter (Ammerman, 2001; Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001; Cnaan, 2006; Dudley & Roozen, 2001; Printz, 1998). In the FACT report, almost 90% of congregations provided or supported food and cash assistance (Dudley & Roozen). In the NCS, the top three common social programs provided by congregations were related to food (33%), housing/shelter (20%), and clothing (12%) (Chaves & Tsitsos). In the Washington DC area, the top three common services were emergency food provision (59%), emergency financial assistance (52%), and clothing provision (40%) (Printz). In Philadelphia, food and clothing related programs were

common, while housing/shelter related programs were not (Cnaan). In addition, Philadelphia programs related to education and culture were popular such as summer day camp, recreational programs for children and youth, music performances, and community holiday celebrations.

In terms of beneficiaries by age group, according to the PRC study, programs for children and teens are the most popular: over 70% of the congregations were involved (Cnaan, 2006). Services for seniors were also popular: almost 45% of the congregations were involved. For helping low-income people, in the Washington DC area about 70% of the congregations offered at least one service (Prnitz, 1998).

How Congregational Services are Provided

Congregational services are provided by volunteers, particularly congregational lay members. In the typical congregations in Washington DC, social service programs were run by a paid full-time staff member, two paid part-time employees, and about 50 volunteers (Printz, 1998). In the NCS, only six percent of the congregations had paid staff or social services, while the median number of volunteers involved was ten (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001).

In delivering congregational social services, collaboration with other organizations is common. Many congregations have been collaborating with other congregations and secular organizations as well in "sharing space, financial resources, or staff and supplies" (Cnaan, 2006, p. 96). In the ORW project, nine out of ten congregations were connected with at least one other organization (Ammerman, 2001). Also, in the NCS, 84% of the congregations collaborated with other organizations for at least one of their social services (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001). In the NCS, many programs were found to be carried out in collaboration with other organizations. Over 70% of all social service programs were provided with a cooperating partner(s): 40% with other religious collaborators, 31% with nongovernmental secular collaborator; and 7% with

governmental agencies (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001). In Philadelphia, the majority of the congregations collaborated with other organizations for social services: 62.5% with other faith-based organizations and 56.1% with secular organizations (Cnaan, 2006). However, unlike in the NCS, most (83.1%) of the congregational social service programs in this city were run by single congregations (Cnaan, 2006).

Beyond operating their own social services, congregations participate in social service delivery in various ways. In the ORW project, 74% of the congregations provided volunteers to at least one other service organization, 30% donated material goods, 45% donated money, and 57% provided free or low fee space (Ammerman, 2001).

Motivations for Social Services

In studying congregational social services, most studies have used exploratory approaches and provided only descriptive statistics. Even though no scholars have directly examined the motivations of congregations involved in social services, some have included values and traditions of different religions related to social services. Since American history and religious beliefs are largely based Judeo-Christian religions, it is worthwhile to review those values and traditions.

Jewish values and traditions are based on the Torah, the first five books in what Christians call the Old Testament. The central idea of social services in Judaism is “a combination of charity and justice” (Cascio, 2003, p. 4). The Jewish religion declares that there is only one true God in the universe and all people are children of that Being (Canda & Furman, 1999; Cascio, 2003). Since all people are children of God, they are brothers and sisters to each other. Thus, when someone needs help, it is the brothers’ or sisters’ responsibility to take care of the person who needs help. In early Jewish history, the Israelites had a small community, so

individualized mutual aid systems were sufficient. Anyone who needed help could receive what they needed without any discrimination through the informal care systems (Cascio, 2003). However, the book of Genesis and the Psalms emphasize a strong work ethic. That is, although the Israelites willingly helped the poor, individuals had the primary responsibility to take care of their own well-being (Morris, 1986).

Since Christianity has the same religious root as Judaism, their religious values are similar. As in Judaism, Christianity holds that all people are brothers and sisters since all humans are God's children (Canda & Furman, 1999; Cascio, 2003). However, in the Christian faith, Jesus is the only way to come to God, so his teachings are important. Jesus emphasized love in the New Testament: love for God and for one's neighbors. When he explained the concept of neighbors, Jesus told the famous story of the Good Samaritan. Neighbors are those who help people who need help. Furthermore, Jesus expanded the boundary of whom are should love to include one's enemy. That is, Christian love should include even personal sacrifices beyond individual interests. That we help and love our enemies as well as our friends means there should be no room for discrimination in helping.

Regarding providing social services, there is a difference between the two religions in that Jewish ideas tend to be based on justice, while Christian ideas emphasize love. Nonetheless, both religions, Judaism and Christianity, support the idea of meeting the needs of people (Cascio, 2003). That is, in both religions, practicing religious teachings in life includes helping others. There should be no discrimination toward recipients, even toward strangers and enemies. Thus, congregations should follow their religious principles and help each member follow the principles by participating in social services and providing their members opportunities to practice the principles.

Determinants of Congregational Social Services

Recently, several studies have described congregational social services; however, few studies have tested any hypotheses related to the congregations' level of social service involvement. In the NCS, there were several factors associated with the number of social service programs (Chaves & Tsistos, 2001). Regarding religious tradition, the mainline Protestant congregations were found to be involved in more social services than the evangelical Protestants and Catholics. Theologically conservative congregations were involved in fewer social services than theologically liberal congregations. Congregational resources (both membership and annual budget) had a positive association with the number of social services. In addition, other positive factors included congregations with clergy with graduate degrees and congregational members' academic achievement. However, environmental characteristics of congregations such as percentage of poor and unemployed in the area did not have statistically significant associations with the extent of involvement in social services. There was no difference between urban and rural congregations.

In the ORW project, in terms of denomination, mainline Protestant congregations had the highest number of social services (Ammerman, 2001). Also, congregational resources (annual budget) had a positive association with the number of social services. Unlike the NCS, the ORW found that congregations in urban areas provided more social services. Congregational demographics such as educational and racial composition were not found to have any significant relationship.

In terms of factors related to social service provision, both of these studies showed that congregational resources and denominations had positive associations with the number of social

services. However, the findings related to congregational members' demographic characteristics and community characteristics were inconsistent.

Benefits and Limitations of Congregational Social Service Provision

In America, Christianity is the largest religion, and the number of local Christian congregations (churches) is huge. Churches are located everywhere, including urban, suburban and rural areas. Particularly in disadvantaged areas, even though many business and government offices have departed, many churches have maintained their locations. In these areas, churches are not only religious organizations, but also community, cultural, and social welfare organizations. Although there are few studies that compare the effectiveness of social services offered by churches with those offered by secular social service agencies, according to the Lehigh Valley Survey in 2002, poor or working poor people tend to trust their church leaders or members more than neighbors and volunteers in their communities (Wuthnow, 2004). For them, their fellow church members are like an extended family sharing similar values. Thus, when receiving care or help from a congregation, they feel comfortable and more trusting of religious service providers. However, when receiving care or help from a secular service agency, they think the interaction with them is more like business behavior (Wuthnow, 2004). Having a trusting relationship with service agencies depends on previous successful or positive experiences. Particularly in disadvantaged areas, a favorable attitude towards local churches is a cultural norm, which is a key foundation for mutually benevolent relationships between service providers and recipients (Wuthnow, 2004). Encouraging or collaborating with churches in these areas to provide social services, it may be a good alternative to reach people who need help but who would otherwise be hard to approach through secular programs.

Congregational social service provision can enhance social capital in a community. Social capital refers to “capacity to bind together autonomous individuals into communal relationships. . . . to transform self-interested individuals exhibiting little social conscience and weak feelings of mutual obligation into members of a community expressing shared interests and a sense of the common good” (Smidt, 2003, p. 5). Through congregational activities, particularly social service provision, local churches provide opportunities to enhance interpersonal relationships and share their values, which result in “improvement of the quality of life in communities and integration of social networks” (Cnaan, 1999, p. 304). That is, congregational social provision for the needy can benefit not only service recipients but also the whole community.

Conceptual Frameworks Guiding this Study

Diverse Theoretical Approaches

There are diverse theoretical approaches to explain human and/or organizational behaviors, including congregations. These approaches can be primarily categorized by two dimensions: level of analysis and behavior orientation (see figure 1) (Astley & Vad de Ven, 1983). In terms of the level of analysis, there are two main levels: individuals and organizations. In the behavior orientation, there are also two core foci: self-direction vs. environmental influences. The theoretical framework used most extensively in this study, social exchange theory, includes perspectives of individual self-direction and environmental forces (structuralism).

In terms of behavior orientation, congregations have goals that are fundamentally based on their scriptures such as the Bible, the Talmud, the Koran, or the Sutra, so congregations mainly have a self-directing orientation. That is, congregations act based on their internal guidelines and beliefs.

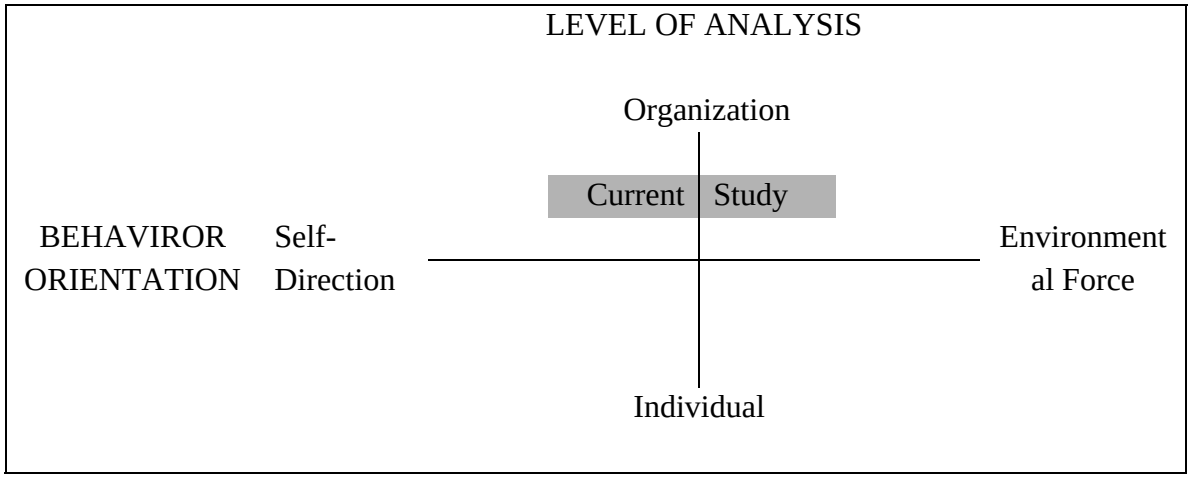


Figure 1. Approaches of the Behavioral Theories
Note: Gray Area = Main area of the current study

Congregational social services are not an exception. These activities are based on practicing one's faith rather than merely helping others for its own sake (Cnann, 1999). However, congregational activities are not isolated from the social conditions surrounding them. Rather than ignoring social conditions, congregations pursue their missions in consideration of their social circumstances. For example, church activities in America are different from ones in China and Europe, not because the biblical teachings are different, but because their social environments are different. Ammerman (1997) emphasizes the reciprocal effects between the churches and social conditions: "social processes of community formation govern the rise and fall of congregations, and the spiritual energies generated in congregations help to shape the social structures of communities" (p. 2, 3). Thus, church activities and roles are oriented by self-direction and influenced by social conditions as well.

In terms of the level of analysis, the theoretical framework addresses organizations. Compared with Catholic churches, Protestant churches are more independent and individualistic, despite their shared foundation, the Bible. That each church has independent decision-making

power does not mean there are no interactions between churches or with other secular community organizations. Churches have similarities in carrying out their core mission but behave independently in setting their own priorities and strategies to pursue the mission. Thus, for Protestant churches, it is better to analyze them as organizational entities than as members of whole denominations.

As seen in the Figure 1, there are multiple approaches to study social agents' behaviors. The theoretical framework for this study was based on theories focusing on organizations in terms of level of analysis, including both self-direction and environmental force in terms of behavioral orientation. This study drew upon these theoretical perspectives: social exchange and social cognitive theories and the ecological model. Although the main foci of these theories were different, all provide explanations of individual or organizational behaviors using interactions between individuals and their environments. The main framework for this study was social exchange theory because this theory can explain why a social actor participates in exchange behaviors, including both individual and organizational behaviors as well as psychological and environmental influences. In addition, the analytic focus of social exchange theory is on reciprocal behaviors between people. Social cognitive theory is useful for examining the self-directing orientation more specifically, and the ecological model was used to appraise various social structural effects.

Social Exchange Theory

Development of Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory is well-known in social psychology and focuses on "how individuals are influenced by social forces" (Molm & Cook, 1995, p. 209). Contemporary social exchange theory covers a wide array of concepts derived from economics, political science,

psychology, and sociology. Fundamentally, social exchange theory is based on rational choice models and economic exchange models which are rooted in utilitarian philosophy (Collins, 1994; Cook, 2000; Zafirovski, 2005). A person acts purposefully to fulfill his/her interests as much as possible. Thus, when individuals interact with other people in society, they try to maximize rewards and minimize costs (McDonald, 1981). Molm and Cook (1995) briefly outlined the aim of this theory:

> to explain how relations between social actors (both individuals and groups) develop and change, how the structure of networks in which relations are embedded affects processes of interaction, and how processes such as power use and coalition formation lead, in turn to changes in social structure (p. 209).

One of the advantages of contemporary social exchange theory is its effort to bridge the gaps between individual behaviors and social structure effects. Another advantage is that it explains the interactions among individuals, individuals within a group, and whole groups as well.

The main contributors to the development of social exchange theory were George Homans, John Thibaut, Harold Kelly, and Peter Blau in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The contributions of these four major figures in developing social exchange theory were unique. Homans' major contribution was to describe peoples' interactions as a function of reward and cost based on a behavioral psychology perspective, while Thibaut and Kelly added the social structural concepts to social interactions including power and dependence (Emerson, 1976; Molm & Cook, 1995). Blau's position connected the behavioral perspective and the structural perspective (Molm & Cook). Later, combining these diverse perspectives, Richard Emerson formulated a more complex and comprehensive social exchange model in 1970s (Molm & Cook).

Emerson (1976) elaborated on the social interactions and the interdependence between social actors within societal structures.

Basic Concepts

As a central assumption, social exchange theory describes people as rational actors and their behaviors as goal-oriented (Molm & Cook, 1995). The most basic concepts in this study were derived from exchange theory: actors, rewards, cost, outcomes, and resources. *Actors* can be individual persons or groups participating in social exchange (Molm & Cook). *Rewards* are any perceived positive tangible or intangible values that actors receive in social exchanges such as money, pleasure, or satisfaction (Molm & Cook). Conversely, *costs* are any negative values that actors receive in social exchanges such as punishments or losses (Molm & Cook). *Outcomes* are net values obtained from social exchanges: rewards minus costs (Molm & Cook). These rewards, costs, and outcomes include monetary values and material values such as goods or services; however, more often, they contain subjective psychological values such as satisfaction or utility which is an abstract concept rather than an empirically countable one (Emerson, 1976; Molm & Cook). *Resources* refer to any material or symbolic commodity/capability valued by other actors that can be delivered through interactions (Molm & Cook).

Since social actors have goal-oriented behaviors and make rational choices, when they are given multiple options, they make choices that will give them better outcomes, which means the option that will be more likely to bring them greater satisfaction (Molm & Cook, 1995). When evaluating outcomes, there are two important concepts: comparison level for a choice and for its alternatives. *Comparison level (CL)* is “the standard against which the member evaluates the ‘attractiveness’ of a relationship or how satisfactory it is . . . . the average value of all known outcomes” (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959, p. 21). The CL is based on direct/indirect previous

experiences and/or expectations. If the expected outcome is above the CL, an actor will be attracted to the exchange. *Comparison level for alternatives (CL_{alt})* is "the lowest level of outcomes a member will accept in the light of available alternative opportunities" (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959, p. 21). The CL_{alt} can be used as the criterion for social actors to stay in a current exchange or leave it. When an actor has another possible choice that would give more valuable outcomes than the one in a current exchange, the actor is likely to leave the current relationship. However, if there are no available alternatives, even when an actor is not satisfied with the current outcome from an exchange, the actor is unlikely to leave the relationship.

In markets, people exchange values such as money, goods, services, and satisfactions. In an economic exchange market, monetary value (a number or price) is the interaction point between the demand and supply sides. Thus, when they think of other alternatives, economic actors can compare the prices attached to them. However, social exchange markets are more complex because psychological values (satisfaction or utility) are also attached to social exchange behaviors (Molm & Cook, 1995). The psychological values are abstract, perceptual, and subjective. Even when doing the same exchange behavior, different people sometimes evaluate the value attached to it differently.

The concept of CL_{alt} is related to another concept, dependence. *Dependence* is defined as the degree to which "outcomes valued by an actor are contingent on exchange with the other" and "a function of both value and alternatives" (Molm & Cook, 1995, p. 216). That is, the degree of dependence depends on the value which an actor will receive from the other actor and the availability of alternatives for the actor. The relational dependence is the basis of the issue of power between actors. *Power* is defined as "the ability of persons or groups to impose their will on others despite resistance through deterrence either in the forms of withholding regularly

supplied rewards or in the form of punishment" (Blau, 1967, p. 117). In this dependence and power situation, when an exchange relation is imbalanced, the more dependent actor has disadvantages in the relationship.

According to Emerson, power is not "properties of actors," but "structural attributes of exchange relations" (Molm & Cook, 1995, p. 217). Since power is a structural factor, the effects of power are contingent upon whether the relationship is imbalanced, not just the extent to which the more powerful actor intends to use that power. Even in a situation in which no actors acknowledge power in their relationship, there is still a power effect.

Emerson expanded the concept of social actors to include exchanges between two individual social actors, exchanges between groups, and coalition formation (Molm & Cook, 1995). Like an individual, a group can be an actor in social exchange relations. By forming a coalition, dependent social actors can increase their power when interacting with a common other actor.

Interpersonal or social exchanges are also influenced by social norms and actors' cognitive aspects. Since these exchanges occur within a societal structure, leading social norms and their individual interpretations affect social actors' decisions and behaviors related to exchanges (Burn, 1973). *Normative orientation* is defined as "the source of consensus of expectations and commitments of the sanctions, folkways, mores, law: the institutional structure . . . . based on a common system of symbols, on the commonalities in socialization, on the similarities of acquired motivations and values" (Abramson, Cutler, Kautz, & Mendelson, 1958, p. 18). There are two parts in the normative orientation. For example, regarding social services, actors have socially shared common expectations or understandings about (1) social services and (2) the roles of diverse social units in dealing with social services.

On the other hand, *cognitive orientations* differ by social actors, defined as "the beliefs, values, and general relationship orientation of the persons" in exchange relationships (McDonald, 1981, p. 828). Personal cognitive orientation is influenced by internalized social norms, role expectations, and pervious experiences. According to Burns (1973), there are four types of cognitive orientations: self-orientation (individualism), joint self-other orientation (cooperation), negative-other orientation (hostility), and positive-other orientation (altruism). With the concept cognitive orientations, social exchange theory can explain not only exchanges based on self-interest but also exchanges based on self-sacrifice to benefit others.

There are diverse forms of exchanges: direct exchange and indirect exchange. Direct exchanges occur between two social actors. When both actors agree to an exchange, it is called a *negotiated direct exchange* (Molm & Cook, 1995). When one actor initiates the process, it is called a *reciprocal direct exchange*. Building on this idea, indirect exchanges may involve more than two actors. For example, actor A gives to actor B, actor B gives to actor C, and actor C gives to actor A.

According to Burns (1973), social exchanges have two forms: institutionalized forms of exchange and interpersonal reciprocity. An *institutionalized form of exchange* is from "socially normative behavior and interlocking role obligations," while *interpersonal reciprocity* is from "mutually contingent reciprocation … free from rigorous constraints … controlled by more self-regulating mechanisms" (McDonald, 1981, p. 829, 830). Thus, a social actor who has positive-other cognitive orientations can pursue interpersonal or social interactions based on general rules of reciprocity or altruism for others, not just based on calculations of material goods and services (McDonald, 1981).

Burns (1973) called exchanges based on reciprocal positive-other orientations a *mutually benevolent relationship*. In order to have a mutually benevolent relationship, developing social trust is key (McDonald, 1981). Social trust can be developed by social norms and individuals' previous exchange relationships with other actors (McDonald). The trust experienced through exchanges develops and increases commitment for social actors involved in these exchanges (McDonald). Leik and Leik defined *commitment* is as "the extent to which an actor has shifted from interest in a relationship because of the goals it mediates to maintenance of the relationship as the dominant goal" (as cited in McDonald, 1981, p. 834). Social trust and commitment can remove uncertainty related to exchanges. By social trust and commitment, social actors can move their exchanges from short-term-based to long-term-based ones (McDonald, 1981).

Relevance to Research Topic

Helping behaviors are obvious social interactions between two kinds of social actors: providers and recipients. Unlike economic exchange, helping behaviors are not based only on evaluations of exchanged material goods and services. Early forms of exchange theory could not address all facets of congregational helping behaviors because congregations are groups, not just individual persons, have altruistic motives, not self-interested motives, participate in more indirect exchanges than direct exchanges, and are influenced by religious teachings, congregational members, and social structure. However, contemporary social exchange theory has several advantages because it can explain behaviors of various social actors (individuals, groups, and coalitions), diverse motives (from self-interest to altruism), multiple forms of social exchange (direct and indirect exchanges), and different behavior orientations (individual and structural factors).

Ecological Model

Basic Concepts

In addition to social exchange theory, this study drew upon ecological and open system models. In explaining human development, Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1986) focused on the mutual interactions between personal inborn characteristics and various environmental factors that change through an individual's life. While many scholars who have studied psychology or psychiatry focused on physical and biological factors, Bronfenbrenner insisted on the importance of environmental effects on the individual's development process. With this ecological model, it is possible to view a person as an entity that relates reciprocally with his or her environment.

Bronfenbrenner (1977) showed that in an ecological environment, there are subsystems that impact human development: micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chrono-systems. First, a micro-system is a smallest subsystem to include individual persons, families, schools, and religious institutions. A meso-system consists of a complex of two or more micro-systems, namely, the interactions among individuals, families, schools, churches, and/or workplaces. A meso-system is "a system of micro-systems" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). An exo-system encompasses the broader social network that includes both formal and informal networks including neighborhoods, communities, mass media, and social institutions like agencies of government. A macro-system is the largest subsystem and encompasses culture, economics, social systems, and global changes, which surround all other subsystems. A chrono-system addresses changes in the other system levels over time.

In addition, Bronfenbrenner (1986) proposed one more subsystem that would have external influences on human development: time. In the chrono-system, there are two causes that change life. One is normative: those changes that most people would experience at a certain age

or period like school entry, puberty, retirement and so on. The other is non-normative: changes that people experience individually like a death in the family, divorce, or moving. These subsystems are reciprocally related to each other. Through the interactions in these systems, an individual or a group of people has different capacities to deal with life issues and events. Bronfenbrenner opposed biological determinism and concluded that a person would develop in mutual relationships with his or her external conditions and that the extent of change in human life would depend on his or her internal processes.

In order to interact effectively, having precise and well-timed information about environmental conditions is necessary. Thus, it is vital for people to have valid and reliable information pathways to connect successfully with external systems (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1992). In addition, these pathways are beneficial to an individual or a group in processing and responding to collected information with currently available resources.

Relevance to Research Topic

Interactions with the environment are one of the most key elements not only in human development but also in organizational development. As an individual entity, a church can be seen as one of the micro-system entities in the ecological model. Thus, it is possible to make an ecological model centered on a congregation (see Figure 2).

The primary criterion of congregational activities is not whether there are environmental opportunities nor whether the congregation has enough resources to start the activity, but whether the activities follow valued principles and teachings. Their goals are already set: no person or external condition can change the ultimate goals. Because their goals are set, congregations might be regarded as closed-system organizations.

