

The Role and Impact of Community Outreach Missions
In Rural Kentucky

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ABSTRACT

This study details the role of one church in a small community bordering the Bluegrass area of Kentucky. Through a series of interviews with recipients of the funds offered through a program known at the church as the "Love Fund," the hardships suffered by the impoverished residents is demonstrated, including their struggles to even travel to the church to receive services. This study reviews ways in which the church could structure the program to better serve the community. This project also briefly details the experiences of the volunteers who run the program, as well as utilizes a survey of church members on their expectations of how their donations should be used to help community members, as well as reviewing how often the members themselves are involved in volunteer activities and their reasons for volunteering. This approach allows the community to become involved in the outreach effort rather than the program simply being administered by paid staff members.

INTRODUCTION

Thirteen million, three hundred thousand people throughout Appalachia are living in poverty, according to 2008 U.S. Census data (Charleston Gazette, 2008). Poverty rates run rampant throughout Appalachia, ranging from a staggering high of 44.4% in Owsley County, Kentucky, to a high of 34.7% in McDowell County, West Virginia and a high of 29.4% in Athens County, Ohio (USDA, 2007). Given this high poverty rate, it is clear that these rural communities have a great need for social services, both governmental and privately operated.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Kanagy (1992:35) notes:

"The history of Protestantism in North America suggests that churches have been predominantly involved with their communities through evangelism and/or social action."

Referring to the work of Marty (1970), Kanagy suggests that Protestants themselves have been subdivided into "public" Protestants and "private" Protestants. The former tends to address social, political and economic problems, while the latter spends more time focused on evangelism and the saving of souls (Kanagy, 1992). This issue has evolved into an ongoing debate about how the church can best serve the community: through outreach programs to help alleviate suffering, or through outreach programs designed to win souls to the church. For churches which are actively involved in community outreach programs, understanding the needs of the

community members is critical to a successful outcome. Gibbs and Ewer (1969:224) point out that churches need to understand the issues of the people and then offer "some kind of response in terms of programs and activities." Kanagy (1992), citing Guest and Lee (1987) takes into consideration the fact that people of higher social classes are "well known for their great involvement in public affairs," which may spur churches with a large number of higher status members to be more willing to become involved with community outreach programs. Presbyterian churches nationwide are associated with higher social class membership and higher occupational prestige scores (Henslin, 2009). Similarly, higher educational levels are also associated with a greater degree of social activism (Kanagy, 1992). Again, Presbyterians tend to have higher educational levels; nationwide, 40% of Presbyterians have a college education (Henslin, 2009:535). In the present study, this social activism will be demonstrated through the volunteerism demonstrated by the church members to the community outreach program ran by the church.

Yet another social location that has been suggested as an indicator of likelihood of social activism within a church is age of church membership. The evidence that average age of church members may impact social activism is controversial, however, in that studies have not found consistent results. For example, Kanagy (1992:39), citing various sources, notes that interest in social activism tends to decrease as age of church members

increases (a negative relationship). On the other hand, Kanagy (1992:39) also cites Myers and Davidson (1984), who found a "relatively strong positive relationship" between age of church members and priority given to ecumenical activities such as community outreach programs.

The National Congregations Study, a 1998 study of 1,236 randomly selected religious congregations, found that more than half (57%) had been a participant in or had supported some form of social service, a community development or neighborhood organizational project within the past year. Most