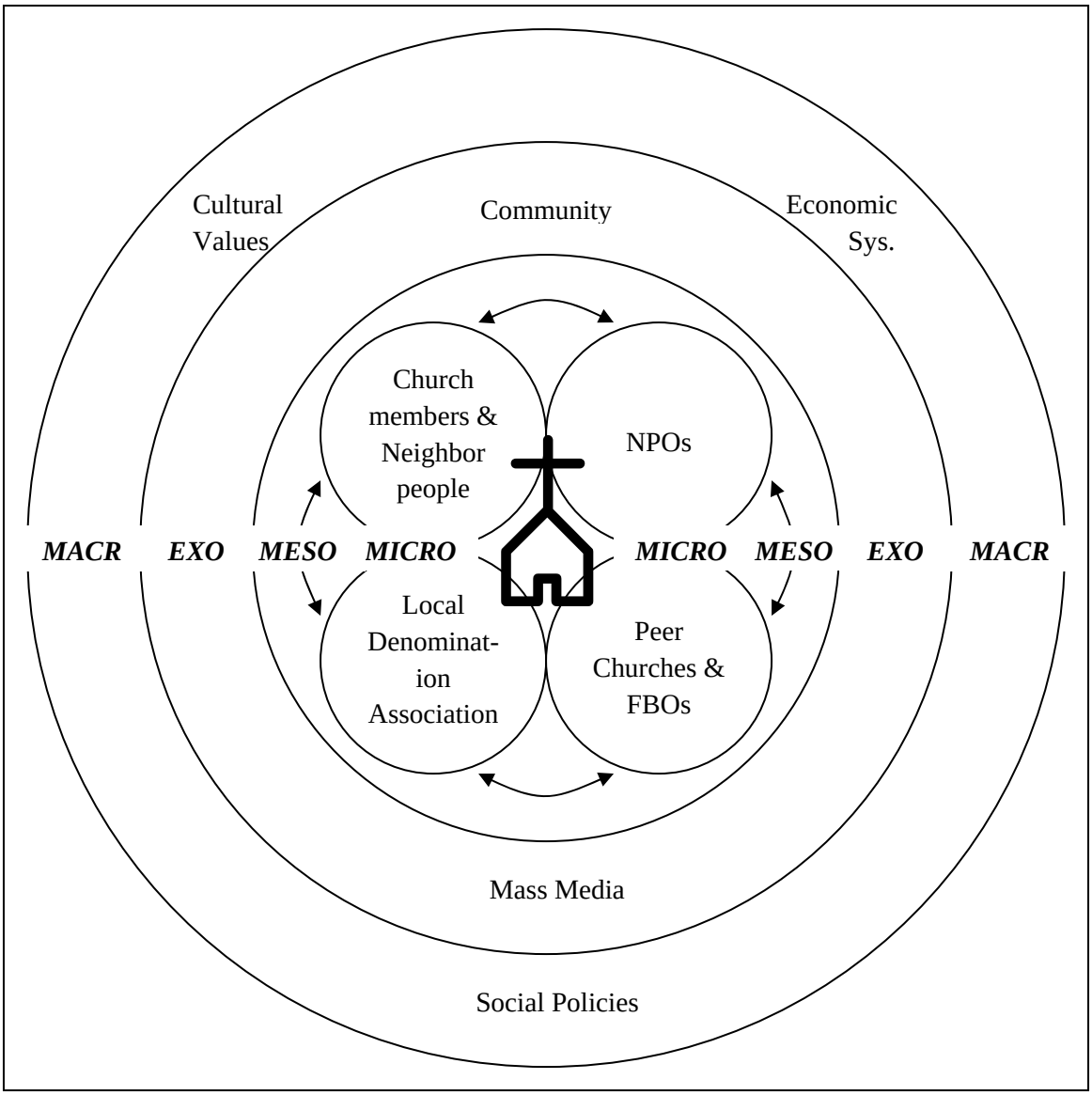


Figure 2. Ecological Model for a Church

However, congregations are more likely to be open-system organizations. Even though their ultimate missions may be unchanging, congregations use various ways to carry out their missions. Sometimes, a congregation works alone; however, many times, it cooperates with other congregations and/or secular organizations. Congregations are located in a local community, which affects their activities. Political or economic systems may not alter the ultimate goals of congregations; however, congregations are not completely free from external systems. Just as

people cannot live satisfactorily when separated from a society, a congregation is not able to function meaningfully when isolated from its community. The ecological and open-system models are useful to understand the roles and activities of the churches as organic bodies interacting with their environments.

Social Cognitive Theory

Basic Concepts

This study also drew upon social cognitive theory. There are three major approaches in conceptualizing of human behavior: viewing a person as an autonomous agent, a mechanical agent, or an emergent interactive agent. First, the autonomous agency perspective emphasizes the roles of the independent self in human actions, minimizing environmental effects (Bandura, 1989a). Second, the mechanical agency position emphasizes that the working mechanism of self systems depends totally on environmental forces. Like a machine, a person's behaviors are just conditioned responses to environmental causes (Bandura, 1989a). Third, the emergent interactive agency viewpoint is that a person's behaviors are influenced by both his/her own internal motivations and environmental forces (Bandura, 1989a).

Social cognitive theory, arguably one of the most powerful theories to explain human developmental changes, accounts for fundamental ideas of human motivation and behavior (Bandura, 1989b). One of the most important concepts in the interactive viewpoint is triadic reciprocal determinism, that is, personal factors, behavior, and environment are continually engaged with each other just as cyclical mechanisms in the open system model. In other words, among the three parts, any one part is not only influenced by the other two parts but also can affect the other two parts (Bandura, 1989b). These reciprocal causations do not need to be equal-power effects nor do they need to happen at the same time.

In the mutual relationships among personal factors and behaviors, personal factors including personal expectation, beliefs, goals, affection, and physical characteristics influence one's behaviors and are, in turn, influenced by outcomes (Bandura, 1989b). In the interaction between personal factors and the environment, personal factors influence environmental conditions and are influenced by environmental influences: "people are both products and producers of their environment" (Bandura, 1989b, p. 3). In the relationship between behavior and environment, human behaviors can modify environmental conditions and be consecutively modified by those conditions. In these reciprocal relationships, a person can select his or her environment, can influence its conditions, and is constrained by those conditions.

To explain human motivation, behavior, and development, Bandara (1989b) posited five basic capabilities: symbolizing, vicarious, forethought, self-regulatory, and self-reflective capability. All these capabilities are related to functions of cognition and thought. First, because of their symbolizing capability, people can internalize and store their direct and indirect experiences into symbolized forms such as spoken or written languages, pictorial images, and/or other symbols through cognitive process. Through their capability for vicarious learning, people develop knowledge and acquire skills purposefully or accidentally through indirect experiences such as observing the behaviors of others and the consequences that follow and/or listening to or reading about others' experiences. In terms of motivation to act through vicarious learning, people want to try behaviors whose outcomes are valued by themselves and/or behaviors whose actors are similar to themselves. The modeling influences are significant for people due to mass media like television.

Forethought capability is another important human quality that motivates people and guides their behaviors (Bandura, 1989b). Since people can anticipate the consequences of their

actions through forethought, they can control their actions and reactions to the environment. The capability for forethought enables people to set goals and plan actions to achieve those goals. Self-regulatory capability is a mechanism that helps people select incentives and anticipate consequences of their current decisions and actions (Thombs, 1999). With self-regulation, people's self-rewards and self-punishments play roles as motivators and restrainers, in addition to external forces or obligations (Bandura). That is, with self-regulation, people can direct their own behavior through internal standards and self-evaluative assessments (Thombs, 1999). Thus, people can maintain consistency or change direction without being wholly dependent upon changes in their external environments.

Human capabilities include a self-reflective capability, which enables people to evaluate their experiences and their own thinking systems (Bandura, 1989b). Based on their evaluations, people can change their thoughts and/or behaviors. In this evaluative process, their judgments about their capabilities, their self-efficacy, are important. Self-efficacy is defined as an "individual's belief regarding the likelihood that he/she can enact behavior at a level required to result in desired outcomes" (Thombs, 1999, p. 151). Although people do not decide what or how to act based only on the judgments of self-efficacy, it plays a vital role in deciding what to do, how to do it, and why to do it. The critical sources making up judgments of personal efficacy are direct and vicarious experiences, social influences, and emotional states.

Self-efficacy is a key factor in motivating human behaviors. It is plausible that there would be differences in the levels of driving power to achieve a goal between a person with high self-efficacy and a person with low self-efficacy. Particularly, when they face a problem or crisis, their reactions would be different: challenging and/or keeping strong beliefs in their capacities for high self-efficacy people vs. giving-up and/or doubting their capacities for low self-efficacy

people (Bandura, 1989a). In a rapidly changing external environment, self-efficacy is a strong motivating force to use goal-directed behaviors to overcome uncertainty and threats.

In summary, social cognitive theory explains diverse human capabilities and how these capabilities develop from interactions with the external environment (Bandura, 1989a, 1989b; Thombs, 1999). People develop their competence through the cognitive processes of symbolic communications among direct experiences, modeling influences, expected outcomes and self-reflection within a social context. Due to their cognitive processes, people can behave differently in the same environmental conditions and people can behave identically in different conditions. People can select their actions and continue their behaviors toward their goals even though they have had previous adverse experiences related to the goals and/or are anticipating various barriers along the way. Although he emphasizes the function of human cognition, Bandura does not ignore environmental influences. People's motivations and behaviors are the products of their internal processes, reinforcing systems, and environmental conditions working interactively.

Relevance to Research Topic

The purpose of social cognitive theory is to explain an individual person's motivation and behavior mechanisms. This theory alone cannot fully describe the actions of an organization, such as a congregation. However, the advantage of this theory is that it adds more specific processes into the cognitive part of social exchange theory. Although social exchange theory includes the function of cognition, the theory does not cover it in detail. An organization is obviously different from an individual. Particularly, in terms of motivation and behavior, organizations have unique characteristics such as group dynamics. However, as social actors, organizations share many similarities with humans because the ultimate acting agents in both

cases are humans. Like a human, an organization can pursue goal-driven actions, assess external conditions, change strategies and/or goals, and/or shift to another setting (Thompson, 1967).

Congregational motivations and behaviors cannot be fully appreciated by only a rational perspective because the members' motivations and behaviors are based on traditions, beliefs and value judgments. Congregations do not intend to act or move in directions that are inconsistent with their religious teachings. Thus, social cognitive theory is a useful tool to explain the unique parts of congregational activities.

Theories, Hypotheses, and Variables

Theoretical Model for This Study

This study had two purposes: one was to describe the current state of social services provided by local congregations; the other was to examine what characteristics of congregations are related to their extent of engagement in social service provisions. The latter was to be examined on the basis of the theories previously summarized. This study drew upon two theories and one model: social exchange and social cognitive theories and ecological model. All three support the idea of environmental influences on individual or organizational behaviors. Social exchange and social cognitive theories support the idea of individual or organizational "goal-oriented" behaviors based on cognitive processes and rationality.

Social exchange theory is actually a group of theories rather than a single theory, and its components cover wide areas of motivation and behavior from individual behaviors to group behaviors and from the internal processes to external structures. Thus, social exchange theory can view local congregational social service activities through multiple lenses.

Internal and external forces related to motivations and behaviors can be understood by social cognitive theory and the ecological model. Social cognitive theory is helpful to illustrate

the congregational cognitive processes in reciprocal interactions with the environment, while ecology and open system models are also useful for understanding the multiple environmental influences affecting congregational choices and functions.

Summing up, social exchange behaviors (congregational social services) depend on a social actor's (congregation's) internal factors (perceived rewards, costs, perception of social services, identity, and capacities), the social actor's understanding of community/societal attitudes toward congregational social services, community characteristics, and public policies.

Research Hypotheses

Although there are various factors influencing congregational social service programs, the main relationship examined was between the expected outcome (net gains) and engagement in social services. The overall research hypothesis was that when controlling for other factors, congregations that have higher expected net gains will be engaged in more social service programs than those with lower expected net gains. In addition, congregations that perceive their social services as more effective than other alternatives for their resources will provide more social services.

In terms of capacities, churches with greater resources were predicted to provide more social service programs. In terms of understanding of attitudes toward congregational social services, churches having a more positive perception of congregational members' and the community's attitudes toward church social services would provide more social service programs. In terms of congregational identity, particularly from a theoretical perspective, according to Roozen, McKinney, & Carroll (1984), evangelical churches place a higher value on proselytizing than on social issues and changes. In addition, according to Ammerman (2001) and Chaves (2004), more liberal churches are more attentive to social problems and provide a greater

number of social service programs than evangelical churches. So, we hypothesized that more liberal churches would provide more social services. In terms of community characteristics, more disadvantaged communities were predicted to provide more opportunities for churches to address community members' needs. Churches located in more disadvantaged neighborhoods would provide more social service programs than those in wealthier ones. In terms of social welfare policy, if churches had been influenced by the change in policy, they would have initiated more social services when the federal government changed its policies to emphasize local and private organizations' role in social services.

Variables

Table 4 shows the variables and theoretical concepts related to them. There are dependent, independent, and control variables, all grounded in the theories summarized previously. Some of them are objectively observable, while others such as outcomes and cognitive orientation are more psychological and subjective and thus not objectively observable. For the subjective concepts, respondents' perceptions or expectations were measured.

Dependent variable. The dependent variable was the extent of involvement in social service programs. Congregations deliver social services in a various ways (i.e., providing food, cash, therapy, educational services, etc.) and participate in service delivering directly (i.e., providing their own services) and/or indirectly (i.e., providing church building space for other social service organizations). Thus, there are multiple ways to measure the level of involvement.

Often, researchers have measured the number of social services to derive the level of involvement. This is one way to measure the involvement; however, there is a serious problem because numbers of programs do not address other significant factors such as total amounts of money spent. For example, church A supports five social service programs with $1,000 for each

Table 4. Theoretical Concepts and Variables

	Theoretical Concepts		
	Theory	Concept	Variables
DV	Social exchange	Exchange behavior	Involvement index (number of social services & spending for the social services)
IV	Social exchange	Outcomes (net gains)	Perceived net gains
		Costs	Perceived total cost for social services
		Rewards	Perceived benefits
		Alternatives	Alternatives
			Effectiveness
CV	Social cognitive	Personal characteristics	Capacities (planning and implementing skills)
			Identity characteristics (denomination & theological orientation)
			Physical resources (membership & budget)
	Social exchange, social cognitive, & ecological model	Cognitive orientation about social services	Attitude toward collaboration with others for social services
			Congregational leaders' perceptions of congregational members' and community's attitude toward congregational social services
	Ecological model	Exo-system: Community	Congregation's location

IV = Independent Variable; DV = Dependent Variable; CV = Control Variable

program, while church B runs two social service programs with $20,000 allocated to each program. Can we conclude that church A is more involved in social services than church B? Certainly not. On the other hand, if we measure only spending to indicate involvement, we can see the same problem because money is a part of the total cost of social services. For example, imagine that church C runs two its own social service program with $20,000 for each program and also supports five secular social service programs by sending volunteers. Then, do churches B and C have the same level of involvement? Obviously, not. For all that, there is no simple, clear way to combine both the number of the programs and the amount of money spent because there are two different metrics, program numbers and dollar amounts.

Measuring an exact and objective level of social service involvement is also a very complex task. As Cnaan and Boddie (2001) did, one could count all direct and indirect costs related to programs. For example, regarding volunteering, they calculated the contribution of volunteers by counting the number of volunteers' hour and multiplying the number by $10 for lay volunteers and by $15 for ministry staff. Regarding donated space, they calculated the cost of renting church space by measuring the space size and usage period and multiplying these values by the estimated rent for similar space in the neighborhood. This approach included different kinds of direct and indirect contributions and calculated a church's total contribution by adding all these direct and indirect supports.

Another way to measure is simpler: make different metrics the same. This is called standardization. Both values can be changed into z-scores. A church could have two z-scores: one z-score for the number of services and the other z-score for the amount spent. By adding together the z-scores, one can create a social service involvement index. For this study, this method was used to estimate the level of congregational involvement in social services.

Independent variables. The independent variables are churches' expected net gains in social service programs and the perceived effectiveness of those programs. In social exchange theory, the expected net gains depend on estimates of rewards and costs, so it can be calculated with a simple mathematical formula: rewards minus costs. However, in spite of the formula's simplicity, it is difficult to apply because the values of rewards and costs are categorical, psychological, and/or subjective. Rewards for church social services may be seen as including a service recipient's conversion. Perceived rewards may include fostering a positive impression of the church in the community, church members' own satisfactions, and/or God's reward after death, to name but a few. All of these are based on subjective value judgments, factors that are difficult to quantify. That is, there are no absolute and objective standards to put into numbers. However, the concept is too important to ignore. Without some form of estimated rewards, we cannot have net gains.

Since the rewards are subjective psychological values, we can measure them by asking interviewees' perceptions about rewards. They have the best estimations. Respondents' own answers should be treated as categorical (nominal level) data.

The other half in the formula for deriving the expected net gains is costs. We could measure costs for social services as a dollar amount, which would be an objective number. But there are problems in enumerating all the costs. Realistically, it is hard to include all direct and indirect cost items. Money is only a part of the total cost. It is almost impossible to convert all the indirect components needed to run a social service program into real monetary value. In addition, related to indirect costs, big congregations may have organized data and records, while small congregations may have little or no systematic records. This will lead some respondents to estimate costs based on memory. Because counting direct and indirect cost items and calculating

total costs is impracticable, measuring the congregational leaders' perceptions of total cost is a more practical substitute.

With respect to measuring the expected net gains, since the measure of rewards is categorical and the measure of costs is based on subjective estimations, it would be impossible to mathematically calculate to get the net gains from the measures of rewards and costs. Another way to measure the net gains is to ask directly about them. Even though respondents' answers are subjective, their answers represent the congregational leaders' perceptions of the net gains of congregational engagement in social services.

In addition, the effectiveness of social service programs in attaining benefits or rewards was assessed. Effectiveness in this study was measured not by calculation of objective rewards and costs, but by comparison with other possible alternatives which a congregation could choose for the same or similar rewards. If a congregation thinks a social service program is less effective than other activities to reach the same rewards, then the congregation would be expected to select the other activities. For example, if a church's ultimate goal (reward) of a social service is to have people convert to Christianity, the church could also use other options like evangelical home visits. If the church thinks evangelical home visits are more effective for its goal, the church could be predicted to do more evangelical home visits than social service provision. Based on rational and utilitarian considerations, when a social actor estimates what provides the greater satisfaction or benefit, the actor will do it repeatedly and/or in various ways to maximize his or her satisfaction.

Control variables. In addition to the expected net gains and perceived effectiveness, the level of involvement in social services is also influenced by a church's capacities, identity characteristics, assessment of congregational and community norms about church social services,

characteristics of the community in which it is located, and public social welfare policies. First, in terms of church capacities, this study used two subcategories: (1) physical capacities including the number of staff who manages and volunteer in social service programs, total membership size, and total budget size, and (2) skill capacities including planning skills and implementing skills. Second, the church's identity characteristics included denomination and extent of liberalism which will be assessed by pastors' responses. Third, the church's assessment of norms was measured by pastors' perceptions of church members' attitudes toward social services and the community's attitudes toward social services. Fourth, a community disadvantage index was designed to estimate a neighborhood's relevant characteristics, including indicators of poverty, female-headed households with children, unemployment, and public assistance rates (Lauritsen, 2001; Lockwood, 2007). Last, with respect to public social welfare policies, the starting year of church social service programs was compared with the starting years of landmark social welfare policies such as 1982 (Reaganomics), 1996 (PROWRA and charitable choice provision), and 2001 (the expansion of the charitable choice). Comparing the starting year of each program with these preceding landmarks was expected to indicate whether public welfare policy changes have influenced local church engagement with social services.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The ultimate purpose of this study was twofold : (1) to increase the understanding of local congregations' attitudes towards and their activities related to social services; and (2) to find appropriate ways to approach and encourage various congregations to provide or be more involved in social services. With this purpose in mind, this study employed the following methodology. First of all, the various congregations' perceptions of social services were explored. Second, the study sought to describe the social services in which the congregations were involved with the following parameters: (1) who was involved in congregational social services?; (2) what social services did various congregations provide?; (3) where did social services actually provided by the congregations in question take place?; (4) how often did these congregations provide these services?; and (5) why did these congregations provide certain, specific social services?

In addition to the aforementioned methodology, this study tested several hypotheses to examine associations between various congregational characteristics and their involvement in social services. In this phase of the research, theoretical guidance of social exchange theory, social cognitive theory, and the ecological model were utilized. Lastly, this study explored congregational leaders' attitudes toward Charitable Choice, which is a federal program to encourage local congregations to be involved in social services.

Unit of Analysis: Congregational Social Services

Congregations

There are diverse religious organizations in our society: congregations, denominational organizations, and religious by-affiliated nonprofits (Chaves, 2002). Congregations are local community-based organizations centered on regular religious worship and include churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples. This study focused on the involvement of Protestant Christian congregations.

The empirical definition of congregations for this study followed the seven criteria of Cnaan and Boddie (2001):

> (1) a cohesive group of people with a shared identity; (2) a group that meets regularly on an ongoing basis; (3) a group that comes together primarily for worship and has accepted teachings, rituals, and practices; (4) a group that meets and worships at a designated place; (5) a group that gathers for worship outside the regular purposes and location of a living or work space; (6) a group with an identified religious leader; and (7) a group with an official name and some formal structure that conveys its purpose and identity (p. 563, 564).

Congregational Social Services

Social services can be defined as any "services that aim at improving the quality of life of people" (Cnaan, Wineburg & Boddie, 1999). Although their motivations may be different, church social service activities are not often much different from those provided by secular social service agencies and other nonprofit organizations. Just like secular social service agencies, churches provide many of the same social services, from emergency food/cash to counseling to advocacy for social justice (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001; Cnaan & Boddie, 2001; McCarthy &

Castelli, 1998). Church social services can be defined as “any corporate effort of the church to influence society or improve quality of life beyond the church’s membership” (Unruh & Sider, 2005, p. 28). Church social services can be called various names such as social ministry, social action, or social outreach (Unruh & Sider).

The types of their social services are various: from informal help to formal programs, from offering their own services to cooperative efforts with other organizations, from child-serving programs to senior-serving programs, from evangelical outreach-oriented services to pure helping services, and from church member-focused services to community member-focused services (Unruh & Sider, 2005). In their National Congregational Study, Chaves and Tsitsos (2001) categorized church social services into two groups: one group includes long term and face-to-face programs and the other group includes short term and temporary services. Unruh and Sider (2005) divided social services based on their primary focus of action (individual or corporate) and nature of benefit (direct benefits or indirect benefits) resulting in four groups: relief services, personal development, community development, and systemic change.

The published information related to congregational social services covers only a part of congregational social services because previous researchers have selected specific services to study based on their interests (Unruh & Sider, 2005). While some studies had clear boundaries on the types of service offered, there are gaps between social services as they are identified by the researchers and social services as they are perceived by congregational leaders or members. This study mainly examined congregational leaders’ perceptions. In order to enhance comparability with the findings of the previous studies, this study also used a definition of congregational social services provided based on the literature. Thus, for this study, both

standpoints were considered in assessing congregational social services: an outsider's view of social service and a congregation's insider perceptions of social services.

The analyses based on differentiated definitions of social services enable us to see differences of congregational involvement in social services from insiders' and outsiders' perspectives. Leaders in a congregation may think they have sufficiently engaged in social services, while community leaders think the congregation could do more. For example, community leaders think that a congregation has few social service programs, while leaders in the congregation perceive that they are involved in an adequate amount of social service programs. When community leaders request congregations to get support, congregations may not respond to the request to engage in social services because of the different perceptions. Congregational leaders may think that they engage in social services with their full strength. Thus, examination of congregational involvement according to the different definitions would provide information about the gap between the insiders and outsiders related to social services.

In this study, a congregation's perspective included any congregational social service programs identified by a congregational pastor or leader. For the outsider's view, congregational social services included all social service programs perceived by a congregational leader excluding

> special holiday donations (such as Thanksgiving baskets), financial support for denominational social program, independent programs that met on the church's property (like AA), or occasional benevolence (as in provision of emergency rent money). . . . benevolence directed out of the country; programs that, in principle, were open to the community but almost exclusively served church members in actual practice (like some churches' youth activities), or programs that had tangential social benefits but were

> largely evangelistic in content (like leading worship services in a prison) (Unnruh & Sider, 2005, p. 28).

Research Design and Methods

Research Design

An experiment is useful not only in hard sciences, but also in social sciences because the term experimentation is "a logic of analysis rather than a particular location, such as a laboratory, in which observations are made" (Monette, Sullivan, & Dejong, 2007, p. 253). Further, Monette, Sullivan and Dejong (2007) clearly state the purpose of an experiment is "to determine what effects the independent variables produce on the dependent variables" (p. 255). In general, in order to examine the relationship between variables, an experimental research design is the best choice.

However, an experimental research design could not be used in this study because the researcher could not manipulate the independent variables, which violates a key requisite of the model (Monette, Sullivan, & Dejong, 2007). The independent variables in this study were church leaders' perceptions of the extent and effectiveness of church social services, churches' physical characteristics, community characteristics, and so on. The researcher could not manipulate these variables to see their effects on the dependent variables. Thus, the only way to conduct this study was through non-experimental research designs. Kerlinger (1986) defined nonexperimental research as:

> systematic empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulable. Inferences about relations among variables are made,

> without direct intervention, from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables (p. 348).

Making causal statements based on non-experimental findings is not possible; however, a plausible suggestion of such inferences may be indicated if three conditions are met: there is a statistically significant association between two variables, proper time order between the variables (the event related to independent variables occurs before the event related to dependent variables) is evident, and spurious relationships have been controlled or ruled out (Johnson, 2001). Non-experimental research designs are popular in the social science; however, such designs are weak as evidence of casual relations among variables. Particularly, this design cannot guarantee the third condition, the elimination of spurious relationships. One way to handle this problem more appropriately is that research needs to be "guided by theory" (Johnson, 2001, p. p. 8).

Johnson (2001) classified non-experimental quantitative research into nine categories with two dimensions: research objective (description, prediction, and explanation) and time dimension (retrospective, cross-sectional, and longitudinal). There are two reasons why cross-sectional survey research was the best fit for this study: first, the small size sample data can be a representative for the total population and second, the sample data can be collected in a relatively short time period.

In general, the present study can be called a cross-sectional, exploratory, explanatory, non-experimental research because in terms of the time dimensions, data were collected at a single point, and in terms of research objectives, this study explored congregational leaders' perceptions, tested theories, particularly social exchange theory, and sought to explain how and why congregations engage in social services.

Sampling Method

The target population for this study was local Protestant congregations in the Athens Metropolitan Area. When selecting a study sample, Kish (1965) specified four dimensions: content, units, extent, and time. The content of the population was Protestant local congregations. In terms of units, the focus of analysis for this study was congregational social service programs reported by congregational leaders. In terms of extent, this study covered the Athens Metropolitan Area including Athens-Clarke County, Madison County, Oconee County, and Oglethorpe County. In terms of time, this study included local congregations that were active in 2008. The sampling frame for this study was drawn from four ways: (1) on-line and paper telephone directories, (2) a list of the churches in each denomination provided by denominational offices, (3) congregational leaders' (interviewees') references, and (4) directly observing study areas.

In order to have a representative sample of the variety of congregations in the community, this study began with an effort to use probability sampling, particularly, stratified sampling, which involves "dividing the population into smaller subgroups, called strata, before drawing the sample and then drawing separate random samples from each of the strata" (Monette, Sullican & Dejong, 2007, p. 135). Although stratified sampling is a well-known method to get a representative sample, it has a considerable problem in the difficulty of stratifying (Monette, Sullican, & Dejong). For stratification, the researcher should know key information in advance. In addition, when seeking multiple stratifying categories, the process of sampling may be too complicated.

In order to have a stratified sampling, the first wave of data collection was critical. Even though the researcher had congregations' names and contact information (phone number and

address) from the published documentations and visitations, the researcher needed information related to strata (theological orientation and size), which was a main purpose of the first wave of data collection. However, less than a half of the congregations in the Athens Metropolitan Area responded to the first wave of data collection for the first three months. Due to this low response rate, in the second wave of data collection, instead of adopting stratified sampling, the researcher contacted all congregations in a sampling frame of this study and collected data through multiple visits, calls, mailings, and emails.

Measurement Instrument

This study used various ways to obtain data: personal visits, telephone calls, mailings, and e-mails. In the first round of data collection, the researcher obtained information about congregations' physical characteristics. The questions covered the congregation's name, address, membership size, total budget, denomination, and so on (see the Appendix A). Regarding the second interview for congregational leaders' perceptions and actual congregational social services, the questions covered the intended goals of congregational social services, the characteristics of these social services, their perceived effectiveness, internal opportunities, and so on (see Appendix B). While developing the paper-based questionnaires for the second phase of the study, the researcher received help from several of the pastors.

When asking for specific program information, the researcher provided a list of 10 major categories of social services (emergency services, fundraising for others, housing/community work efforts, self-help/support groups, health, outreach/program for children and youth, economic development programs, cultural/other community effects, social action activities open to the public, and other) and 59 social service program areas, such as food bank, clothing bank, health clinic, job training, to name a few, and one other choice under the major categories (See

Appendix B: the Section VI, Church Program Profile, the Survey of Church Social Service Programs and Perceptions). The list of social service program categories and areas was provided to help respondents think about their diverse social services.

Community characteristics were measured by use of a community disadvantage index composed of poverty rates, rates of female-headed households with children, unemployment rates, and public assistance rates from the 2000 US Census data. In the Athens Metropolitan area, there are four counties, Clarke, Madison, Oconee, and Oglethorpe. In the area, there were 44 census tracks (29 in Clarke County, 6 in Madison County, 6 in Oconee County, 3 in Oglethorpe County) based on the 2000 US Census data. This study collected the community characteristics by census track. The index score was the total number summing the z-scores of the four factors.

Data Collection

For this study, the researcher used survey data collection instruments. Survey data collection is simply defined as "gathering information from individuals, called respondents, by having them respond to questions" (Monette, Sullican & Dejong, 2007, p. 158). Survey sampling is one of the most popular data collection methods in social science because it allows the researcher "to generalize about an entire population by drawing inferences based on data drawn from a small portion of that population" (Rea & Parker, 2005, p. 7). Since the respondents for the second phase of the study were not drawn randomly from the population of churches, inferences to that population are limited.

In survey data collection, there are two major approaches: self-administered questionnaires and direct interviews. In survey interviews, there are four types of interview survey depending on the type of interview: in-person, telephone, mail-out, and web-based survey, and there are two types of interview surveys depending on question format: quantitative and

qualitative interview surveys (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Rea & Parker, 2005). A quantitative interview has an already-made set of questions and fixed response categories, which provide quantitative data, while a qualitative interview seeks in-depth information and free-style, open-ended interviews (Johnson & Christensen). This project developed and used a set of quantitative-based questions and collected data through interviews.

From online and hard-copy published documentations and driving local streets, the initial sample frame was composed of 288 congregations. By visiting, mailing, and/or calling, the researcher identified 267 congregations. Even though this study developed a paper-based questionnaire, the researcher preferred to have an in-person survey because that approach allows for greater depth in participants responses. With the in-person survey, the researcher and participants had opportunities to clarify research questions and participants' answers. In the first wave of data collection, five congregational leaders stated that they did not want to participate in this study. During data collection period, between August 2008 and April 2009, this study ended up 157 congregations with congregational profiles and 109 congregations with congregational social service programs and perceptions.

The major data source for this study was congregational leaders, particularly pastors. Pastors' attitudes and opinions sought were not just their own personal views of their congregations. Rather, their attitudes and opinions about their overall congregational activities and perceptions were sought (Ammerman, 1997). Ammerman illustrates the influential and unique position of such respondents as

> The most involved and influential person in most local congregations, of course, is the pastor or priest. Beyond whatever sacramental power such persons may have over the souls of their parishioners, pastors also have a variety of more earthly ways of

> influencing what happens in the congregations, Most basically, pastors are the ones with the day-to-day knowledge of the congregation's operations. . . . They are paid professionals and presumably know how to get things done. Pastors have pragmatic authority and are usually respected for their expertise. . . . They are the primary persons charged with being interpreters for the congregation, making sense of what is happening in the world in light of the sacred texts and traditions of the faith. Pastors with a clear sense of vision for the congregations' future can have an extraordinary impact through their religious authority" (p. 52, 53).

Even if a congregational leader's opinion is not representative of the whole church at a current moment, that opinion may indicate a direction of the church in the near future. Thus, the congregational leaders' responses to the survey were used to represent a congregation's current situation and/or future direction.

In addition, in order to have more specific information about how to encourage local congregations to engage in social services, semi-structured personal interviews were conducted. Ten social service program coordinators/directors and congregational leaders were purposefully selected for more in-depth interviews. The interviews proceeded for between 30 and 60 minutes.

Data Analysis

With quantitative data, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and means were used to show the congregational leaders' perceptions and status of congregational social service programs in the study communities. When examining relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variables, bivariate and multivariate regression analyses were used based on the general linear model.

In addition, differences between two groups were tested with independent t-test analyses. The chi-square and Fisher's exact tests were also used in order to have a probability test for categorical data. The Fisher's exact test is more accurate and unbiased than the chi-square test, particularly for an analysis with a small sample size or a small number in a cell of a frequency table (Raymond & Rousset, 1995). The exact test provides only p-value.

In analyzing qualitative data, the general thematic analysis method was employed. By coding and categorizing, data can be "broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102). The researcher examined data line by line (focusing on words or phrases), a whole sentence or paragraph, or an entire document and find differences and similarities in data. With the method, the researcher elicited the major themes related to the main research questions.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Characteristics of Congregations in the Study

Although the Protestant congregations that make up the study unit had the same or similar religious background, they were by no means a homogeneous group. The congregations were different in terms of their theological orientation, denomination/convention, as well as size/ethnicity. Thus, first of all, the unique characteristics of the congregations that participated in the study were delineated.

Between August 2008 and March 2009, a total of 157 congregations participated in this study at the first wave of data collection. The 157 congregations filled out the Church Profile survey, which asked for general congregational profile information, such as location, denomination, staff, and size. According to the definition of "a congregation" used in this study, if a congregation did not have a principal congregational leader or gathered in a congregational leader's house, it was not considered as a valid study organization. Based on this definition, five congregations were removed from this study: Four congregations did not have a principal congregational leader and one congregation gathered in a congregational leader's house. In addition, since one congregation skipped most of the questions on the surveys, it was also removed from the study. Thus, after removing six churches, 151 congregations remained. Among them, 109 congregations participated in the second wave of data collection. The 109 congregations filled out the survey of Church Social Service Programs and Perceptions, which asked questions specifically related to social services such as expected outcomes from social

services, capacity and resources of the congregations, opportunities for congregational involvement, Charitable Choice, and social service programs, in general.

The purpose of the first wave of data collection was to obtain general congregational profiles. Most of the 151 congregations participated in face-to-face, paper-based surveys (89, 59%) or post mail surveys (53, 35%). About a half (72, 48%) of the survey respondents were senior pastors. Among the rest, there were 22 associate/assistant pastors, 29 administrative staff, and 27 lay leaders (elder, deacons, congregational program directors and/or Sunday school teachers).

Table 5 shows a summary of the descriptive characteristics of the congregations which participated in the study. Forty-two congregations were affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, 22 were with the United Methodist Church, and 29 were independent. The majority (111, 76%) of the participants rated themselves as conservative or moderately conservative. While the average size of congregational membership was 236, the median was 120. That is, many congregations were small; however, several big congregations increased the average: 95 (63%) congregations had 150 or fewer members. Almost all congregations were composed of one dominant ethnic/racial group: 111, (75%) were White Americans, 22 (15%) were Black, 2 (1%) were Hispanics and 2 (1%) were Asians. Only 12 (8%) congregations had diverse racial/ethnic groups. The majority (97, 65%) of the congregations reported that the size of their membership had been growing in recent years. Most (135, 89%) of the congregational leaders were full-time ministers. Approximately 40 percent (56) of the congregations had an annual budget of $100,000 or less. Six (4%) congregations reported they had an annual budget of more than one million dollars. Most of the congregations owned their worship buildings. Among the "other" group in the church building section of Table 5, many of the congregations actually

owned their building; however, on official documents, the actual building belonged to their denomination, such as the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church of USA, etc.

Table 5 About Here

In terms of geographic characteristics, the 151 congregations were located in four counties and 39 census tracks. About one half of the congregations were located in Clarke County. According to the US Census 2000, the average rate of urbanization of the 39 census tracks was 56.4%, the average rate of unemployment was 5.6%, the average rate of public assistance was 3.1%, the average rate of poverty was 20.2%, and the average rate of single parent families was 8.8%.

As seen in Table 5, compared to congregations that did not participate in the second survey, the congregations that did participate in the second survey had a bigger membership size, bigger budget size, and bigger staff size. The majority of the congregations that participated in the second survey were also from Clarke County; were Southern Baptist, United Methodist, or independent congregations; were conservative and White dominated. Additionally, the majority of congregations had 100 or fewer adult members and owned their building.

Congregational Perception of Social Services

The purpose of the second wave of data collection was to obtain the various congregations' perceptions and experiences related to social services. The majority (81, 74%) of the 109 congregations participated in face-to-face paper-based survey. Another 25 (23%) congregations participated by mail survey. One congregation responded by email and another by phone interview. The majority (70, 64%) of the survey respondents were senior pastors. Among the rest of the respondents, there were 18 associate/assistant pastors, 9 administrative staff, and 12 lay leaders. Thus, the congregational perceptions and experiences of social services described

below were based on the 109 congregations that were responded in the second survey (see Table 6).

Table 6 About Here

This section of the study mainly sought to elicit the appropriate data that in turn would allow for a description of congregations' general perceptions of congregational social services. This part of the study sought the following information: (1) main functions of congregations in the community, (2) major factors affecting congregational decisions related to social services, (3) overall cost and benefits of congregational social services, (4) alternatives and effectiveness of social services, (5) congregational skills available for social services, (6) congregational members' and community's attitudes toward congregational social services, and (7) congregational leaders' general advice related to congregational social services. Thus, this section of the study was expected to increase the general understanding of congregational social services.

Main Functions of a Congregation in a Community

What do congregational leaders think about their congregation's role in the community? Do they think themselves as a social service provider? Respondents were asked to pick the top three main functions of their church in the community among religious, cultural, Christian educational, social justice, social welfare, and other types of organizations. As expected, all (109) congregations picked "religious" which meant that they dealt with spiritual needs and efforts to save souls. Eighty-six (79%) congregations picked "Christian educational" which meant that their first priority was to provide Christian education for people in the community. Seventy-nine (72%) congregations picked "social welfare" which meant that they felt a priority to provide goods/services for neighbors in need. Regarding social and helping services, almost all

congregations (107 congregations, 98%) reported they were directly and indirectly involved in these types of activities.

The congregations in this study had multiple functions. Even though they mainly functioned as religious organizations, which meant they were interested in spirituality and evangelism, they were also interested in Christian education and helping services for people in the community. In fact, almost all the congregations in this study provided some sort of social/helping activities directly and/or indirectly.

Major Factors Affecting Decision-Making related to Social Services

From a list of nine given choices and one "other" option, the participants were asked to choose the top three reasons for being involved with social services. As seen in Table 6, "church members' attitude" was most commonly selected, followed by "church financial status." "Pastoral interpretation on Bible," "denominational interpretation on Bible," and "congregational experiences and skills" were influential also. Thirty-one participants picked "other" and then made specific comments. Among them, 19 stated their involvement in social services was related to individual or community needs or availability of other community services, and 12 were related to the mission of the church or understanding God's command.

When counting the unduplicated number of participants who picked "pastoral interpretation on Bible," "denominational interpretation on Bible" and "other" with church mission/God's command, the number was 69 (64%), which was more than the number who picked "church members' attitude," 62. This suggests that biblical understanding and interpretation may be more influential for congregations to make a decision related to social and helping activities than their members' attitudes toward such efforts. In making decisions related to social services, congregations draw upon three sources: the Bible/congregational mission, the

opinion/belief of congregational members, and/or finance. Almost all (102, 95%) congregational leaders mentioned at least one of the three, and 68 (64%) mentioned two or more of them. The next most common factors included congregational experiences/skills and community needs/expectations/service availability (34 and 26 participants, respectively).

The decision-making factors concerning social services were classified into two categories: factors from the inside of a congregation and factors from outside of a congregation. The inside factors include interpretations of the Bible, congregational members' attitudes, congregational experiences/skills, and congregational financial status. The outside factors were presence of social services in other congregations, community needs/expectations/service availability, social service requests in mass media, and government policy/political movements. Only three respondents picked only the outside factors, while the number of respondents who picked only the inside factors was 72, and the number of respondents who picked both was 31. That is, while the number of respondents who picked at least one of the outside factors was 34 (32%), the number of respondents who picked at least one of the inside factors was 103 (97%). In summary, congregations' in the study made decisions about involvement in social services considering inside factors more often than outside factors.

Overall Cost and Net Benefit of Social Services

Most of congregational social services were free. However, when providing social services, congregations spent their own various resources including money, people, skills, and facilities. While some of resources spent were easy to be quantified, others were not. For this reason, the congregational leaders were asked about their perceptions of overall costs, including direct and indirect, in providing social services. On the five-point Likert type scale ranging from one (too much) to five (too little), over a half (60, 57%) of them selected the middle category,

not too much or too little. While five participants reported the overall cost was too much for the social services, 41 participants said they spent too little on social services. It may be inferred that these 41 congregations could increase their tangible and/or intangible resources for social services, while five congregations may try to reduce their resources dedicated to social services,.

The survey participants were also asked about the perceived overall net benefits to the congregation of providing social services, based on their consideration of the major benefits and overall costs together. On the five-point Likert type scale ranging from one (deficit), three (even), to five (surplus), 40 (39%) said it was even, 24 (23%) reported it was deficit, and 39 (38%) said it was surplus. More congregational leaders perceived involvement in social services to have a positive effect overall. The independent t-test also showed that congregational leaders perceived that the net benefits were slightly positive: 3.25 on average; t-value = 2.56 and p-value = 0.12. It may be inferred that these 39 congregations which perceived positive net gains would do more social services if they had additional resources, while the 24 congregations that saw a net loss may not do more if they had more resources.

When thinking of each individual social service program, the congregational leaders perceived that the majority (443, 63%) of programs had a positive net benefit. Few (23, 3%) programs were mentioned as a negative benefit. Several participants reported that their programs had a negative gain financially; however, the programs were seen to have spiritually positive effects. That is, while the congregations spent resources for helping people, they earned spiritual blessings and/or life satisfaction.

The average of net benefits of individual programs was 3.88, which is higher than the average of aggregated net benefits of congregational social services (3.25). Congregational leaders seemed to perceive social services more positively when they thought about a specific

service program. They seemed to have more specific ideas of benefits brought by an individual social service than across all programs together.

The perceptions of overall cost and aggregated net benefit were significantly associated (estimate = -0.31, p-vale = 0.0131, and r-square = 0.0593, based on a bivariate regression analysis). When cost increased by one point, the net benefit decreased by 0.3 point. That is, the participants who perceived they spent too many resources for social services were less likely to see surplus net benefits. Since the cost explained only six percent of the variance of the net benefit, it has a small effect size (Rubin & Babbie, 2008).

Alternatives and Effectiveness of Social Services

As mentioned above, congregations serve multiple functions and are involved in a variety of different activities in a community. As people often do different activities for the same purpose, so do congregations. The congregational leaders were asked whether they had another program that achieved the same benefits as did social services. Seventy-eight participants answered that they had alternative programs, while 29 respondents said that they did not. That is, for the 29 congregations, social service programs could not be replaced by other congregational activities to achieve the same benefits. In order to achieve the benefits they expected, they needed to engage in social service activities. On the other hand, 78 congregations reported having effective alternatives to social services. When they compared the effectiveness of social services to other congregational activities to gain the same benefits, 34 participants responded it was neutral (neither less or better), 19 responded the social service was more effective, and 23 responded the social service was less effective.

Thus, it may be inferred that in order to gain the expected benefits, 48 (29 unique and 19 more effective) congregations may choose engagement in social services because the services

were seen to be unique or more effective than other alternative activities. However, 34 congregations were indecisive because they perceived the social services were neither better nor worse. In addition, the 23 congregations would not choose social services because they had other options to achieve the same benefits and the options seemed to have the same or better effects.

Congregational Skills to Plan and Deliver Social Services

Even though many congregations are involved in social services, congregations are primarily religious organizations. Thus, one question which follows from this conclusion is: do congregations have the appropriate skills to provide social services? On a five-point Likert type scale ranging from one (not at all skillful) to five (very skillful), respondents were asked two questions about congregational skills in planning and delivering social services. In general, respondents had somewhat positive perceptions of their skills: 82 (75%) congregations rated thee or more on planning skills and 93 (85%) rated three or more on delivering skills. Even though the difference between the two skill ratings was small, 0.25 point (3.15 for planning and 3.40 for delivering on average), the difference was statistically significant (t-value = 4.39, p-value < 0.0001, based on a one sample t-test of difference of planning and delivering skill points).

In terms of effect size (strength of association), the Cohen's d was 0.28, and so has a small effect size (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). That is, the difference was significant, but weak. Overall, congregations reported they were moderately skillful, which implies that they thought they could perform average levels of helping services. The congregations perceived that they did a slightly better job in delivering social services than in planning social services.

Congregational Members' and Community's Attitudes toward Social Services.

Overall, respondents perceived that their congregations had very positive attitudes toward social services. On the five-point Likert type scale from one (very negative) to five (very

positive), the average was 4.1. While none of them picked one (very negative) and only two of them picked two, 86 (79%) participants picked four or five.

These leaders also had positive perceptions of the community's attitudes toward congregational social services and expectations of congregational involvement in social services. On the community attitude, 76 (70%) participants marked four or five (positive attitude), and the average was 4.0. On the community's expectation, 83 (76%) participants marked four or five (high expectation), and the average was 4.0.

In general, according to these respondents, congregational and community members were seen to have positive attitudes toward congregational involvement in social services. In addition, they perceived that the community wanted more services from congregations. This may be a positive influence on greater congregational participation in more social services in the future.

Congregational Social Services: Who, What, Where, How Often, and Why

This section provides more detailed information about congregational social services: who was involved in congregational social services (who provided and who received the services), what services the congregations provided, where they provided the services, how often they provided the services, and why they provided the services.

Who was Involved in Congregational Social Services – Providers and Recipients

Providers. Congregations can be involved in social services in mainly two ways: (1) operating their own social services, and (2) supporting other social service organizations already existent in the community. The findings of this study showed that congregations took part in more programs initiated by others than they did in programs initiated by themselves (see Table 7). Among the 786 programs about which information was given, over half (436, 56%) of the programs in which congregations were involved were operated by others outside of the

congregation (either faith-based organizations including another congregation or secular organizations). In their collaborations, congregations more often linked with faith-based organizations than they did with secular organizations: 250 (32%) programs with faith-based organizations and 162 (21%) with secular organizations. Still, many (350, 45%) programs were initiated and operated by the congregation in question.

Table 7 About Here

Overall, congregational social services were hands-on experiences. In providing services, congregation service providers (congregational staff or members) interacted directly with service recipients in 514 (66%) programs. Even when supporting other social service organizations, congregations sent their members as volunteers to serve clients directly. There were 260 programs checked as "usually do not interact" with the service recipients. This was because these programs involved just financial donations to another organization or the rental of a congregational facility to another organization.

In particular, who within a congregation is involved in social services? Among the 107 congregations reporting information about their staff, congregations had an average of 5.6 paid staff members: 1.5 full-time pastoral staff, 0.6 part-time pastoral staff, 1.1 full-time non-pastoral staff, and 2.3 part-time non-pastoral staff. Among the paid staff, congregations had an average of 1.4 paid staff members who were involved in social services at least 25% of their time: 0.6 full-time pastoral staff, 0.2 part-time pastoral staff, 0.2 full-time non-pastoral staff, and 0.3 part-time non-pastoral staff. Among the congregational staff, full-time pastoral staff members were actively involved in social services. About a half of the congregations had at least one full-time pastoral staff who was involved in social services more than 25% of their time.

Congregational members also participated in social services. On average, 43 members in a congregation participated in social service programs hosted by their congregations throughout a year. While 14 (14%) congregations had 100 members or more, over a half (50, 52%) of the congregations had 30 members or fewer. For the social service programs provided by other congregations or social service organizations, on average, congregations had 33 members engaged annually. While seven (8%) congregations had 100 members or more involved, over a half (48, 57%) of them had 15 members or fewer.

Congregational members participated in social service programs hosted by their own congregations more than social service programs offered outside the congregation: mean difference = 12.4, t-value = 2.02, df = 82, and p-value = 0.0469. As expected, congregations with bigger membership sizes were more likely to have more members participating in social service programs than smaller congregations (see Table 8).

Table 8 About Here

Collaboration with Other Organizations. All congregational leaders had an open attitude toward collaborating with others to provide social services. None of them reported they would not collaborate with any service organizations. While 96 participants specified they would collaborate with other Christian-based religious organizations, about half (53) of them also said they would collaborate with any faith-based organizations. The other half (56) of them were reluctant to collaborate with a faith-based organization that were not Christian. The congregational leaders were more open to secular or government organizations than to non-Christian faith-based organizations: 73 participants would collaborate with secular community organizations and 61 would collaborate with government agencies, while 53 congregations would collaborate with non-Christian based organizations.

Even though most of the congregations were willing to collaborate with another organization to provide social services, the congregations had different preferences on this issue according to their theological orientation. Table 9 shows (1) the frequencies of willingness to collaborate with different types of organizations, (2) chi-square tests, and (3) Fisher's exact tests to examine differences by theology. For each of the four different types of outside organizations, the non-conservative congregations had a higher percentage of willingness to collaborate. In collaboration with a Christian-based religious organization and with a government organization, there was no significant difference between the two groups. However, regarding collaboration with a non-Christian faith-based organization and with a secular community organization, non-conservative (liberal) congregations were more likely to be willing to collaborate than conservative congregations.

Table 9 About Here

Since all the congregations were generally open toward collaboration, it may be inferred that encouraging congregations to work together may be a good way to encourage congregations to be involved in more social services. Overall, the congregations seemed to be most comfortable working within the same faith. However, non-conservative congregations were more open to collaboration with faith-based organizations outside of Christianity and/or secular community organizations.

Recipients of Congregational Social Services. In general, congregations did not have specific restrictions on who could receive services. The majority (662, 84%) of the programs were open to anyone in the community (see Table 7), although some programs were designed specifically for certain population groups such as children, women, seniors, or the poor.

For example, a program director of a meals program mentioned that it may appear as if it was only for the poor or homeless, but it was not. Anyone could come to have a meal because nobody asked a person who came for a meal if he/she was poor or homeless. In fact, anyone was welcomed. However, since most of the recipients were homeless or poor, people in the community had the impression that the program was only for the poor or homeless. The program was still open to anyone in the community who wanted a meal between 9am to 3pm.

Quite a few congregations contributed money and volunteers to their denominational social service programs. However, they thought that their contributions were used to serve all needy people in the community. That is, their focus was on people, not on membership in or allegiance to a certain denominational organization. Congregations helped their denomination programs because they knew more about these programs than any other available service programs and trusted the operators of the programs.

Only 29 (3.7%) programs were reported to be exclusively for congregational members. Several congregations had also initiated or funded social service programs in foreign countries. These international social service programs usually support activities of local congregations or missionaries in foreign countries. Many of the international social service programs were public/physical health- or education-related services.

What Social Services Congregations Provide

In this study, the congregational leaders that were interviewed were asked specific information about the social services in which they were involved during the previous year. Some of the participants listed their programs in 2007 while others listed theirs in 2008. However, the researcher made certain that the social services under consideration covered only a

one year period, either 2007 or 2008, and that there was not much difference reported in activities between 2007 and 2008.

On the survey, there were 10 major categories of social services and 59 social service program areas (See the Section VI, Church Program Profile, of the Survey of Church Social Service Programs and Perceptions). The list of social service program categories and areas was provided to help study participants thinking about the structure and diversity of the social services in which they were engaged. It was assumed that one congregational social service program provided services in only one program area. However, the survey's data revealed that one program could cover more than one social service program area. For example, an emergency program in a congregation was used for two program areas: both as a food bank and as an emergency fund. A congregation could have more than one program for one program area. For example, one congregation in the survey had two programs for one area (food bank): one for their own food bank program and the other a canned food drive for the Northeast Georgia Food Bank.

Study participants were asked to check all program areas in which their congregation were directly and indirectly involved in the past year and to fill out a program profile for each program area. If a congregation checked five program areas, respondents were asked to fill out five program profiles. Thus, the total number of program profile sheets obtained should have equaled the total number of congregational social service programs. However, 15 out of 109 participants reported which social service program areas their congregations were directly and indirectly involved in but did not fill out program profiles for them. For these congregations, the number of program areas they checked was counted as the number of congregational social service programs. Under the category of economic development programs, none of the

participants indicated that they engaged in any retail development or investment training as forms of social service.

Respondents indicated that the participating congregations were involved in diverse social/community services covering nine major categories and 82 program areas (60 given program areas and 22 program areas created from the "other" category by the researcher after collecting data - see Table 10). The 109 congregations had 977 programs, an average of nine programs per congregation. One-hundred-seven (98%) congregations reported that they had at least one social service program and were directly and indirectly involved in social service activities. The congregations spent a total of $1,883,440 annually: an average of $17,279 per congregation.

Table 10 About Here

This study included two different definitions of congregational social service programs. One definition was based on a congregation's perspective, which counts all the programs congregational leaders perceived as social service programs. The other definition was based on researcher's (outsider's) perspective as described in the Chapter III, Methodology (see Page 57 - 58).

Based on the researcher's perspective, 402 (41%) respondent identified programs were excluded. Among the 109 congregations, the 15 congregations that did not fill out the program profile were also removed from this step of analysis. Thus, 94 congregations had 453 social service programs, slightly more than four programs per congregation. Ninety-one (97%) congregations reported that they had at least one social service program, directly and indirectly involved in helping and social service activities. The congregations spent a total of $862,038 annually: an average of $7,909 per congregation. Compared with the congregation's perspective,

the researcher's perspective reduced identified social service spending by over $1 million (see Table 11).

Table 11 About Here

Comparing the congregation's and researcher's perspectives, overall, the total number of programs and money spent decreased significantly: 41% and 54% respectively. In addition, the average number of programs and money spent per congregation was reduced to about one half of the original total. The number of congregational social services decreased drastically from the researcher's perspective. The congregational leaders participated in this study thought that they were involved in social services approximately twice as much as those based on the outsiders. However, almost all of the congregations had still participated in some form of social services: 98% in the congregation perspective and 97% in the researcher perspective.

Main Categories of Congregational Social Services. In this study, 109 congregations reported that they provided 977 social service programs covering nine major categories of social services. When it came to identifying which social service program was mentioned most frequently, the category of emergency services was the obvious choice (311 programs, 32%). This category was followed by the categories of outreach/programs for children and youth (146 programs, 15%) and self-help/support groups (100 programs, 10%), while the category of economic development was the least frequently mentioned (20 programs, 2%). Almost half (457 programs, 47%) of the congregational social service programs were in the two categories of emergency assistance and programs for children/youth. Table 12 provides more detail information.

Table 12 About Here

In terms of cost, the congregations in the survey indicated that the biggest spending percentage was allotted to the category of emergency services ($969,009; 55%), followed by the categories of outreach/programs for children and youth ($228,722; 13%) and housing/community work efforts ($142,338; 8%). The survey also indicated that the least amount of money was spent by the congregations in the category of economic development ($11,500; 0.6%). Congregations spent a significant portion (68%) of their money in the two, top categories: programs for emergency services and children/youth.

As one would expect, the ranking of the most popular categories of congregational social services was almost identical to the ranking obtained when the number of programs was the criteron. The category of emergency services was the most frequently identified (104 congregations, 95%), followed by the categories of self-help/support groups (70 congregations, 64%) and outreach/programs for children and youth (69 congregations, 63%), while the category of economic development was, again, the least frequently mentioned (18 congregations, 17%). That is, the majority of congregations had at least an emergency service program. As seen in Table 9, there were four categories (emergency services, self-help/support groups, outreach/programs for children and youth, and fundraising for others) in which more than 50 percent of congregations were involved.

The major congregational social service categories were emergency services and programs for children/youth: 104 congregations (95%), 457 programs (47%), and $1,197,731 (67%). In terms of rank, there were two interesting findings. For the category of housing/community work efforts, a smaller number (45, 6th rank) of congregations participated, a smaller number (57, 7th rank) of programs were operated, but a larger amount ($142,338, 3rd rank) of money was spent. This was because there were two large support items ($73,750) for

community development in foreign countries. For the category of self-help/support groups, 70 congregations (2nd rank) had 100 programs (3rd rank), but spent $52,370 annually (6th rank). This was because there were few programs that required a big financial support structure and the most common content of service in this area was facility rent.

As seen in table 13, based on the researcher's perspective, the most frequent program category was also emergency services (180 programs, 40%), followed by outreach/programs for children and youth (59 programs, 13%). Interestingly, the third most frequent area was housing/community work efforts (42 programs, 9%), which was the seventh in the congregation perspective. The least frequent category was cultural/other community effects (8, 2%), which was the fifth in the congregation perspective.

Table 13 About Here

Again from the researcher's perspective, the congregations in the survey spent the most in the category of emergency services in terms of financial support, followed by the category of services for children and youth, while they spent the least in the category of economic development. The third largest spending category was fundraising for other people and organizations, of which the most common segment (96%) in this last category was financial donations. Even though the congregations did not have many programs, they spent relatively more than in the category of fund raising.

In terms of number of congregations, the ranks of the most popular categories were the same to that when ranked by the number of programs. The category of emergency services was most frequent (77 congregation, 82%), while the category of cultural/other community effects was the least frequent (8 congregations, 9%). There was only one category (emergency services) in which more than 50% of congregations were involved.

According to the researcher's perspective, the major congregational social service categories were also emergency services and programs for children/youth: 83 congregations (88%), 239 programs (53%), and $618,832 (72%). In terms of rank, the patterns from the congregation's perspective and from the researcher's perspective were almost the same across program, money, and congregation except the category of fundraising for others. That is, the larger numbers of participating congregations meant larger numbers of programs. The larger numbers of programs meant larger amounts of spending.

Content of Congregational Social Services. When helping people and social service organizations, congregations were attempting to provide at least one of the five common service contents: money, goods/materials (e.g. food, clothes, etc.), services (e.g. lodging, recreation, child care, etc.), volunteers, and/or facilities (free rent). For the purpose of data collection, a clear distinction was made between services and volunteers. From both the congregation and the researcher's perspective, it was quite evident in the study that congregational members provided services in the social service arena. However, for this study, a service was defined as a content of social services when congregational members volunteered for their own congregational programs: A congregations provides services to people in need. A volunteer was defined as a service content when congregational members volunteered for an organization outside of congregations: a congregation provides volunteers to support another social service organization.

As seen Table 14, among the 977 programs, 783 programs had specific information of types of service content. While 543 (69%) programs provided one content, 240 (31%) programs provided more than one content. The most common content for the congregations providing help was financial: 332 programs (42%) were engaged in financial support for individuals, families or

another service organization. The second most common one was tangible goods/materials, followed by services.

Table 14 About Here

When congregations provided financial support, particularly for individuals who were not members of their congregation, they did not give cash. Almost all congregations interacted directly with the vendors (billing companies like an apartment office, an electronic power company, etc). Congregations gave people in need a check which was payable to the vendor. For some cases, congregations had an account at a gas station, so that when people need some food or gas, the congregations gave people in need a voucher which is usable only at that station. The voucher had restrictions such as no alcohol beverages, no cigarettes, etc. Such restrictions grew from prior experiences that when people received cash, some of them did not use the cash as described when they requested help, but instead would buy drugs or alcohol beverages rather than paying their bills. It was found that another common form of abuse was when people visited multiple congregations with the same requests. Congregations in general, wanted to help individuals, but they did not want to waste their resources by falling prey to these types of abuses. Thus, the aforementioned restrictions on monetary assistance by congregations were put in practice in order to increase the accountability of resource usage. However, if congregations decided to financially assist their own congregational members or another social service agency, the congregations often gave them cash.

The majority (606, 77%) of the programs did not have any evangelistic activities (including prayer, worship service, Biblical-centered activities, and/or proselytizing). Among the 185 programs which had a spiritual or evangelistic component in social service programs, 131 programs had specific information about types of spiritual or evangelistic activity. The most

common activity was a prayer (in 37 programs). Christian music, bible study, and worship study were also typical (29, 26, and 25 programs respectively). In terms of proselytizing activities, only in five programs, congregations shared the gospel.

However, even when programs included spiritual or evangelistic activities, participating in those activities was not required to receive a service. For example, while receiving the service with prayer, the service recipients were asked if they would agree to pray together. Even when the recipient said, “No, I don’t want to,” there was no penalty for the recipient on receiving the service. Obviously, for some of the programs like a Christian-based or holiday music concert in a congregation or a prison ministry program, the service recipients had no opportunity to avoid the evangelistic activity (Christian music or worship service) while receiving the service.

Some congregations did not include any evangelistic activities in their social service programs; however, they would often schedule the programs before or after a worship service or bible study. It was not required for the recipients to come to the worship service or bible study to receive assistance. The congregations only indirectly encouraged people to come to the worship service or bible study.

Where Congregations Provide Social Services

When it comes to where congregations provide social services, in a majority (407, 52%) of the social service programs congregations provided services in their buildings, which means that people came to the site to get services (see Table 15). The in-house services included facility use by another faith-based or secular organization. In addition, congregational service providers often went to the community, which means they visited service requesters’ houses or communities in order to provide services. In other cases, some congregations supported other

organizations travelling to the organization site in order to provide social support. Some other congregations supported other organizations only financially.

Table 15 About Here

How Often Congregations Provide Social Services

Congregations were involved in social services regularly. Most (76, 83%) of the congregations had at least one social service program provided once a month or more often: 60 congregations had at least one program operated once a week or more often. In terms of number of social service programs, the majority (603, 77%) of congregational social service programs were provided regularly (see Table 16). Among the regular programs, “once a year” was the most common, followed by “once a week” and “once a month.” Over one third (276, 35%) of the programs were operated at least once a month. In 181 programs, congregations provided help when they had a request for a service. One of the most common request-based services was an emergency fund program. When a person came to a congregation to ask for help, the congregation staff assessed the need and provided help to meet it. For some congregations, even though the emergency assistance was based on a request, respondents said that their congregations, in fact, helped people in need regularly.

Table 16 About Here

Why Congregations Provide Social Services

Understanding why congregations offer social services provides useful information related to how local congregations may be encouraged to be involved in more social service activity. Oftentimes, when helping people or organizations in need, individuals may not expect to benefit directly for their efforts. However, they can expect other rewards from helping others,

such as feeling a sense of happiness or satisfaction. Likewise, congregations may not expect to benefit directly from the social service recipients, but, like the individual, their intangible rewards may be just as important. Thus, the next stage in this study's analysis was to determine what goals congregations have when providing social services.

Major Benefits from Providing Social Services. The congregational leaders were asked to pick two perceived major benefits from providing social services from a list of six given choices and one "other" choice (see the Question Six in the Survey of Church Social Service Programs and Perceptions). As seen in Table 17, 99 (92%) respondents reported that helping and serving the community was beneficial because it was a way to honor or to obey God/Jesus. Table 18 shows that this was across theological orientation (conservative and liberal). The second most common benefit picked was to convert recipients to Christianity and to have opportunities to share the Gospel: 42 respondents, 39%. The third and fourth common benefits were "altruistic behaviors not related to evangelism" and "social obligation as a community entity." Since most of the congregations mentioned honoring or obedience to God/Jesus as a major benefit, it is meaningful to look at the other choices they picked.

Table 17 & 18 About Here

Among the two major benefits the respondents selected, the other choices (after honoring or obedience to God/Jesus) can be classified into two groups: evangelistic and non-evangelistic benefits. The evangelistic benefits include converting recipients to Christianity and making a positive impression of the church. The non-evangelistic benefits include doing altruistic acts and fulfilling a social obligation as a community entity. In unduplicated numbers, 55 respondents emphasized evangelistic benefits, while 41 respondents emphasized non-evangelistic benefits. Only four respondents selected both types, while 16 respondents selected neither of the two.

Thus, overall, more congregations engaged in social/helping activities for the evangelistic benefits.

Related to the second choice of the major benefit, it was expected that more conservative congregations would be more likely to emphasize evangelistic benefits, while less conservative congregations would be more likely to pursue non-evangelistic benefits. Table 19 shows the differences of perceived major benefits by theological orientation. As expected, the conservative congregations more often mentioned evangelistic benefits (63%), while the non-conservative (more liberal) congregations more often mentioned non-evangelistic benefits (83%). The Fisher's exact tests also supported the difference of perceived benefits by theology: the conservative congregations were more likely to select evangelistic benefits (p-value < 0.0001) and the liberal congregations were more likely to select non-evangelistic benefits (p-value < 0.0001). Interestingly, only four participants mentioned both together. That is, most of the participants selected only one category of benefit, evangelistic or non-evangelistic.

Table 19 About Here

Regardless of theological orientation, the greatest benefit which congregations perceived from providing social services was honoring and obeying God/Jesus. That is, congregational social services are not dual-party- but triple-party-activities: God-oriented interactions between the helpers and the recipients. However, on the other perceived benefits, congregations showed a clear difference by theology. The conservative congregations wanted evangelistic effects when helping people, while the liberal congregations were more likely to provide social services without considering evangelistic effects.

Types of Ministry and Goals of Social Service Programs. Most (638, 90%) of the congregational social service programs were operated as a part of the "social services/ministry,"

which was not for evangelistic purposes. However, many (314, 44%) programs were run as parts of the "evangelistic ministry," too. Quite a few (248, 35%) programs were run for both social service/ministry and evangelistic purposes. The participants' responses to goals for congregational social service programs showed this pattern more clearly. The survey respondents were asked, "To the service recipients, what kind of caring has your church provided (from 1 to 5)?" There was a five-point Likert type scale including one (physical/social caring), two (mixed with more physical/social caring), three (mix of the two), four (mixed with more spiritual caring), and five (spiritual caring). Among the 700 programs, there were 147 physical/social caring programs (one), 32 spiritual caring (five), and 521 blended programs (two, three or four). More than 40 percent (293 programs) of the programs were scored a three, the middle point between physical/social caring and spiritual caring. While about a quarter (179, 26%) of the programs were exclusively for either social/physical caring or spiritual caring, three quarters (521, 74%) of them were reported to have dual purposes. Congregations perceive spiritual components in their activities regardless of the category of ministry (social service ministry or evangelistic ministry). This pattern is supported by a thematic analysis of interviews of congregational leaders about whether they could separate the concepts of physical/social caring and spiritual caring in their congregational activities.

Separation of Physical/Social Care and Spiritual Care. When helping people, what do congregations want to provide? Would they be satisfied with helping people only physically and/or socially, or do they want to provide something else? The study participants were asked whether they could distinguish between physical/social care and spiritual care when helping people. The answers could be classified into three main themes: (1) no, cannot separate or hard

to separate, (2) yes, can separate, but don't want to do so, and (3) yes, can separate, and can help without spiritual care.

On this question, 52 congregational leaders responded. The majority (44, 85%) of them could not separate nor did not want separate the domains. A congregational leader stated, "All church activities are leading to Jesus (spiritual dimension). That is an ultimate goal." Another participant stated, "[It is] difficult to draw a line [between physical caring and spiritual caring. Doing a good thing is doing a thing God asks us to do." Another participant reported, "Social ministry is not looking to convert people, but meeting physical needs. However, meeting their physical needs is a pathway to spiritual needs. Spiritual needs and physical needs are connected: wholeness of people." For most of the congregations, even though the congregations did not do any evangelistic activities when helping people, spiritual caring was embedded in their activities for providing services to meet physical and social needs. A person is composed of physical and mental/spiritual parts. Since all the parts of a person are connected, taking care of one part of the person is indirectly taking care of another part. That is, physical caring could not be perceived as only purely physical caring.

On the other hand, several participants mentioned that they could help people without giving direct spiritual care: "Evangelistic … spreading faith, try to convert people. Serving people is serving God. However, our social ministries are not a tool for evangelistic ministries."; "Yes, they [social/physical care and spiritual care] are different. We can provide social/physical care without considering spiritual need."

As Table 20 shows, respondents from liberal congregations had a higher percentage of respondents who separated the social/physical care category from the spiritual care category, and correspondingly, had a lower percentage for not separating these categories. However, the

majority of the congregational leaders, regardless of theological orientation, reported that they could not separate or could separate but did not want to do so. The Fisher's exact test of a "no separation" approach by theology showed there was no significant difference by theology: p-value = 0.2069. That is, in general, congregational leaders did not separate the two in their congregational activities.

Table 20 About Here

General Advice for Other Congregational Leaders about Social Services

Fifty-five congregational leaders responded to an invitation to give general advice for other congregational leaders about involvement in social services. There were a total of 122 advice statements. The statements were classified into five major themes: (1) how to start a social service program, (2) how to operate a program, (3) how to continue a program, (4) what services to provide, and (5) why a social service program is needed. Among the 122 advice statements, the advice about how to start a social service program were most frequent (48, 39%) and the advice about what to provide were the least frequent (15, 12%).

Table 21 provides a summary of the respondents' statements. When starting a social service program, congregations were urged to assess congregational interests/resources and community needs and to look for opportunities to collaborate with other congregations or social service organizations in the community. Many respondents also mentioned that seeking for God's guidance should not be left out in the planning stage of providing social services.

Table 21 About Here

When operating a social service program, it would be important to have an accountability system so that congregations would not waste their resources. In addition, the level and intensity

of the congregation's commitment to the social service(s) provided was important. How can congregations continue a social service program once it is launched? Having congregational members' involvement and enough resources would be important for continuing the social service program. Congregational leaders' involvement in social services was also important. In terms of what services should be provided, congregations were advised to consider long-term services, not those having a "band-aid" effect (give a fish), but those having a self-sufficiency effect (teach how to fish). When meeting social and physical needs, congregations were also advised to provide spiritual care for the service recipients. When providing services, congregations were advised to help people with a warm heart and not to attach any strings, even evangelistic strings. For Christians, helping people and communities was seen as following Jesus' teaching and God's command.

Determinants of Congregational Involvement in Social Services

In the previous studies examining determinants of congregational social services, the main dependent variable was the number of social service programs in which congregations were involved. In this study, the main dependent variable was involvement based on a combination of the number of programs and those amount of spending for the programs.

Related to congregational involvement in social services, there were seven research hypotheses in this study: (1) net benefits – congregations that have higher net benefits were predicted to be involved in more social services, (2) alternatives – congregations having no alternatives for social services were predicted to be involved in more social services; and congregations perceiving their social services are more effective than their alternatives were predicted to be involved in more social services, (3) resources – congregations with greater resources were predicted to be involved in more social services, (4) cognitive orientation –

congregations having a positive perception of collaboration with other organizations and a positive perception of congregational members' and the community's attitude toward congregational social services were expected to be involved in more social services, (5) theological orientation – more liberal congregations were expected to be involved in more social services, and (6) community disorganization – congregations located in more disadvantaged neighborhoods were expected to be involved in more social services. Table 22 provides a summary of bivariate analyses with the congregational involvement.

Table 22 About Here

Bibariate Analyses (I): Analyses of the Major Variables in this Study

Net Benefits from Congregational Social Services. When considering both the benefits and overall costs related to offering social services, the study participants rated the net benefits from one (deficit) to five (surplus). We expected the congregations perceiving higher net benefits would be involved in more social services. However, this was not supported in data from either the congregation's perspective or the researcher's perspective: coefficient = -0.01207, t-value = -0.20 and p-value = 0.8423 in the congregation's perspective; and coefficient = -0.00773, t-value = 0.34 and p-value = 0.7360 in the researcher's perspective. That is, the congregational perceptions of net benefits from providing social services were not significantly associated with the extent of congregational involvement in them.

Effectiveness of Congregational Social Services. A variable of "alternatives" was created by combining (1) whether congregational leaders identified an alternative program for the same benefit as for social services and (2) if they had an alternative, whether the social service programs were more effective in achieving the benefits than the alternatives. In the variable of alternatives, there were four choices: (1) having an alternative and social services less effective,

(2) having an alternative and social services similar effectiveness, (3) having an alternative and social services more effective, and (4) no other alternatives. If congregations perceived that social services had a unique role in a congregation and were more effective than other programs, they should be involved in more social services.

The findings showed that this hypothesis was not supported. More interestingly, in both perspectives, it had a significant negative association: coefficient = -0.14352, t-value = -3.40 and p-value = 0.0010 in the congregation perspective; and coefficient = -0.04586, t-value = -2.18 and p-value = 0.0326 in the researcher perspective. This means that congregations having an alternative and perceiving social services were less effective had higher levels of involvement in social services, a totally opposite direction from the hypothesis.

More specifically, since the variable of alternatives was a combination of two variables, when examining the association separately, whether a congregation has an alternative program and with whether the alternative was seem to be more effective, both had negative associations with congregational involvement in social services. The former variable had a significant negative association, while the other did not. That is, congregations having an alternative program were more likely to be involved in social services than those that did not have such alternatives.

Congregational Resources. In this study, congregational resources were mainly composed of two things: congregational human resources (membership size) and financial resources (budget size). Congregational membership size was measured by the number of people who regularly participated in religious activities in a congregation. There were two membership sizes: adult members and total members including children. Since most of social services were operated or helped by adult members, the adult membership size was used for the analyses. In

both perspectives, size had a significant positive association: the larger the membership size, the higher the involvement. The adult membership size was based on study participants' estimates. The membership size was classified into the seven groups based on congregational leaders' common conceptions: one (30 or fewer), two (31 – 70), three (71 – 150), four (151 – 250), five (251 – 500), six (501 – 1,000), and seven (over 1,000). With the ordinal level of total membership size, both perspectives showed the same result: a significantly positive association. In addition, the results with the ordinal level membership size had higher r-square (0.3262 and 0.1859) than those with the ratio level of data: 0.3262 vs. 0.2146 in the congregation's perspective and 0.1859 vs. 0.1100 in the researcher's perspective.

Since financial information is sensitive, respondents did not report a specific dollar figure of their annual budgets; however, they were more comfortable revealing a range of budget figures: one ($25K or under), two (25,001 – 50K), three (50,001 – 100K), four (100,001 – 250K), five (250,001 – 500K), six (500,001 – 1,000K) and seven (1,000,001 or more). For both perspectives, this variable had significant positive associations as predicted: the larger the budget size, the higher the involvement in social services.

Thus, a variable for "congregational resources" was created by combining congregational adult membership size and their annual budget size. As expected, the overall congregational resources had a significant positive association with congregational involvement: the larger the resource size, the higher the extent of involvement. This is consistent with the study hypothesis.

Cognitive Orientation toward Social Services. When congregations had more positive cognitive orientations (more positive attitudes toward congregational social services, perceived more expectations from their community regarding their social services, and a more open mind to collaborate with other organizations), they were expected to be involved in more social

services. A variable of “cognitive orientation” was created by combining attitudes toward collaboration and toward congregational social services. In both perspectives, the congregations having positive cognitive orientations were more likely to be involved in social services (coefficient = 0.04941, t-value = 2.83 and p-value = 0.0057 in the congregation’s perspective; and coefficient = 0.02220, t-value = 2.53 and p-value = 0.0134 in the researcher’s perspective).

More specifically, while the congregational members’ attitudes, community’s attitudes, and community’s expectation did not have a significant association with the involvement, the collaboration had a significant positive association. Congregations having a more open attitude towards collaboration were more likely to be involved in social services. Since there are various social service organizations in a community, the open attitude may increase opportunities for congregations to be involved in social services. In fact, having a more open attitude toward collaboration was found to have a significant positive association with the number of social service programs (coefficient = 0.42535, t-value = 2.05 and p-value = 0.0430 in the congregation perspective; and coefficient = 0.16012, t-value = 3.12 and p-value = 0.0024 in the researcher perspective).

Theological Orientation. Answers to the impact of the theological orientation of congregations was based on a five-point Likert type scale, ranging from conservative (one) to liberal (five). Interestingly, in the congregation’s perspective, theological orientation had a significant positive association (coefficient = 0.095, t-value = 2.16, and p-value = 0.0334), while in the researcher’s perspective it did not (coefficient = 0.031, t-value = 1.41, and p-value = 0.1626). The more liberal the congregation, the higher the involvement in providing social services. The theological orientation of the congregations was also divided into two groups, conservative (one and two) and non-conservative (three, four and five). In this case, the pattern

was the same: a significant positive association in the congregation perspective and a non-significant association in the researcher perspective.

Community Characteristics. A variable of "community disorganization" was created by combining the rates of unemployment, public financial assistance, poverty, and single parent families. Since congregational social services were for people in need, congregations located in more disorganized communities were expected to have a higher involvement in social services. However, in both perspectives, the findings showed that there was no association between community disorganization and congregational involvement in social services.

Bivariate Analyses (II): Analyses of Other Interesting Variables in this Study

There are several variables not mentioned in the study hypotheses but examined in other previous studies: ethnicity and urbanization.

Ethnic Congregation. A binary variable of "ethnic minority congregations" was created based on the ethnic composition in a congregation: White congregations were those having 50% or more of White members, while other congregations with 50% or more of ethnic minority members. In both perspectives, the directions were negative and non-significant (coefficient = -0.09857 and p-value = 0.04391 in the congregation perspective; and coefficient = -0.06524 and p-value = 0.2833 in the researcher perspective). That is, the ethnic congregations were less likely to be involved in social services; however, the differences were not significant.

Urbanization. Two previous studies showed different findings about this variable: no association was found in the National Congregation Study (NCS), but a positive association was reported in the Organizing Religious Work (ORW) study (Ammerman, 2001; Chaves, 2004). The findings of this study showed that there was no significant association between urbanization and congregational involvement in social services: (bivariate regression - coefficient = 0.00217,

t-value = 1.90 and p-value = 0.0606 in the congregation's perspective; and coefficient = 0.00071, t-value = 1.20 and p-value = 0.2332 in the researcher's perspective).

However, while 23 (21%) congregations had an urbanization index lower than 0.25, 86 congregations had larger than 0.75 (79%). Congregations in the study were clearly divided into congregations in rural areas and ones in urban areas. When creating a binary variable of urbanization (rural and urban), the bivariate regression showed somewhat different results. There was a significant difference by urbanization based on the congregation perspective (coefficient = 0.30372 and p-value = 0.0191), but not on the researcher's perspective (coefficient = 0.13078 and p-value = 0.0739). The result based on the congregation perspective was the same as reported by NCS: congregations in the urban areas were more likely to be involved in social services than those in rural areas. The result based on the researcher's perspective was similar to the finding reported by ORW: there was no significant difference by urbanization. That is, the association between urbanization and congregational involvement were different by definitions of congregational social services.

Multivariate Analyses

The results of bivariate regression based on the congregation perspective showed that the variables having a significant association with congregational involvement in social services were theological orientation, congregational resources (membership and budget), alternatives of social services, and cognitive orientation (collaboration and attitude). The variables of congregational skills for social service programs and community disorganization were not significantly associated with involvement.

When considering all these variables together (multivariate analysis), three variables were found to be significant predictors of congregational involvement in social services:

theological orientation, congregational resource size, and perceived alternatives (see Table 23). The main hypothesis for this study was that the perceived net benefits of social services would have a positive association with involvement. However, the finding of this study did not support that prediction (coefficient = -0.05246, t-value = -1.16, and p-value = 0.2495). Among the three variables having significant associations, while the congregational resources and theology showed a positive association as hypothesized, the alternatives to social services had a negative association, in the opposite direction from the hypothesis. The variable of cognitive orientation had a significant association in a bivariate regression analysis, but not in a multivariate regression analysis. Overall, the variables in this study explained 53 percent of the variance of congregational involvement in social services in the congregation's perspective, while the variables explained 30 percent in the researcher's perspective. In both perspectives, congregational resources alone explained substantially, 41 percent in the congregation's perspective and 25 percent in the researcher's perspective.

Table 23 About Here

The results of bivariate regression analyses on the researcher's perspective showed that the variables having a significant association with congregational involvement were congregational resources, alternatives of social services, and cognitive orientation. The variables of theological orientation, skills for social service programs, and community disorganization were not significantly associated.

The multiple regression analyses showed somewhat different results depending on the perspectives. On the congregation's perspective, congregational resource size had a significant positive association with involvement. Theological orientation was positively associated with the involvement. The variable of alternatives of social services was also statistically significant;

however, the direction was negative. On the researcher's perspective, only congregational resources had a positive association with the involvement.

However, under both perspectives, that of the congregation and the researcher, the main hypothesis of this study was not supported. That is, the approach based on concepts of rewards and costs may not be appropriate for understanding congregational involvement in social services. As seen Graph 1, there were two groups showing an unexpected relationship: first, congregations with low perceived net benefits engaged highly in social services (net benefits = 1 or 2 and involvement index > 1); and second, congregations with high perceived net benefits engaged lowly in social services (net benefits = 4 or 5 and involvement index < 1). This finding may be explained by congregational resources. The number of congregations in the first group (with the unexpected relationship) totaled seven. They were not small congregations: three congregations with an annual budget of between $100,001 and $250,000, one congregation with between $250,001 and 500,000 and three congregations with more than $500,000. In the second group (with the unexpected relationship), there were 20 congregations. Twelve of them had an annual budget of equal or less than $100,000. Eleven of them stated that they considered their financial status when making a decision related to social services.

Graph 1 About Here

The study variables explained the congregational involvement in the congregation's perspective more than in the researcher's perspective. Since measurement of the independent variables for this study was mainly from the congregational leaders' perceptions, it seems correct to conclude that measurement of the dependent variables from the congregation's perspective were a better fit than ones from the outsider's perspective.

In drawing a conclusion about the determinants of congregational involvement in social services, the findings of this study revealed that congregational resource size was critical, positive, and very important. Even though they did not have significance across all analyses, the variables of theological orientation, alternatives of social services, and cognitive orientation were important as well. While all other variables had a positive association, the variable of alternatives of social services had a negative association, which was an unexpected direction. Thus, further study is required to ascertain why this occurred.

Charitable Choice

By enacting Charitable Choice, the federal government intended to provide financial and technical support for local congregations to become social service providers and partners with other community organizations. The federal government intended for local congregations to become more involved in the public social service networks. Thus, the next step of this study was to ask local congregations whether this federal policy would be helpful for the congregations to be able to provide more social services.

Resources needed for More Social Services in Congregations. Do congregations have enough resources to do social services? If they need more resources, what resources do they need for additional social services? This study asked the congregational leaders what tangible and intangible resources would be needed for their congregations to provide more social services. Forty-five participants specified 76 kinds of resources. The most frequently mentioned resources were financial and human resources: 27 and 25 participants respectively. Five participants mentioned having a committed “heart” for helping because when people had a “heart” for something, money and other resources followed. Two congregational leaders stated they needed more service opportunities. Both of these congregations were new in the community so that they

were looking for more opportunities to serve people and communities. Overall, most (42, 93%) of the congregational leaders stated that they needed at least three major resources: money, people, and facilities. With more money, people, and/or facilities, they believed their congregations would do or be more involved in social services in the community.

Even though the majority of the congregations reported needing financial and human resources for more social services, it was interesting to see which congregations identified more money (budget size and need of money) and which congregations identified more people (membership size and need of people). Table 24 shows that the association between the congregational budget size and need of money was curvilinear: a bell shape. Particularly, the congregations with a budget between $100,000 and $500,000 responded that they needed more money in order to provide more social services. Regarding the need for human resources, the association with membership size was also not linear. Not surprisingly, those congregations with smaller membership size (less than 150) were more likely to want more people to provide additional social services (see Table 25).

Table 24 & 25 About Here

Helpfulness of Charitable Choice. While Charitable Choice was enacted in 1996 at the federal level, it had not been introduced in Georgia as of the date of this study's completion. In order for this federal policy to be enacted, Georgia would first need to change its state law. However, the study participants were asked about their familiarity with Charitable Choice and its helpfulness for their congregation. Only 12 participants reported they were already familiar with Charitable Choice. Since this was expected, on the survey there was a brief introduction about Charitable Choice, which stated that "Charitable Choice enables local churches to receive public money for social service programs by competing with other service organizations. That is,

churches can apply for a public grant for social services. While providing the social services, churches can maintain their religious identity." Regarding the helpfulness of Charitable Choice, the majority (65, 63%) of the congregational leaders responded they did not think it would be helpful, while 25 (24%) of them said it would be helpful.

It is interesting that while many of them stated that it would be no problem to collaborate with government organizations to provide social services and that they could do more social services with more money, they did not, in fact, want government money. As seen in Table 26, the group more favorable to collaboration with government had a higher percentage of participants who said Charitable Choice would be helpful (four or five on the Likert type scale) than the non-collaboration group: 16 (28%) responses for the collaboration group and 9 (20%) for the non-collaboration group. However, regardless of participants' attitude toward collaborating with government, in general, the majority of the participants showed a negative attitude toward Charitable Choice: 30 (65%) responses were below three for the non-collaboration group and 35 (61%) were below three for the collaboration group. In addition, on average, although the collaboration group scored 0.3 point higher than non-collaboration group, the two independent sample t-test indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups: t-value = 1.05 and p-value = 0.298.

Table 26 About Here

The survey participants were also asked to give specific reasons why or why not Charitable Choice would be helpful for their congregations. 101 participants specified various reasons: 90 congregational leaders specified a total of 113 reasons and 11 said they needed more information to decide how helpful it may be. Only seven participants mentioned both of the positive and negative sides. That is, most of the congregational leaders mentioned only one side,

either why helpful or why it may not helpful. Among the 113 reasons, 83 (74%) were about why it was not helpful, while 30 (27%) were about why it was helpful (see Table 27).

Table 27 About Here

Table 27 summarizes the various reasons offered by the congregations as to why Charitable Choice would be helpful or not. The most common benefit which congregational leaders expected was that they could serve more people and/or have more social service programs in the community with additional money. One participant stated "Funding is the greatest barrier to extending needed social services. Desire [for helping] is present." Another stated "I believe it would help. Our resources are always limited as we are a small congregation."

On the other side, the most common concern was that government money would hurt congregational autonomy and operation. One respondent stated,

> By choosing to take government funds to help, we must abide by the set standards of the government office . . . therefore limiting our ability to be first and foremost a church proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Another responded,

> [I am] not sure. [I] might fear government rules. If we take their money, [there are] strings attached to government money. Once we received money, [it would be] hard not to follow the regulations. It is too late.

One congregational leader indicated a mistrustful attitude towards government involvement, saying,

> I'm not certain since I am not familiar with the program, but we [congregation] would probably not meet certain requirements for benefits from the program. Once accepted, the

> government would increase requirements to get funded. We don't know when the government would stop funding. Don't trust the government.

Another also showed the same attitude toward the government.

> We are not yet in a position to participate. [We are] suspicious of government money - compromise church doctrines. [We] should not underestimate government interference. The government can change their rules later.

One congregational leader mentioned that he would not take government money because it was not from God or His people for His work: “I do not want there to be even a hint that the church is receiving money from an ungodly source.” Even for the participant who acknowledged potential benefits, the primary fear was that the government might have too much power over congregational operations.

> They [government] would help us to see the possibilities and encourage the church to help socially more . . . possibly help with organizing the service aspect of the church. However, there are some concerns: The government tells churches how to run programs, so many regulations. I answer to the Lord (Higher Authority), not the government.”

In addition, 14 participants stated that they were not interested in government money at all without giving any specific reasons.

There were several other concerns related to Charitable Choice: perceptions of there being too much documentation required and/or a complicated application process, lack of human resources to work on Charitable Choice, competition with others for money, and no need of additional money for social services. One congregational leader mentioned her congregation’s limitations in dealing with government processes: “Due to the number of volunteers required and hours needed to support documentation for government assisted programs, we do not have

enough paid staff to accomplish the task." Another stated, "We will not compete for funds with other service organizations. We do not seek grants. We participate on an individual, voluntary basis only." Another showed no interest in social services: "By and large, we are not primarily focused on a strong social services outreach and profile in our community."

To sum up, most (96, 89%) of the congregational leaders were not familiar with Charitable Choice. Six out of ten remarked that it would not be helpful for the enhancement of their congregational social service involvement. Even though there may be some benefits, the majority of congregational leaders had no interest at all, had no resources to properly follow the government processes, and/or thought the regulations attached to government money would limit congregational evangelistic activities. Although they thought there might be no restrictions against any congregational activities at first, the congregational leaders were still suspicious or did not trust the government regarding later changes in regulations. Many congregational leaders did not want to start a social service program with government money. Thus, since the majority of the participants were cautious about Charitable Choice and would be unlikely to take advantage of Charitable Choice even if it became available in Georgia.

Summary of Findings

Characteristics of Congregations that Participated in the Study

Local congregations are not homogeneous. The congregations that participated in this study belonged to a diversity of denominations or conventions, had different theological orientations (from conservative to liberal), varying membership sizes (from 12 to 3,400), paid staff sizes (0 to 30), annual budget sizes ($12,000 to $2,395,000), and different main ethnic groups. On average, the congregations that participated in the study were affiliated with a

denomination/convention (particularly Southern Baptist or United Methodist), were conservative, small, and one-ethnic/racial dominated (particularly White).

Congregational Perception of Social Services

Local congregations have multiple functions in a community. This study indicated that one of the main functions of congregations in a community was to provide social services for people in need. In fact, almost all congregations in the study were already directly or indirectly involved in social services.

There were various factors that affect congregations in making a decision related to social service involvement. The decisions were mainly based on the factors inside a congregation, such as supports from biblical understanding, congregational members' attitude, financial status, experience/skill for social services. The outside factors also influenced congregations. Particularly, when congregations recognized individual or community needs for social services, they tried to meet the needs.

When it comes to overall cost of social services, the majority of congregations thought they used the right amount of or too much of their tangible and intangible resources for social services. However, about four out of ten congregational leaders thought that they had room to use more resources for social services. In terms of net benefits from providing social services, overall, the congregational leaders perceived that participation in social services brought about slightly positive net benefits. The congregational leaders' perceptions of cost and net benefit of social services were significantly associated: The higher the overall cost, the lower the perceived net benefit.

A majority of congregational leaders thought they had other congregational activities for the same benefits which they could have from providing social services. About a quarter of them

with other congregational activities said that social services were more effective than these congregational activities. Unexpectedly, when congregational leaders perceived the social services had a unique role for the congregations, the congregations had lower involvement in social services.

On average, congregational leaders rated their congregations as moderately skillful in planning and delivering social services. Between skills for planning and delivering, the congregational leaders perceived they were slightly better in delivering than planning.

Providing social services is not the main job of congregational staff. They, particularly pastoral staff, would get paid the same amount of money without doing much social service work. However, one out of four paid congregational staff was involved in social services at least 25% of the time. More pastoral staff was involved in social services than non-pastoral staff. In addition, congregational members were actively involved in social services, particularly when those services were operated by their own congregations.

Regarding congregational members' and community's attitude toward congregational social services, the congregational leaders had a positive perception: congregational and community members had a positive attitude toward congregational social services and congregational members actually wanted more social services from their congregations.

Overall, congregational leaders had a positive perception of congregational social services. They considered participating in social services to be one of the main congregational functions; thought they spent the right amount of congregational resources on social services; had moderate skills for social services; and perceived a positive attitude from their members and community members.

Congregational Social Services: Who, What, Where, How Often, and Why?

Congregations were actively involved in diverse areas of social services in various ways. On average, from the congregation's perspective, almost all (98%) congregations were involved in social services. An average congregation had nine social service programs and spent $17,279 per year. From the researcher's perspective, however, a congregation had four programs and spent $7,909 per year. Even though the volume of social services reduced to a large extent, the number of congregations that participated in at least one social service program remained about the same: 97% of the congregations were involved in a social service program.

Local congregations actively participated in social services. They not only had programs initiated and operated by themselves, but also support programs run by other faith-based or secular organizations. In terms of number of programs, the programs collaborating with other organizations were more common than the programs operated only by the congregations. Congregations were very open to collaborating with other congregations, faith-based, secular, and even government organizations in providing social services. In collaboration, congregations had different preference for collaborating with other organizations depending on their theological orientation: Conservative congregations were more likely to value collaboration with Christian-based organizations, while liberal congregations were open to collaboration with any organization. Congregations had not only an open attitude to collaborating with other organizations, but also supported many social service programs operated by other organizations.

Congregational social services were usually open to everyone in a community or even to people who were just passing through the community. The main congregational contribution to social services was to help individuals and organizations financially. In addition to financial contributions, congregations provided goods, materials, and intangible services. Most of the

congregations were involved in emergency services providing money, food, clothes, and shelter. Programs for children and youth were also popular. On the other hand, programs related to economic development were the least popular among these congregations.

Most of the congregational social services were planned activities. A majority of the congregational social services were provided regularly. The social services were included in the annual budget and in the activity plan of the congregation. In many cases, people came to congregations to get social services and to use the facilities. In addition, congregational staff and volunteers often went out to the community to provide help.

Above all, for congregations, participating in social service programs was a way to honor or obey God/Jesus. This was an expression of their faith before God. In addition, more conservative congregations wanted to have opportunities to provide spiritual care while more liberal congregations wanted to fill physical/social needs before spiritual needs.

The majority of congregational social services did not have any religious or evangelistic activities. Even though it may not be seen as an evangelistic activity by community people, the majority of congregational leaders wanted to provide spiritual care while providing social and physical care. For many of the congregational leaders, it was hard to separate spiritual caring from social/physical caring because they valued mainly a “whole” person approach.

Determinants of Congregational Involvement in Social Services

The major influence on congregational involvement in social services was congregational resources (people and money): the greater resources a congregation had, the higher involvement in social services the congregation had. Another influential factor was alternative programs for social services. Unexpectedly, when congregations had an alternative activity to social service programs, they were even more likely to be involved in social services. Theological orientation

(conservative or liberal) and attitude toward collaboration showed significance. However, congregational leaders' perceptions of net benefit from providing social services and characteristics of congregations' neighborhoods did not have significant associations with the involvement.

Charitable Choice

The resources needed most by congregations were financial/human resources and facilities: the more money, people, and facilities in congregations, the more social services in congregations. However, these congregational leaders did not want government money. They would collaborate with the government, but would not seek out or accept funding by the government. They were not very familiar with Charitable Choice. Even after reading a summary of Charitable Choice, they did not think Charitable Choice would be helpful for their congregations. This was mainly because the congregational leaders were afraid of governmental control over the congregations. Some congregational leaders simply said they were not interested in government money at all.

Table 5. Characteristics of Congregations: n (%)

	Total	First & Second Survey	First Survey Only
Participated Church	151	109	42
Method of Contact	151	109	42
Personal Interview	89 (58.9)	64 (58.7)	25 (59.5)
Post Mail	53 (35.1)	40 (36.7)	13 (31.0)
Email	3 (2.0)	2 (1.8)	1 (2.4)
Phone Interview	6 (4.0)	3 (2.8)	3 (7.1)
Survey Respondent Position	150	108	42
Senior Pastor	72 (48.0)	54 (50.0)	18 (42.9)
Associate/Assistant Pastor	22 (14.7)	17 (15.7)	5 (11.9)
Administrative Staff	29 (19.3)	21 (19.4)	8 (19.1)
Lay Leaders	27 (18.0)	16 (14.8)	11 (26.2)
Denomination	151	109	42
Southern Baptist	42 (27.8)	32 (29.4)	10 (23.8)
United Methodist	22 (14.6)	16 (14.7)	6 (14.3)
Presbyterian Church USA	7 (4.6)	6 (5.5)	1 (2.4)
Other Denomination	51 (33.8)	36 (33.0)	15 (35.7)
No Denomination	29 (19.2)	19 (17.4)	10 (23.8)

	Total	First & Second	First Survey Only
Theology	147	109	38
Average / Median	1.9 / 1.0	1.8 / 1.0	2.0 / 2.0
1 Conservative	76 (51.7)	59 (54.1)	17 (44.7)
2	35 (23.8)	26 (23.9)	9 (23.7)
3 Moderate	19 (12.9)	11 (10.1)	8 (21.1)
4	15 (10.2)	12 (11.0)	3 (7.9)
5 Liberal	2 (1.4)	1 (0.9)	1 (2.6)
Total Member Size	151	109	42
Average / Median	236 / 120	271 / 125	143 / 75
30 or Fewer	9 (6.0)	5 (4.6)	4 (9.5)
31 – 70	33 (21.9)	18 (16.5)	15 (35.7)
71 – 150	53 (35.1)	43 (39.5)	10 (23.8)
151 –250	19 (12.6)	15 (13.8)	4 (9.5)
251 – 500	24 (15.9)	15 (13.8)	9 (21.4)
501 – 1,000	7 (4.6)	7 (6.4)	0 (0.0)
1,001 or More	6 (4.0)	6 (5.5)	0 (0.0)

	Total	First & Second	First Survey Only
Adult Member Size	150	108	42
Average / Median	174 / 79	199 / 91	110 / 55
30 or Fewer	17 (11.3)	8 (7.4)	9 (21.4)
31 – 70	55 (36.7)	38 (35.2)	17 (40.5)
71 – 150	35 (23.3)	29 (36.9)	6 (14.3)
151 –250	17 (11.3)	13 (12.0)	4 (9.5)
251 – 500	18 (12.0)	12 (11.1)	6 (14.3)
501 – 1,000	6 (4.0)	6 (5.6)	0 (0.0)
1,001 or More	2 (1.3)	2 (1.9)	0 (0.0)
Race/Ethnicity among Adult Members	149	108	41
White 75+%	111 (75.0)	83 (76.9)	28 (68.3)
Black 75+ %	22 (14.9)	13 (12.0)	9 (22.0)
Hispanic 75+ %	2 (1.4)	1 (0.9)	1 (2.4)
Asian 75+ %	2 (1.4)	2 (1.9)	0 (0.0)
None of Ethnic Group 75+ %	12 (8.1)	9 (8.3)	3 (7.3)
Membership Change	150	109	41
Growing	97 (64.7)	69 (63.3)	28 (68.3)
No Change	38 (25.3)	29 (26.6)	9 (22.0)
Declining	14 (9.3)	10 (9.2)	4 (9.8)
Don’t Know	1 (0.7)	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)

	Total	First & Second	First Survey Only
Congregational Leader	151	109	42
Full Time Leader	135 (89.4)	102 (93.6)	33 (78.6)
Part Time Leader	16 (10.6)	7 (6.4)	9 (21.4)
Paid Staff: Average / Median			
Total	4.8 / 4	5.5 / 4	3.1 / 3
Full Time Pastoral Staff	1.5 / 1	1.7 / 1	1 / 1
Part Time Pastoral Staff	0.6 / 0	0.7 / 0	0.5 / 1
Full Time Non Pastoral Staff	0.8 / 0	1.0 / 0	0.3 / 0
Part Time Non Pastoral Staff	1.9 / 1	2.2 / 1	1.3 / 1
Budget	86	81	5
Average	$336,503	$348,694	$139,000
Median	$200,000	$200,000	$47,000
Range	$12,000 - $2,395,000	$14,000 - $2,395,000	$12,000 - $360,000

	Total	First & Second	First Survey Only
Budget Range	144	107	37
25,000 or Under	10 (6.9)	6 (5.6)	4 (10.8)
25,001 – 50,000	17 (11.8)	9 (8.4)	8 (21.6)
50,001 – 100,000	29 (20.1)	22 (20.6)	7 (18.9)
100,001 – 250,000	41 (28.5)	28 (26.2)	13 (35.1)
250,001 – 500,000	25 (17.4)	21 (19.6)	4 (10.8)
500,001 – 1,000,000	16 (11.1)	15 (14.0)	1 (2.7)
1,000,001 or More	6 (4.2)	6 (5.6)	0 (0.0)
Church Building	151	109	42
Owned by Church	103 (68.2)	73 (67.0)	30 (71.4)
Rented from Another Church	3 (2.0)	3 (2.8)	0 (0.0)
Rented from Other	10 (6.6)	7 (6.4)	3 (7.1)
Other	35 (23.2)	26 (23.9)	7 (16.7)
Zip	19 Zips	19 Zips	15 Zips
County	151	109	42
Clarke	78 (51.7)	57 (52.3)	21 (50.0)
Madison	35 (23.2)	23 (21.1)	12 (28.6)
Oconee	28 (18.5)	23 (21.1)	5 (11.9)
Oglethorpe	10 (6.6)	6 (5.5)	4 (9.5)
Census Track	39 Census Tracks	34 Census Tracks	28 Census Tracks

	Total	First & Second	First Survey Only
Geographic Characteristics – Based on Census Track (2000)	151	109	42
Urban (%)			
Mean / Median	56.4 / 80.6	57.4 / 80.6	53.5 / 67.5
Min - Max	0.0 – 100.0	0.0 – 100.0	0.0 – 100.0
Unemployment (%)			
Mean / Median	5.6 / 3.3	5.5 / 3.3	5.9 / 3.4
Min - Max	1.1 – 46.5	1.1 – 46.5	1.2 – 16.4
Public Assistance (%)			
Mean / Median	3.1 / 2.0	3.0 / 2.0	3.2 / 2.0
Min - Max	0.0 – 12.9	0.0 – 12.9	0 – 12.9
Poverty (%)			
Mean / Median	20.2 / 13.8	20.0 / 13.8	20.7 / 13.6
Min - Max	2.9 – 66.0	2.9 – 66.0	4.5 – 52.7
Single Parent Family (%)			
Mean / Median	8.8 / 8.7	8.7 / 8.6	9.3 / 8.7
Min - Max	0.7 – 23.1	0.7 – 21.5	0.7 – 23.1

Table 6. Congregational Perception of Social Services

	N	%
Method of Contact	109	
Personal Interview	81	74.1
Post Mail	26	23.9
Email	1	0.9
Phone Interview	1	0.9
Survey Respondent Position	109	
Senior Pastor	70	64.2
Associate/Assistant Pastor	18	16.5
Administrative Staff	9	8.3
Lay Leaders	8	7.3
Other	4	3.7
Q: Main Function of Church (Pick Top Three)	109	
Religious Organization	109	100.0
Cultural Organization	4	3.7
Christian Educational Organization	86	78.9
Social Justice Organization	30	27.5
Social Welfare Organization	79	72.5
Other	3	2.8
Q: Provide or Engaged in A Social Services	109	
Yes	107	98.2
No	2	1.8

	N	%
Q: What Affect Decision related to Social Services (Select Top Three)	107	
Denominational Interpretation on Bible	35	32.7
Pastoral Interpretation on Bible	41	38.3
Church Member's Attitude	61	57.0
Church Experience/Knowledge/Skill	34	31.8
Financial Status	53	49.5
Presence of Social Services in Other Churches	10	9.4
Expectation of Community Members	7	6.5
Social Service Request in Mass Media	2	1.9
Government Policies / Political Movement	2	1.9
Other	31	29.0
- Individual/Community Needs/ Service Availability	19	
- Church Mission / God's Command	12	
- Church Leadership	2	

	N	%
Q: Overall Cost to Provide Social Services	106	
1 Too Much	2	1.9
2	3	2.8
3 Just Right	60	56.6
4	31	29.2
5 Too Little	10	9.4
Q: Net Benefit (Considering Both Benefits and Cost)	103	
1 Deficit	3	2.9
2	21	20.4
3 Even	40	38.8
4	29	28.2
5 Surplus	10	9.71
Q: Alternatives to Achieve the Same Benefit by Social services	107	
Yes	78	72.9
No	29	27.1
Q: Effectiveness of Social Services	76	
1 Less Effective	2	2.6
2	21	27.6
3 Neutral	34	44.7
4	15	19.7
5 More Effective	4	5.3

	N	%
Q: Church's Planning Skills for Social Services	*109*	
1 Not At All Skillful	1	0.9
2	26	23.9
3 Moderately Skillful	50	45.9
4	21	19.3
5 Very Skillful	11	10.1
Q: Church's Delivering Skills for Social Services	109	
1 Not At All Skillful	0	0.0
2	16	14.7
3 Moderately Skillful	48	44.0
4	32	29.4
5 Very Skillful	13	11.9
Q: Congregational Members' Attitude toward Social Services	109	
1 Very Negative	0	0.0
2	2	1.8
3 Neutral	21	19.3
4	50	45.9
5 Very Positive	36	33.0

	N	%
Q: Community's Attitude toward Congregational Social Services	109	
1 Very Negative	0	0.0
2	2	1.8
3 Neutral	31	28.4
4	39	35.8
5 Very Positive	37	33.9
Q: Community's Expectation of Congregational Involvement in Social Services	109	
1 Low	1	0.9
2	3	2.8
3 Neutral	22	20.2
4	43	39.5
5 High	40	36.7

Table 7. Congregational Social Services (I): Who was Involved

	Program: n (%)	
Q: Major Provider of Social Services		
Church Own Program	350 (44.5)	
Sponsor Others	436 (55.5)	
- Faith Based Organizations		250 (31.8)
- Secular Organizations		162 (20.6)
- No Sponsor Specification		24 (3.1)
Total	786 (100.0)	
No Answer	191	
Q: Interaction with Service Recipients		
Interact with Service Recipients	513 (66.5)	
Not Interact	258 (33.5)	
Total	771 (100.0)	
No Answer	210	
Q: Recipients of Social Services		
Church Members Only	29 (3.7)	
Open Recipients in Community	660 (84.1)	
Denomination	70 (8.9)	
Foreign Country	18 (2.3)	
Other	8 (1.0)	
Total	785 (100.0)	
No Answer	192	

Table 8. Associations between Congregational Membership Size and Members Volunteered for Social services: Bivariate Regression

Dependent Variable: Members Volunteered for Social Services hosted by Their Congregations					
Independent Variable	Estimate	t-Value	p-Value	n	r^2
Total Membership Size	0.0572*	6.76	<.0001	97	0.3248

Dependent Variable: Members Volunteered for Social Services hosted by Other Organizations					
Independent Variable	Estimate	t-Value	p-Value	n	r^2
Total Membership Size	0.0474*	3.82	0.0003	84	0.1511

* p-Value < 0.05

Table 9. Collaboration with Another Organization by Theology: Frequency, Chi-Square, and Fisher's Exact Tests, n (%)

	Christian-Based Organization			Any Faith-Based Organization		
Theology	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Conservative	73	12	85	34	51	85
	(85.9)	(14.1)	(100)	(40.0)	(60.0)	(100)
Non-Conservative	23	1	24	19	5	24
	(95.8)	(4.2)	(100)	(79.2)	(20.8)	(100)
Total	96	13	109	53	56	109
	(88.1)	(11.9)	(100)	(48.6)	(51.4)	(100)
Chi-Square		1.7643			11.4928	
p-value for Chi-Sq		0.1841			0.0007*	
p-value for Fisher's Exact Test		0.2902			0.0010*	

	Secular Community Organization			Government Organization		
Theology	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Conservative	50	35	85	44	41	85
	(58.8)	(41.2)	(100%)	(51.8)	(48.2)	(100)
Non-Conservative	23	1	24	17	7	24
	(95.8)	(4.2)	(100%)	(70.8)	(29.2)	(100)
Total	73	36	109	61	48	109
	(67.0)	(33.0)	(100%)	(56.0)	(44.0)	(100)
Chi-Square		11.5895			2.7614	

p-value for Chi-Sq	0.0007*	0.0966
p-value for Fisher's Exact Test	0.0004*	0.1091

* p-value < 0.05

Table 10. New Areas of Congregational Social Services created from the "Other" Category

1. Disaster Relief
2. Discounted Sales of Food
3. Exercise Class
4. Mission Trip with Social Service Provision
5. Money (Budget) Management Class
6. Recreation in General
7. Seasonal (Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, etc.) Services/Programs
8. Services/Programs for Children of Incarcerated Parents
9. Services/Programs for Ethnic Minority Group
10. Services/Programs for the Homeless, Poor, and/or Hunger
11. Services/Programs for the Seniors
12. Services/Programs for People with Disabilities
13. Services/Programs for Widowed or Single Parent Families
14. Services/Programs for Women
15. Services/Programs related to Child Maltreatment
16. Services/Programs related to Community Camps, Parties and Activities
17. Services/Programs related to Counseling/Therapy
18. Services/Programs related to Education, Tutoring, School Supplies or Home Schooling
19. Services/Programs related to Foster Care, Group Homes, or Children's Home
20. Services/Programs related to Mental Health
21. Services/Programs to Support College/University (Students)
22. Support Social Service or Non-Profit Organizations

Table 11. Description of Congregational Social Service Programs by Congregation and Researcher Perspectives

Perspective	Congregation's Perspective		Researcher's Perspective	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Total Congregations	109		94	
Congregations having a Social Service Program	107	(98.2)	91	(96.7)
Total Programs	977		453	
Average Program per Congregation	9.0		4.8	
Total Spending (Donation, Cost, etc.)	$1,883,440		$861,588	
Average Spending per Congregation	$17,279		$9,166	

Table 12. Rank by Frequency of Program Areas: Congregation's Perspective

Rank	By Program (977 Programs)	By Money Spending ($1,775,755)	By Congregation (109 Congregations)
1	Emergency Services - 311 (31.8%)	Emergency Services - $969,009 (54.6%)	Emergency Services - 104 (95.4%)
2	Outreach/Program for Children and Youth - 146 (14.9%)	Outreach/Program for Children and Youth - $228,722 (12.9%)	Self-Help/Support Groups - 70 (64.2%)
3	Self-Help/Support Groups - 100 (10.2%)	Housing/Community Work Efforts - $142,380 (8.0%)	Outreach/Program for Children and Youth - 69 (63.3%)
4	Fundraising for Others - 80 (8.2%)	Fundraising for Others - $102,442 (5.8%)	Fundraising for Others - 62 (56.9%)
5	Cultural/Other Community Effects - 71 (7.3%)	Health - $59,330 (3.3%)	Cultural/Other Community Effects - 48 (44.0%)
6	Health - 63 (6.4%)	Self-Help/Support Groups - $52,370 (2.9%)	Housing/Community Work Efforts - 45 (41.3%)
7	Housing/Community Work Efforts - 57 (5.8%)	Cultural/Other Community Effects - $24,900 (1.4%)	Health - 43 (39.4%)

Rank	By Program (977 Programs)	By Money Spending ($1,775,755)	By Congregation (109 Congregations)
8	Economic Development - 20 (2.0%)	Economic Development - $11,500 (0.6%)	Economic Development - 18 (16.5%)

Note

- The money spending was based on the programs about which the study participants specified spending.

- The programs in the area of “Other” were not included.

Table 13. Rank by Frequency of Program Areas: Researcher's Perspective

Rank	By Program (453 Programs)	By Money Spending ($861,558)	By Congregation (94 Congregations)
1	Emergency Services - 180 (39.7%)	Emergency Services - $462,559 (53.7%)	Emergency Services - 77 (81.9%)
2	Outreach/Program for Children and Youth - 59 (13.0%)	Outreach/Program for Children and Youth - $156,272 (18.1%)	Outreach/Program for Children and Youth - 38 (40.4%)
3	Housing/Community Work Efforts - 42 (9.3%)	Fundraising for Others - $53,475 (6.2%)	Housing/Community Work Efforts - 34 (36.2%)
4	Self-Help/Support Groups - 38 (8.4%)	Housing/Community Work Efforts - $52,200 (6.1%)	Self-Help/Support Groups - 33 (35.1%)
5	Health - 32 (7.1%)	Self-Help/Support Groups - $49,985 (5.8%)	Health - 24 (25.5%)
6	Fundraising for Others - 24 (5.3%)	Health - $15,430 (1.8%)	Fundraising for Others - 21 (22.3%)
7	Economic Development - 14 (3.1%)	Cultural/Other Community Effects - $4,200 (0.5%)	Economic Development - 13 (13.8%)

Rank	By Program (453 Programs)	By Money Spending ($861,558)	By Congregation (94 Congregations)
8	Cultural/Other Community Effects - 8 (1.8%)	Economic Development - $1,500 (0.2%)	Cultural/Other Community Effects - 8 (8.5%)

Note

- The programs in the area of “Other” were not included.

Table 14. Contents of Congregational Social Services

	Program: n (%)	
Q: Content of Social Services		
Goods/Materials	244 (31.2)	
Financial Donation	332 (42.4)	
Intangible Services	204 (26.1)	
Volunteers	175 (22.3)	
Facility	125 (16.0)	
Total	783 (100.0)	
No Answer	194	
Q: Social Services with Spiritual/Evangelistic Activities		
With Evangelistic Activities	185 (23.4)	
- Prayer		37 (4.7)
- Others (worship service, etc.)		148 (18.7)
Without Evangelistic Activities	606 (76.6)	
Total	791 (100.0)	
No Answer	186	

Table 15. Congregational Social Services (II): Where

	Program: n (%)
Q: Places of Social Services	
In-House Services	407 (52.0)
Community Services	206 (26.3)
Other	218 (27.8)
Total	783 (100.0)
No Answer	194

Table 16. Congregational Social Services (III): How Often

	Program: n (%)	
Q: Time Period of Social Services		
Provide Help based on Need	181 (23.1)	
Regularly Provide Help	603 (76.9)	
- Daily		28 (3.6)
- Two/Three times a week		22 (2.8)
- Weekly		109 (13.9)
- Two/Three times a month		25 (3.2)
- Monthly		92 (11.7)
- Six times (bimonthly) a year		16 (2.0)
- Four times (seasonally) a year		48 (6.1)
- Two/Three times a year		68 (8.7)
- Once a year		170 (21.7)
- No Information		25 (3.2)
Total	784 (100.0)	
No Answer	193	

Table 17. Major Benefits from Congregational Social Services (I)

	Congregations: n (%)	
Q: Major Benefits of Social Services (Select Top Two)	108 (100.0)	
Recipient's Conversion to Christianity or Having an Opportunity to Share Gospel	42 (38.8)	
Positive Impression of Church in Community	12 (11.1)	
God's Reward in Heaven	11(11.1)	
Altruistic Behavior not related to Evangelism	27 (25.0)	
Honoring or Obeying God/Jesus	99 (91.7)	
Social Obligation as a Community Entity	17 (15.7)	
Other	6 (5.6)	
- Showing Love of God/Jesus		4 (3.7)
- Make Jesus/Church More Attractive		2 (1.9)

Table 18. Major Benefit (II) – Honoring or Obeying God/Jesus by Theology: n (%)

	Honoring or Obeying God/Jesus		
Theology	Yes	No	Total
Conservative	76	8	84
	(90.5)	(9.5)	(100)
Non-Conservative	23	1	24
	(95.8)	(4.2)	(100)
Total	99	9	108
	(91.7)	(8.3)	(100)

Note:

Conservative = two or less in the question of theology on the first survey

Non-Conservative = three or more in the question of theology on the first survey

Table 19. Major Benefit (III) – Evangelical and Non-Evangelical Benefits by Theology: n (%)

Theology	Major Benefit			Total
	Evangelical	Non-Evangelical	Both	
Conservative	47	18	4	69
	(68.1)	(26.1)	(5.8)	(100)
Non-Conservative	4	19	0	23
	(17.4)	(82.6)	(0.0)	(100)
Total	51	37	4	92
	(55.4)	(40.2)	(4.4)	(100)

Note:

Conservative = two or less in the question of theology on the first survey

Non-Conservative = three or more in the question of theology on the first survey

Evangelical benefit = converting recipients to Christianity and making a positive impression of the church in the question of the major benefits of social services on the second survey.

Non-Evangelical benefit = doing altruistic behavior and social obligation as a community entity in the question of the major benefits of social services on the second survey.

Table 20. Separation between Physical/Social Caring and Spiritual Caring by Theology: n (%)

Theological Orientation	Separation			Total
	Cannot Separate	Can Separate; But Don't Want to Do	Can Separate	
Conservative	24	9	4	37
	(64.9)	(24.3)	(10.8)	(100)
Non-Conservative	9	2	4	15
	(60.0)	(13.3)	(26.7)	(100)
Total	33	11	8	52
	(63.5)	(21.1)	(15.4)	(100)

Conservative = two or less in the question of theology on the first survey

Non-Conservative = three or more in the question of theology on the first survey

Table 21. General Advice for Congregational Leaders about Social Services

Main Theme	Main Frequency	Sub Theme	Sub Frequency
How to start a social service program	48	Assess / know what a community needs or wants	14
		Cooperate or collaborate	11
		Seek God's guidance or pray	9
		Assess / know a congregation's interests and resources	8
		Focus on a few things and/or start from small	4
		Explore what another congregation has done	1
		Seek opportunities beyond a local community	1
How to operate a program	21	Have commitment or consistency	8
		Have an accountability system	7
		Organize helping processes	3
		Evaluate a program	2
		Need trainings for some programs	1
How to continue a service	19	Need congregational members involved	6
		Need enough congregational resources	6
		Need congregational leaders involved	3
		Motivate desire or heart	2
		Need a flexible budget system for making up social service spending	1
		Need encouragement	1

Main Theme	Main Frequency	Sub Theme	Sub Frequency
What services to provide	15	Programs for self-sufficiency (how to fish)	6
		Programs with spiritual care	4
		Programs of hands-on helping experiences	2
		Programs to connect people to resources	1
		Programs with a new idea / approach	1
		Personal and close relationship with service recipients	1
Why a social service program is needed	19	Genuine sense of help	8
		Follow Jesus' examples and/or God's command	4
		Need to do something for community as a community entity	2
		Best way to be a witness for Jesus	2
		Provide an opportunity for congregational members' spiritual growth	1
		Buffer the effects of bad economy	1
		Be a refugee for people	1

Table 22. Bivariate Associations with Congregational Involvement in Social Services

	Congregation Perspective				Researcher Perspective			
Variable	n	Coefficient	p-Value	R-Sq	n	Coefficient	p-Value	R-Sq
Major Variables								
Net Benefit (5)	90	-0.01027	0.8423	0.0005	78	0.00773	0.7360	0.0015
Alternatives: A & B	89	-0.14352	0.0010*	0.1171	78	-0.04586	0.0326*	0.0587
A. Uniqueness (2)	92	-0.32800	0.0021*	0.1001	80	-0.10371	0.0477*	0.0493
B. Effectiveness (5)	65	-0.09034	0.1567	0.0316	57	-0.02970	0.3403	0.0165
Skill: A & B	94	0.04436	0.1267	0.0252	82	0.00429	0.7697	0.0011
A. Planning (5)	94	0.08088	0.1241	0.1241	82	0.01097	0.6785	0.0022
B. Delivery (5)	94	0.07552	0.1849	0.0190	82	0.00345	0.9026	0.0002
Theology (5)	94	0.09518	0.0334*	0.0483	82	0.03059	0.1626	0.0242
Theology (2)	94	0.26327	0.0201*	0.0573	82	0.07453	0.1832	0.0220
Resources: B & C	93	0.10815	<.0001*	0.4068	80	0.03937	<.0001*	0.2531
A. Adult Members (C)	93	0.00061	<.0001*	0.2146	81	0.00019	0.0025*	0.1100
B. Adult Members (7)	93	0.19160	<.0001*	0.3262	81	0.06505	<.0001*	0.1859
C. Annual Budget (7)	93	0.20332	<.0001*	0.4156	80	0.07908	<.0001*	0.2793
Cognitive Orientation: A & B	94	0.04941	0.0057*	0.0803	82	0.02220	0.0134*	0.0740
A. Collaboration (5)	94	0.12342	0.0001*	0.1286	82	0.05721	0.0009*	0.1284
B. Attitude toward Social Services (5)	94	0.50292	0.1738	0.0200	82	0.01325	0.2827	0.0144
Community Disorganization (C)	94	-0.00083	0.9583	0.0000	82	-0.00909	0.2365	0.0175

Variable	Congregation Perspective				Researcher Perspective			
	n	Coefficient	p-Value	R-Sq	n	Coefficient	p-Value	R-Sq
Other Interesting Variables								
Ethnicity (2) – White or not	94	-0.09857	0.4319	0.0067	82	-0.06524	0.2833	0.0144
Urbanization (C)	94	0.00217	0.0606	0.0277	82	0.00071	0.2332	0.0177
Urbanization (2) – rural and urban	94	0.30372	0.0191*	0.0583	82	0.13078	0.0739	0.0394

* = p-value < 0.05

(n) = Variable with a Liker-type scale (n = the number of points)

(c) = Continuous variable

Table 23. Multivariate Associations with Congregational Involvement in Social Services

Variable		Congregation's Perspective		Researcher's Perspective	
		Coefficient	p-Value	Coefficient	p-Value
IV	Net benefit	-0.04632	0.3047	0.01162	0.6459
CV	Alternatives	-0.12517	0.0004*	-0.03877	0.0567
	Skill	0.01688	0.5334	-0.00623	0.6939
	Theology	0.19554	0.0380*	0.02482	0.6336
	Resources	0.09395	<.0001*	0.03067	0.0004*
	Cognitive orientation	0.00805	0.6455	0.00891	0.3850
	Community disorganization	-0.00631	0.6287	-0.00561	0.4511
N		86		74	
R-Square		0.5271		0.2962	

* = p-value < 0.05

IV = Independent Variable

CV = Control Variable

Table 24. Need of Money for More Social Services by Congregational Budget Size: n (%)

	Budget						
Need of Money	$25,001 - $50K	$50,001 - $100K	$100,001 - $250K	$250,001 - $500K	$500,001 - $1,000K	Over $1,000K	Total
No	1	3	3	4	5	2	18
Yes	0	4	11	7	3	1	26
	(0)	(57)	(79)	(64)	(38)	(33)	(59)
Total	1	7	14	11	8	3	44
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

Table 25. Need of People for More Social Services by Congregational Membership Size: n (%)

Need of People	Membership Size						Total
	< 70	71 - 150	151 - 250	251 - 500	501 - 1,000	> 1,000	
No	1	7	4	5	0	2	19
Yes	3	13	2	3	3	1	25
	(75)	(65)	(33)	(38)	(100)	(33)	(57)
Total	4	20	6	8	3	3	44
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

Table 26. Helpfulness of Charitable Choice by Collaboration with Government: n (%)

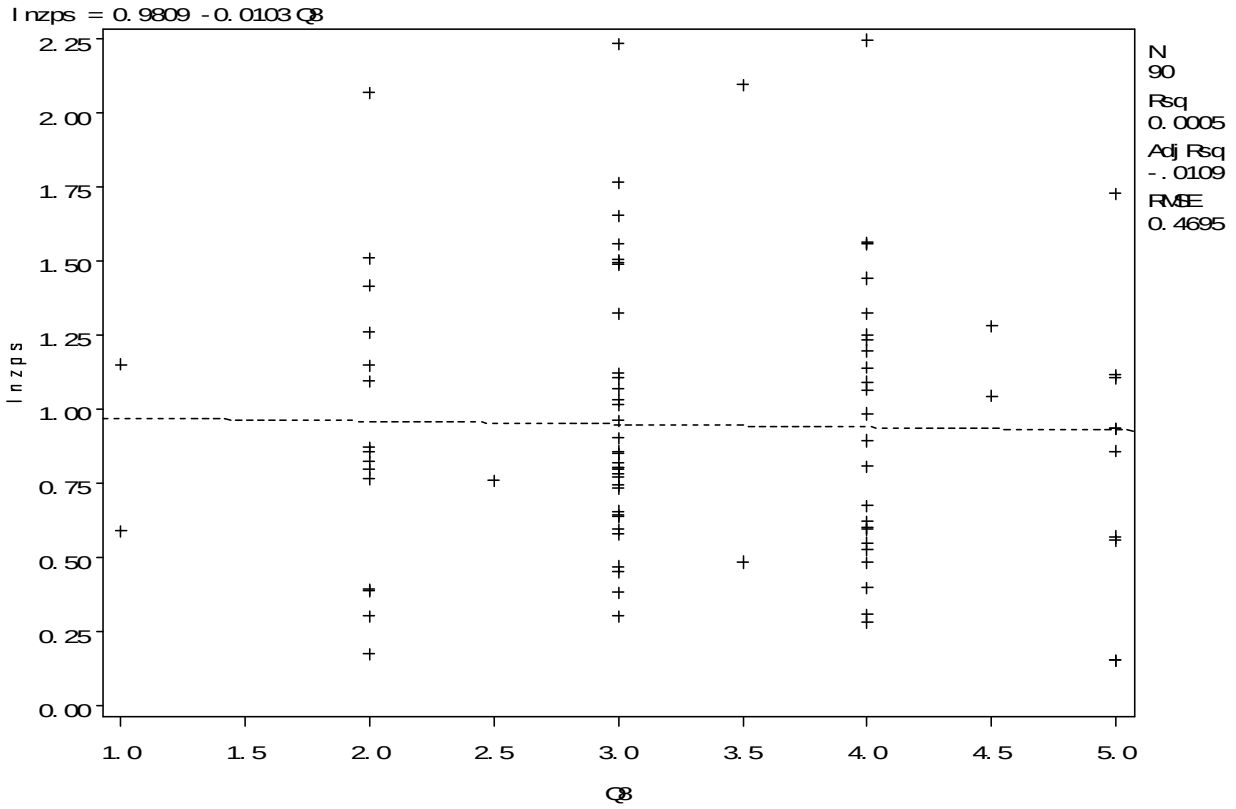
Collaboration with Government	Helpfulness of Charitable Choice (Public Money) Not At All 1	2	3	4	Very Much 5	Total	Mean
No	23	7	7	4	5	46	2.17
	(50.0)	(15.2)	(15.2)	(8.7)	(10.9)	(100)	
Yes	21	14	6	7	9	57	2.47
	(36.8)	(24.6)	(10.5)	(12.3)	(15.8)	(100)	
Total	44	21	13	11	14	103	2.34
	(42.7)	(20.4)	(12.6)	(10.7)	(13.6)	(100)	

Table 27. Reasons Why or Why not Charitable Choice is Helpful for a Congregation

	N		%	
Total Participants	101			
Participants who stated Reasons of Why or Why not Helpful	90		89.1	
More Information Needed (No Specific Reasons)	11		10.9	
Total Number of Reason Statements	113			
Why Not Helpful	83		73.5	
No interest in government money / grant	14		12.4	
Lack of human resources / red tapes	12		10.6	
- Small church / no staff		8		7.1
- Red tape		5		4.4
Church independence	41		36.3	
- Government regulations / control		23		20.4
- Mistrust government		2		1.8
- Church autonomy		3		2.7
- Own ways to help		16		14.2
No need money from ungodly source	2		1.8	
Church-government separation	4		3.5	
Don't want competition	3		2.7	
No need additional money for social services	7		6.2	
- No on-going base services		2		1.8

	N	%
- No additional services	3	2.7
- Reduce church members' opportunity to serve	2	1.8
Why Helpful	30	26.5
More services with more money	29	25.7
More opportunities for church members to be involved in social services	1	0.9

Graph 1. Regression Plot: Congregational Involvement in Social Services by Net Benefits



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter begins with a brief overview of study purposes and discusses major findings, limitations, as well as implications for practice and policy.

Purposes of Study

The primary purpose of this research was to explore and examine social service contributions made by faith-based organizations, particularly the Protestant churches in local communities (in Athens, Georgia). Specifically, the study aimed to (a) explore congregational leaders' perceptions related to social services, (b) assess the current status of local congregations' contribution to local communities, (c) examine the theory-driven and empirical-based characteristics of congregations that actively participate in delivering social services, and (d) explore congregational leaders' attitudes toward Charitable Choice.

Major Findings

Major Finding I

Local Protestant congregations, in general, have very similar background: the same religious roots (God/Bible of Judeo-Christianity) and the same desire for independence (no other/secular controlling power over congregation). However, local congregations are also heterogeneous in other respects. They are different by theology (conservative/liberal), size (small/big), and ethnic culture (Caucasian/African American/Hispanic/Asian). They are also different regarding available resources for social services, types of preferred social services, and reasons to be involved in social services. Thus, when asking about the congregations support for

social services, the “one-size-fit-all” type approach has limitations. It may work for a certain type of congregations but not for other types of congregations.

Major Finding II

Since local congregations are religious organization, their primary activities are related to religiosity and spirituality. Local congregations are also interested in helping people. According to this study, the third main function of local congregations in a community was to provide goods/services for neighbors in need. In fact, almost all congregations in this study were involved directly or indirectly in social service programs. An average congregation was involved in nine social service programs on which they spent over $17,000 per year. Since this amount of money was purely for helping, not for staff salary or utility bills, congregational monetary contribution for social services is substantial. In addition, the congregational leaders had a positive perception of their congregation members’ and community’s attitude toward congregational social services. Congregations are likely to support their communities and see themselves as being valued by their communities.

Major Finding III

The analyses of comparisons of definitions between the congregation’s and the researcher’s perspectives indicated that the programs related to emergency services and services for children and youth were common in both perspectives. However, there was a significant difference of the extent of congregational involvement in social services. Based on study participants (congregational leaders), an average congregation were involved in nine social service programs and spent $17,279 in a year, while based on the researcher’s definition of social services, average congregations engaged in five programs and spent $9,166. The congregational

involvement based on the insiders was twice as much as those of the outsiders. That is, congregations provided more help than the outsiders thought.

Major Finding IV

Local congregations were involved in social services in mainly two ways: operating their own congregational programs and supporting programs operated by other organizations. Between the two, collaboration was the more common way for congregations to be involved in social services. In fact, congregations were open to collaborating when providing social services. The congregations were open to peer congregations, faith-based organizations, and even secular organizations. Particularly, liberal congregations were willing to collaborate with any other organizations including government.

The congregations in this study rated themselves as having moderate skills for planning and delivering social services, though they perceived that they were more skillful in delivering than planning. Thus, when congregations are invited to partner with an existing service, they may feel more comfortable and confident about participating in social services.

Major Finding V

Local congregations had diverse factors that affected their decision making related to social services. When thinking about a social service program, the congregations mainly considered whether the program was consistent with their understanding of the Bible and/or congregational vision, whether they had enough financial resources for the program, whether their members' attitude toward the program was positive. Their decisions were generally influenced by the factors inside of the congregation more than those outside it. However, external factors could influence congregations, too. Particularly, when they recognized individual or community needs, the congregations looked for ways to meet the needs.

Since congregations want to operate independently, they may not allow outsiders of the congregation, particularly those from the public world, to direct or change them. However, what helping professionals can do is to let the congregation see the needs in a community and invite them to decide on whether they will participate in a response. Thus, having continuous contacts with congregations and developing a trusting relationship with them would appear to be critical to earn their involvement.

Major Finding VI

Local congregations provide various social services. In this study, the most frequent congregational social service was to provide help to meet people's current needs, which has a short-term effect. Such services are popular in congregations, maybe because people in a community come to congregations to ask for this service. As mentioned above, when congregations see the needs, they try to meet those needs.

The second most popular social service programs were for children and youth, which would have a long-term effect. The programs reported for children and youth were recreational and/or educational. Congregational leaders mentioned "Christian education" as the second most common function of congregations in a community. Educational programs would have long-term effects on the service recipients.

Congregations spent an average of $12,632 and were involved in five programs per year mainly focusing on the emergency assistance and services for children and youth. In terms of spending, the programs in both categories took over 70% of total congregational social service spending ($12,632 out of $17,279). In terms of the number of programs, they were over 50% of the total congregational social service programs (five out of nine programs).

The majority of congregational leaders mentioned that they spent the right amount of resources or too many resources for social services. After spending resources in the two biggest categories of social services (emergency assistance and children/youth), the available resources remaining were small. Thus, with the remaining resources, it would be hard for congregations to start a social service program with long-term effects. In order to have an appropriate long-term effect, congregations need more sophisticated planning and resources. For this reason, congregations may only participate in social services which they can do with volunteers and facilities. In fact, most congregational leaders mentioned that they needed more money and more people to do more social services.

Major Finding VII

Congregational involvement in social services is a confession of faith to serve God and people. That is, regardless of whether the congregational social service programs include an evangelistic activity, congregational social services are not a dual-party (helper and receiver) activity, but a triple-party (helper, receiver, and God) activity. Congregations can provide help people without any evangelistic purposes. In fact, the majority of congregational social service programs in this study did not have any spiritual or evangelistic component. However, in essence, congregational social services are related to religiosity or spirituality.

When helping people, conservative congregational leaders were more interested in evangelistic opportunities than liberal leaders were. However, it seems they agree that a person has physical/social needs and spiritual needs. Since a person cannot be separated into physical, social, and spiritual parts, helping people in one part impacts all three. Providing only physical and social care does not mean that congregations are not interested in spiritual needs. All is

connected. That is, congregations expect providing physical and social care influences the spiritual part of recipients indirectly.

Outwardly, congregations could provide social services to people in need without saying anything about faith, as most do. The congregational services would be purely physical and social care to the recipients; however, the services would be seen as a spiritual and religious activity for congregations. Thus, when we want congregations' involvement in social services, we should expect to see the congregations would look for gains in the spiritual realm. This does not mean, however, that congregations will use social services to proselytize people.

Major Finding VIII

Congregational resource size is a key determinant of overall volume of congregational involvement in social services. Congregations that had bigger membership size and budget size had more involvement in social service programs. Open attitudes toward collaboration in providing social services are important. If they are willing to collaborate with any organizations, congregations would have higher possibilities to be involved in social services. In addition, theological orientation influences congregational involvement in social services: the more liberal, the more involvement. On average, liberal congregations were less likely to include evangelistic activities in social service programs and were more likely to collaborate with non-Christian based religious, secular, and government organizations. That is, the liberal congregations would have fewer restrictions to start a social service program and more opportunities to partner with social service organizations in a community. They may be appropriate priority sites to look for partnership in community social services.

Major Finding IX

Local congregations need more resources for social services, but say “no thank you” to government money. As seen above, congregational resource size had a positive relationship with congregational involvement in social services. Congregational leaders wanted more resources to expand their existing services and provide new services. Congregations, particularly liberal congregations, were open to having partnerships with other faith and government organizations. However, the congregations including liberal congregations did not want government money to provide social services. Congregational leaders were concerned with their independence as a religious organization, fearing that the strings attached to government money could try to direct what the congregations should and should not do.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, data from one congregational leader per congregation was incomplete. Congregational leaders are important figures in congregations and know more about congregational activities than anyone else in their congregations. However, they may not know all the detailed information about members’ attitude and social services. Many respondents provided information from recorded data, while others provided it from their memories. Some congregations planned all congregational social services and kept all records of the services, while others provided informal and often unrecorded services based on individual requests. The latter congregations may not record their social service activities. Thus, their memories are the only source to draw information about the services, an obvious limitation on any generalizations.

Second, study participation was completely voluntary, thus self-selected. Those who chose to participate may well be different from those who did not. Study participants may have

more positive attitudes toward social services than non-participants. Some participated in the study because they had a social service program(s) in their congregations. Thus, since this study explored diverse areas of respondents' perceptions, the study findings may be based on people already positively oriented toward social services.

Third, only about one third of congregations around Athens participated in the second wave of data collection. These that participated in the second survey were slightly larger than the congregations that participated in the first survey only. Even though the researcher tried to contact and collect data from all congregations, quite a few small congregations did not respond to invitations to participate in the second wave of data collection. Thus, the findings, particularly those related to the determinants of congregational involvement in social services and average numbers of programs and cost, may not represent all congregations in this study area.

Fourth, when the survey questionnaires were developed, the researcher received help from a few congregational leaders to refine questions related to congregational characteristics and social service programs. This study covered various areas of perceptions related to congregational social services. A few questions may not have captured the whole realm of human perception. For example, the researcher asked one question to know congregations' net benefits from social services with a five-point Likert type scale. Thus, the validity of the questionnaire may be a limitation for this study.

Results Related to Previous Studies

Several previous studies reported general congregational characteristics in the United States. In terms of theological orientation, the majority of congregations (85, 78%) that participated in this study were conservative. The percentage of conservative congregations in the Athens Metropolitan area in this study is higher than that (66%) reported by the Glenmary

Research Center in 2000 (Glenmary Research Center, 2002). In terms of membership size, a majority of congregations (75, 69%) had 150 or fewer regular adult attendants.

This is similar to other national reports: 50 percent of congregations had fewer than 100 regular adult attendants in the FACT report (Dudley & Roozen, 2001) and 70 percent had fewer than 100 attendants in the National Congregation Study (Chaves, 2004). In terms of annual budget, congregations in this study had a lower percentage of small budget congregations. In this study, there were 15 (14%) congregations whose annual budget was $50,000 or less and 22 (21%) congregations whose budget was between $50,001 and $100,000. According to the Philadelphia Religion Census study, 31 percent of congregations had an annual budget of less than $50,000 and 26 percent had an annual budget between $50,000 and $100,000.

In terms of percentage of congregations providing at least one social service, the previous studies reported between 58 percent and 95 percent. This study showed that 98 percent of the congregations indicated that they were involved in at least one social service programs directly or indirectly. Even with the definition of social services based on researcher's perspective, 97 percent of them participated in social services. This may be because of larger annual budget size of congregations in this study than in the previous studies. A congregation's annual budget is a key predictor of its involvement.

In terms of areas of social service programs, this study also showed similar findings. In this study, 95 percent of congregations were involved in emergency services (money, food, clothes, and shelter), while almost 90 percent were involved in these services in the FACT report (Dudley & Roozen, 2001). In other previous studies, programs that provide money, food, clothes, and/or shelter for emergency situations were most common (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001; Printz, 1998).

When it comes to who provides social services, this study indicated 0.8 full-time staff and 0.5 part-time staff engaged in social services more than 25 percent of their time. These numbers are slightly smaller than those in the study in Washington DC, which reported one full-time staff and two part-time staff members (Printz, 1998). The prior studies indicated that collaboration was common in congregational social services. This study showed the same. In addition, congregational leaders had an open attitude toward collaboration, as reported by others.

In terms of determinants of congregational engagement in social services, this study indicated congregational resources (human and financial), theology, cognitive orientation (particularly attitude toward collaboration), and alternative to social services were significant predictors. The previous studies also indicated that theology and congregational resources had significant associations with engagement.

Implications (I): Ways to Encourage Congregations to be involved in Social Services

This study explored congregational leaders' perceptions, examined their experiences and congregational social service programs, and tested multiple hypotheses. The ultimate purpose of the study was to find ways to encourage congregations to be more involved in social services. During the data collection, the researcher learned that there were quite a few social service programs that were already well supported by local congregations. Some of them were operated by faith-based organizations and others by secular organizations. How did the social service organizations receive support from congregations for their programs? In order to get the answer the question, semi-structured personal interviews were conducted. As seen in table 28, there were nine interviews with ten interviewees, each lasting between 30 and 60 minutes.

Based on the quantitative and qualitative analyses in this study, the researcher makes six recommendations to enhance congregational engagement in social services: (1) learn/study about

a congregation, (2) build a trusting relationship, (3) engage with the congregation, (4) establish a common ground of interest, (5) advertize a social service program, and (6) be flexible.

Table 28. Demographic Information of Interviewees

	Gender	Age	Race	Religion	Personal Theology	Title at Church	Professional Experience with Church
1	Female	20s	White	Christianity	Moderately Liberal	None	1.5 years
2	Female	30s	Black	Baptist	Moderately Liberal	None	Over 10 years
3	Male	60s	White	Baptist	Moderately Conservative	Deacon (Retired)	13 years
4	Female	60s	White	Baptist	Moderately Conservative	None	23 years
5	Female	50s	White	Christianity	Conservative	None	9 years
6	Female	60s	White	Episcopalian	Moderate	None	Over 20 years
7	Male	60s	Black	Christianity	Moderately Liberal	Senior Pastor	34 years
8	Female	60s	White	Methodist	Liberal	Senior Pastor	12 years
9	Female	60s	White	Baptist	Conservative	None	33 years
10	Male	50s	Black	Baptist	Liberal	Deacon	

Learn about a Congregation

When social workers or helping professionals approach a congregation, it would be better to study or learn in advance about the congregation with which they would like to collaborate including what resources the congregation has, what services they have been involved with, and what visions they have for the future. Local congregations are not homogeneous. In addition, one congregational leader's statement highlights the importance of knowing congregations before trying to get support from them.

> I think one of the things that are always helpful is to have some knowledge of the congregation and what that congregation has done one the past. . . . When it comes to social workers or anybody outside of that congregation, it is important to know that these are the services that we can provide. Sometimes you get people who come to ask for you to provide some services we've never done before. And that can sometimes be problematic, because our resources are dedicated to doing this, but you're asking to do something else.

Congregations may have different motivations to engage in social services. Some congregations may want to have evangelistic activities while participating in the services, while others may not be so concern about that. Some congregations want to do more independently, while others are more open to collaborating with secular organizations: for example, "Baptists are very congregationally oriented and they like to do things within their congregation, for their congregation, or for their neighborhood and are not so much into connectional things the way Methodists are oriented to do," and "If you were looking at the United Methodist or Catholic congregations or even Lutheran congregations, they have a hierarchy that they have to go

through to get permission to do certain things, whereas we don't have that in the Baptist churches." Studying a congregation enables us to have a more appropriate approach to it.

Trying to get congregations do something they have not done before is not an easy task. Even for congregational leaders, it is not easy: "Changes [within a congregation] do not come without a fight." For outsiders (including social workers and other helping professionals), it would be better to study or learn about a congregation in advance before approaching it and trying to engage it in service activities.

The study provides various facets of information related to congregational perceptions and experiences on social services. Congregational resource size is a key predictor of congregational involvement in social services. Congregations need more resources to do more social services. Most have an open attitude toward collaboration with other organizations. However, they are cautious about control by the outsiders. Theoretical orientation is also key predictor of the involvement: more liberal congregations are more likely to engage in social services and thus may be more easily engaged for collaborative efforts.

Build a Trusting Relationship

In order to have a support from congregations, having and keeping a "trust" relationship is very important. Many congregations are interested in helping people and want to support social service programs; however, when there is no trust toward helping professionals, congregations do not support community social service programs. Without trust, congregations may respond to the outsider (social workers or helping professionals), "Why should we let anyone come in and try to change us?"

The trust issue is even more serious across ethnic groups. Regarding ethnicity, several Caucasian program directors stated that they had tried to get support from African American

congregations for their programs. They tried hard; however, it was not successful for them to get support from those congregations. They did not know why it was not successful. An African American congregational leader pointed out,

> There are pockets in the African American community that are very mistrustful of those White people who come in and ask; they are mistrustful for a lot of reasons, valid reasons. . . . They have told us that if we help them with this, then this is how we're going to benefit from it. We help with it and we don't benefit it at all. And so people become mistrustful. We are reluctant to get involved. . . . We really feel that they don't care about us. . . . Not want to participate, not want to associate, not want to even hear anything that somebody else comes in and talks about. We don't hear that. . . . They [social workers or helping professionals who ask congregational support] may be well intended, good hearted folks . . . but until we believe them, they're going to be rejected. We don't trust them.

The mistrust exists between the more-educated and the less-educated. A congregational leader illustrated,

> Many rural congregations never look favorably at educated people trying to come in to make changes. There was once again stigma, this divide between the educated and non-educated. It has taken years for me to bridge the gap . . . people with education were no better than people without education. We are all the same people.

Without a trust relationship, people within a congregation would not listen to outsiders, even to "warm hearted" social workers and helping professionals.

Developing a trust relationship is also important between congregations and government, though likely to be even more difficult. Many congregations are open to work with government:

however, they do not want to receive government money. When they are requested to collaborate with government agencies, the decision about whether collaborates or not is up to the congregation and its leaders. Offering money is a different challenge. What they are afraid of is that receiving money would be to lose decision making power about their activities. Unless congregations trust government, they may cooperate with public programs, but they are not interested in receiving government financial support for their social services.

Sustaining the trust relationship is important as much as building it. Having continuous communication and providing accurate reports of program activities are helpful to maintain the trust relationship. Respondents emphasized: “Communicate with the congregations in all ways possible,” “Never stop communicating even if the trust level is high,” “Be accountable for all activities involved in the project (minutes, agenda, financial reports, etc),” and “Be accountable for every penny, nickel, and dime spent.” It takes time and resources to maintain a high trust level even after developing it.

Engage with a Congregation

In order to learn about a congregation and show sincerity, visiting a congregation is an essential component. Find out who is the best contact person in a congregation, contact him/her/them to arrange appointments, visit them and others in the congregation. After the initial contact, sometimes, congregations ask social workers/helping professionals to make a presentation before a mission or outreach committee or to the whole congregation. Some congregations may invite the social workers/helping professionals to their own social service programs or other congregational activities. When we know the schedule of congregational activities, visiting is very important for learning about the congregational activities and to show genuine interest.

> If you want to provide a service or you want to find out what services are being provided, or if you want to participate in moving the congregation into a different direction of service, then you have to get in and you have to get to know these [congregational] people. And the only way you're going to know them is you come in and be around them. Visit!

Visiting begins building trust. Multiple calls may be needed to get an initial response. We may need to ask someone who has already a trust relationship to serve as a bridge or door-opener. It is important to be persistent and to try various entry routes.

> The church is not just going to automatically welcome you with open warm arms, many of the rural churches, especially from the African-American culture. You have to get someone who makes that connection for you and then they bring you in. . . . You must make some kind of connection. If you are dealing with African-American churches in this area, you must make a connection many times with the pastor. And many times, pastors may not respond to you unless they get a call maybe from another pastor.

Establish a Common Ground of Interest

Even though helping people and communities is one of the most common activities in congregations, congregations are basically religious organizations. Their primary interest is in spirituality and worship. They may be interested in some types of social services but not other types. Thus, when asking for support from congregations for social services, it would be critical to show what the proposed support would bring about and how it would fit with the congregations' goals and interests.

The study findings indicated that congregations received diverse benefits from participating in existing social services: honoring God/Jesus, having opportunities to share the

Gospel, doing altruistic actions, and so on. In addition, one denominational social service program manager specified two general benefits from social services: (1) “It makes the church relevant to the community” and (2) “Helping us with this program is a way to translate everything we have confessed to believe on Sunday into some practical, positive outcome on Monday for all of God’s children.” Social workers and helping professionals may identify additional potential benefits. Another program coordinator mentioned three specific benefits for congregations from participating in their fundraising program: (1) support their congregational members who are fighting against cancer, (2) engage youth by teaching them the value of community services, and (3) exercise team building to unify congregational members by planning who is going to bring the equipment, who is going to bring the food, and so on.

Almost all participants acknowledged the importance of establishing a common ground to encourage congregations to be involved in social services. Among such comments were:

> Letting them know how it (the program) is going to also benefit them (congregation) is really important;
>
> When we approach a church, we say this could be a great ministry for them. They call a ministry what we would call a service project;
>
> One of the ways to talk to congregations and churches about being more involved is in terms of ways for them to carry out their mission of their faith; and
>
> If it was a well presented, well organized plan with an outcome that they could understand and if it was within their theological brainwork [frame work] to see as a good, I think churches are looking for those kinds of opportunities.

When social workers and helping professionals can show that the social service programs can meet the needs of congregations, congregations think more seriously about the program.

Advertize Your Social Service Program

When making decisions related to social services, congregations consider inside factors such as their mission, financial status, and members' attitudes. But this does not mean that outside factors do not have any influence on their decisions. Particularly, congregations try to find ways to help people and organizations when they recognize needs from them. Thus, rather than waiting for congregations to come to social service organizations, going to congregations to let them know unmet needs and available opportunities may be a productive way to encourage their engagement in social services.

Several interviewees supported the idea of advertizing social service programs. Even though many congregations want to participate in the existing helping services, they may not know about available opportunities in the community: "They (congregations) want to help and they want to do but they don't know how or where." Thus, it would be useful to advertise social service programs more actively. Some social service programs may not need to advertise since they are already well known around the community. In such situations, pastors talk about the program with another pastor. If a program is new or not known well, it would be more important to advertise. Mailing program information, follow-up calling, and visiting congregations are popular ways to advertise.

When advertising a social service program, it would be great to show congregations what needs exist in a community, how the congregation can be involved, and what outcomes their support would bring about. A program director shared his successful story about getting volunteers from congregations.

We [program staff] went and visited our congregations. We told them about the English

> program. They listened to us and they understood but it went through one ear and out the other. We got no response. One time I got an idea, "What if we take people from other counties and let them do most of the talking." And when we did this, the responses were totally different. The American people didn't understand everything that the international students were saying because of the accent but it went in the heart and they remembered it. So I think that was the beginning of success for our volunteer activities.

Be Flexible

Congregations are different by size, theological orientation, ethnic culture, and other characteristics. If a social service program only fits a large congregation, smaller congregations may not want to participate in it. Thus, it would be better to diversify the program to fit a range of congregational sizes. Some congregations are willingly to support the programs operated by other organizations, while other congregations prefer to operate their own programs. Smaller components of any program are important as well as the larger component. In order to increase congregational involvement in social services, it may be useful to match the request to the congregation's characteristics or to support their social service programs rather than to request support from them.

Even if the goals of social service programs are the same, congregations may have different approaches according to their theological orientations. An interviewee pointed out that although most congregations have a "whole" person approach, conservative congregations would have to pursue the salvation of souls as well as the improvement of their current situation, while more liberal congregations believe that Christians are called to help one another regardless of whether a person is a believer or not. Conservative congregations may insist on more freedom in

how to carry out social service programs. They are likely to want to have opportunities to share their gospel while providing social services.

Regardless of theological orientation of our respondents, all those participated in the interviews were against proselytizing clients while helping them. However, they wanted to allow some spiritual activities in their programs. A secular program coordinator narrated,

> That is OK [to have religious activities] at our event. We always do start our opening ceremony with a prayer. We usually find a local reverend or someone big in the community like the mayor or a commissioner. . . . We often have church choirs singing throughout the ceremonies and they are welcome to sing religious songs. We definitely don't have a problem with that. . . . I have never seen proselytizing [at our events].

Even for a program run by a conservative denomination, the program director mentioned,

> We advertise our program as an English teaching so we teach English. . . . Many of our volunteers invite the people that they meet to their homes, into their churches, into their Bible studies, and other activities, which is good and which I encourage them to do. But I say very strongly, we will not turn our English class into a Bible study. We will not turn our English class into an evangelism meeting.

In terms of ethnic culture, congregations with ethnic minority compositions may have unique characteristics. An African American congregational leader stated,

> You cannot expect an African-American congregation to act like, to think like, to function like your White counterparts. There are a lot of reasons for that: economic reasons, social reasons, and cultural reasons.

Thus, it would be better to prepare more diverse projects and different approaches to participation before asking congregations to support social service programs.

Implications (II): Charitable Choice

Related to Charitable Choice, previous studies offer two opposing voices: one voice sides with Charitable Choice. Local congregations have been participating in social service provision continuously, and their contribution is impressive in American social welfare systems (Cnaan & Boddie, 2001). Further, Charitable Choice supporters expect more social services through partnerships between public and religious agencies. The other voice is opposed to Charitable Choice. Even though congregations make a significant contribution to social safety nets, the majority of the congregations are not ready yet to run extensive public social service programs. The services which the congregations provide currently focus on temporary and emergency needs, which cannot meet the government's expectations for long-term effects (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001). Likewise, they are very suspicious of receiving public grants.

The findings of this study supported both voices. Local congregations have been playing a significant role in social services but are mainly involved in temporary and emergency social services. Many congregational leaders are concerned about lack of human resources in congregations to meet government regulations in application for and operation of the services. Congregations mainly provided short-term assistance probably not because they were not interested in long-term assistance, but because they received short-term assistance requests from people.

Congregations are interested in long-term effects. When providing general advice for what social services should be provided, many congregational leaders mentioned self-sufficiency (how to fish) programs. In addition, congregations are interested in education and provide quite a few services for children and youth. This is not temporary and short-term based assistance. Since congregations have been involved in emergency services for decades, their capacities and

systems are arranged to fit these current services. Thus, it would take time to change their capacities to operate long-term-effect programs beyond religious education.

With respect to social welfare policies, as public social services decrease, congregations will observe more opportunities and, accordingly, may try to provide more social services. In fact, in the current economic downturn, local congregations around Athens have recognized more service needs. At the same time, they experienced reduced income from their members due to the economy. Since congregational leaders recognize they need more resources, Charitable Choice may be one way for congregations to have more resources but the obstacles of distrust are great.

Many congregational leaders said they were reluctant to receive government money to do more social services. First, they do not trust the government. Second, they are not very familiar with Charitable Choice. If Charitable Choice were available now, some congregations would definitely apply for it and receive government money. But, most of them would not pay attention to grants available from the government. They are not interested in what the government wants congregations to do.

If the government really wants congregations to be a part of public social welfare systems, community leaders must pay attention to what congregations want rather than to what the government wants. It may be better that government representatives seek out appropriate congregational social service programs and offer them support rather than trying to get local congregations to apply for government funding. It may be helpful to have a person, a division, or a department in local government to deal with congregations. When the person or the division works extensively with local congregations, they would gain knowledge and experiences which would turn into developing more appropriate strategies to elicit congregational support. Local

government may support local congregations' voluntary efforts to help people in need as it does in the case of ACTS (Area Church Together Services) in Oconee County.

In social service provision, congregations and secular services organizations cannot agree on all issues because they have different frames of reference (Cnaan, 1999). In order to successfully include local congregations in social service delivery systems, it is not enough to wait for congregations to change their attitudes and to establish more social services. It is necessary for helping professionals, social service organizations, governments, and whole communities to change their attitudes toward congregational social services and to learn about the congregations. We need to go to them and seek to build upon their interests.

Examining how we can support local congregation's involvement in social service systems more actively does not mean that it is time for government to cut their public service programs and to shift its responsibilities of caring for the needy to local and voluntary-based service organizations. As social workers, we need to think over how we can enhance societal capacity from all government, private, and faith-based organizations to increase the well-being of people who need or want help for their lives.

This study did not focus on the question of whether government should support religious congregations, but how congregations are encouraged to be involved in social services. The success of ACTS in Oconee County provides a good model of ways to increase congregational participation in social services: Local congregations recognized needs in their community, initiated services voluntarily, and cooperated with private and public organizations in the community. There was not a complicated process to receive a local government support. Many local congregations voluntarily engaged in the program. A congregation which already participated in the program encouraged other congregations to do the same thing as they did. In

addition, many community residents in need received services conveniently. It would be an effective way for congregations to be involved in social services to support to form congregational service team.

However, congregations in another community may have different characteristics and needs. Thus, it is important to study more about congregations and listen to what they need to engage in social services. We need more studies to examine congregational experiences related to social services and to provide effective models for congregations to adopt in various situations. We need to evaluate which congregational effort is more effective. Through comprehensive and diverse studies, we need to develop integrated models to connect all government, private, and faith-based organizations to improve quality of life of people and their communities.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

2008 Athens-Area Survey of Church Social Services (Social Ministry)

C H U R C H P R O F I L E

Date: / /

Please know that everything you tell me will be completely confidential. The results of this survey will be reported only in aggregate form, and no one will be able to match your church to the data.

Section I: CHURCH NAME and CONTACT INFORMATION

Name:	
Address:	
	(Zip:)
Phone Number:	
County of Church Location:	
Interviewee position: ____.	(1) Senior Pastor (2) Assistant Pastor (3) Administrative Staff (4) Lay Leaders (Elder or Deacon) (5) Other (Specify):

Section II: BASIC INFORMATION

1. Is your congregation formally affiliated with a denomination, convention, or some similar kind of association?
   (1) Yes (Specify):
   (2) No

2. Theologically, your church is . . .
   (1) Conservative
   (2) Moderate conservative
   (3) Moderate
   (4) Moderate liberal
   (5) Liberal

3. How many persons – counting both adults and children – would you say regularly participate in the religious life of your church – whether or not they are officially registered as a your church member?
   Number ( )

4. How many adults – people 18 years or older – would you say regularly participate in the religious life of your church?
   Number ( )

5. How about ethnic composition?
   White (%)
   Black (%)
   Hispanic (%)
   Other (%)

6. In recent years, how would you describe membership growth of your church?
   (1) It is growing.
   (2) No change.
   (3) It is declining.
   (4) I do not know.

7. Is there a principal leader in your church?
   (1) Yes, we have a full-time church leader.
   (2) Yes, we have a part-time church leader.
   (3) No, we do not have a church leader.

8. How many paid-staff are in your church?
   Number ( )
   - Number of Full-time Pastoral Staff ( )
   - Number of Part-time Pastoral Staff ( )
   - Number of Full-time Non-pastoral Staff ( )
   - Number of Part-time Non-pastoral Staff ( )

9. What was your total congregational budget for the most recent fiscal year – the total amount that your congregation spent for all purposes, including standard operating costs, salaries, money sent to your denomination or other religious organizations, and all other purposes?
   Amount ($)
   (1) $25,000 or Under (2) $25,001 - $50K (3) $50,001 – 100K (4) $100,001 - $250
   (5) $250,001 - $500K (6) $500,001 - $1,000K (7) $1,000,001 or More

10. Your church building is …
    (1) Owned by the church
    (2) Rented from another church (free or paid)
    (3) Rented from non-religious organizations (school, community center, ect.)
    (4) Church leader's house
    (5) Other (Please Specify……..)

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

APPENDIX B

2008 Athens-Area Survey of Church Social Services (Social Ministry)
Church Social Service Programs and Perceptions

Date: / /

Thank you for participating in the Athens-Area Church Social Service Study. Your church was selected randomly, and the success of this study depends very much on your cooperation. We are very appreciative of your time and willingness to be a part of this study.

Please know that everything you tell me will be completely confidential. The result of this survey will be reported only in aggregate form, and no one will be able to match your church to the data.

Section I: CHURCH NAME and CONTACT INFORMATION

Name:	
Address:	
	(Zip:)
Phone Number:	
County of Church Location:	

Section II: EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. In general, what should be the main function(s) of a church in a community (pick the top three roles)?
   (1) Religious organization (dealing with spiritual needs, saving souls)
   (2) Cultural organization (maintaining church members' cultural heritages)
   (3) Educational organization (providing Christian education)
   (4) Social justice organization (dealing with social injustice, social changes)
   (5) Welfare organization (providing goods/services for neighbors in need)
   (6) Other (Specify):

2. Does your church provide any social services?
   (1) Yes
   (2) No

3. What affects whether your church provides a social service (pick the top three)?
   (1) Denominational interpretation on the Bible
   (2) Church pastor's interpretation on the Bible
   (3) Church members' attitude/opinion
   (4) Church's social service program management knowledge / skills
   (5) Church's financial status
   (6) Peer churches' pressure
   (7) Culture in a community
   (8) Social service requests
   (9) Governmental policies/Political movement
   (10) Other (Specify):

4. What is (will be) the major benefit(s) of your social service programs (pick the top two benefits)?
   (1) A service recipient's conversion to Christianity
   (2) Positive impressions of your church in the local community
   (3) Receiving God's reward in Heaven
   (4) Doing altruistic behaviors, not evangelistic outreach purposes or expecting any returns
   (5) Honoring God
   (6) Fulfilling social obligations as a responsible community entity
   (7) Other (specify):

5. In providing the current level of social services as a church, what do you think about overall costs including money, time, volunteers, building space, and all other direct and indirect costs?

1	2	3	4	5
Too Much		Just Right Amount		Too Little

6. Considering both the benefits and costs mentioned in Q4 and Q5, what is the net benefit of your church's social service programs?

1	2	3	4	5
Deficit		Even		Surplus

7. Does your church use strategies other than social service programs in order to achieve the benefits answered in Q4?

   (1) Yes → Please answer question 8.
   (2) No → Please proceed to Section III below.

8. If you answered "Yes" to Q7, how many activities/programs other than social service programs are currently provided or being planned by your church?

1	2	3	4	5
One	Two	Three	Four	Five or More

Please provide one or two specific examples.

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, how much more effective do you think your social service programs are compared to alternative strategies you listed in Q 8?

1	2	3	4	5
Social Services – Less Effective		Neutral		Social Services – More Effective

Section III: CHURCH CAPACITIES & RESOURCES

1. About how much did this church spend for social services in the previous year?
   Spending in Social Services: $
   Spending in Total Church Activities: $
   (excluding staff salaries and maintenance cost)
   Total Spending: $

2. The principal leader of your church is
   (1) Full-time leader, without other employment
   (2) Full-time, with other employment
   (3) Part-time, without other employment
   (4) Part-time, with other employment

3. How many paid staff positions do you have in your congregation?
   Number of Full-time Pastoral Staff ( )
   Number of Part-time Pastoral Staff ( )
   Number of Full-time Non-pastoral Staff ( )
   Number of Part-time Non-pastoral Staff ( )

4. Among the paid staff, how many are involved in social services at least 25% of the time?
   Number of Full-time Pastoral Staff ( )
   Number of Part-time Pastoral Staff ( )
   Number of Full-time Non-pastoral Staff ( )
   Number of Part-time Non-pastoral Staff ( )

5. How many volunteers participated in social services provided by your church in the previous year?

6. How many volunteers your church sent social services provided by other churches or social service organizations in the previous year?

7. How skillful is your church in planning social services?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all Skillful		Moderate		Very Skillful

8. How skillful is your church in delivering social services?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all Skillful		Moderate		Very Skillful

Section IV: OPPORTUNITIES

1. In providing social services, what organizations could your church collaborate with?
   (1) Christian-based religious organizations
   (2) Any faith-based organizations
   (3) Secular community organizations
   (4) Government organizations
   (5) None

2. What is your perception of the majority of church members' attitudes toward church social services?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Negative		Neutral		Very Positive

3. What is your perception of your community's attitudes toward social services provided by your church?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Negative		Neutral		Very Positive

4. To what extent do you think that the community expects the church to be involved in social services (social ministry)?

1	2	3	4	5
Low		Neutral		High

Section V: CHARITABLE CHOICES

1. How familiar are you with Charitable Choice?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all familiar				Very familiar

Brief Info: Charitable Choice enables local churches to receive public money for social service programs by competing with other service organizations. That is, churches can apply for a public grant for social services. While providing the social services, churches can maintain their religious identity.

2. To what extent do you think that Charitable Choice will help your church in social service involvement?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all				Very much

and Why?

Section VI: CHURCH SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

(A) Emergency Services

1. Food bank
2. Clothing bank
3. Furniture/appliance distribution
4. Emergency fund administered by the church
5. Emergency shelter
6. Community gardening/surplus product distribution
7. Meals for senior citizens (meals on wheels)
8. Meals for homeless/poor (soup kitchen)
9. Refugee resettlement

(B) Fundraising for Others

10. For victims of fire or crime
11. For person/family with health problem
12. Events for nonprofits in community

(C) Housing/Community Work Efforts

13. Habitat for Humanity (in your community)
14. Other community work projects
15. Highway or river clean-up sponsors

(D) Self-help/support groups

16. Twelve Step meetings (AA, etc.)
17. Other substance abuse groups
18. TOPS, Weight Watchers, etc.
19. Grief support groups
20. Divorce support groups
21. AIDS groups or ministries
22. Other health related activities/groups
23. Parent groups
24. Domestic violence

(E) Health

25. Health clinic
26. Blood pressure screening
27. Migrant clinic
28. Parish nurse
29. Blood drives
30. Health fair

(F) Outreach/Program for Children & Youth

31. Pre-school programs
32. After school or other program for elementary children
33. Sports programs for youth under 18
34. Boy Scouts
35. Girl Scouts
36. Teen Centers

(G) Economic Development Programs

37. Job placement
38. Job training
39. Credit union
40. Community reinvestment corp.
41. Retail development
42. Entrepreneurial training
43. Investment groups/Training

(H) Cultural/Other Community Effects

44. Community classes
45. Art displays
46. Other special displays such as the AIDS quilt
47. Musical concerts
48. Theater productions
49. Dances

(I) Social Action Activities Open to Public

50. Racism workshops
51. Peace workshops

(J) Other

52. GED
53. English language classes
54. Income tax assistance
55. Legal assistance
56. Post-release programs for prisoners
57. Pregnancy related caring
58. Prison ministry
59. Recycling project outside the church itself
60. Other (Please specify……...)

PROGRAM PROFILE

Type of Service/Program: *A B C D E F G H I J* (No.:) or Other (specify):
Official (Tentative) Program Name:

PROGRAM CATEGORY

☐ Social services/ministry ☐ Evangelical ministry ☐ Other (specify:)

MAIN PROVIDER (WHO)

☐ Church → ☐ Church Staff ☐ Church Members
☐ Non-church Volunteers
☐ Other Agency → ☐ Faith-based agency ☐ Secular agency

SERVICE RECIPIENT (TO WHOM)

☐ Church Members Only
☐ Church Members & Non-members
☐ Community
☐ Denomination
☐ Foreign Country
☐ Other (specify):

☐ Children (0-5)
☐ Youth
☐ Seniors
☐ Malnourished
☐ Women
☐ Minority persons
☐ (Ex) Prisoner
☐ Gay/lesbian persons
☐ Persons living with AIDS
☐ Other (specify):

☐ Elementary Children
☐ Adults
☐ Families
☐ Welfare Recipients
☐ Divorced Persons
☐ Migrants
☐ Refugees

SERVICE PLACE (WHERE)

☐ In-house services (offering to people in need at church)
☐ Community services (offering to people in need at outside of church)
☐ Outreach assistance (offering to community service providers)

SERVICE CONTENT (WHAT)

☐ Direct Services →
- ☐ Goods/Materials — What? = About $
- ☐ Money — How much?
- ☐ Services — What?
- Y / N — Any Evangelistic Activities / Services: What ?

☐ Indirect Services →
- ☐ Facility (Rent) — How big?
- ☐ Goods/Materials — What?
- ☐ Money — How much?
- ☐ Volunteers — How many?

TIME PERIOD (WHEN / HOW OFTEN)

☐ Regularly →
- ☐ Daily
- ☐ 2-3 times/month
- ☐ 4-5 times/year
- ☐ 2-3 days/week
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ 2- 3 times/year
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ 6-8 times/ year
- ☐ Once a year

☐ Irregularly (Whenever requested)

GOALS/PURPOSES (FOR WHAT)

	1	2	3	4	5
	Physical/Social Caring				Spiritual Caring

	1	2	3	4	5
Net Gain	Negative		Neutral		Positive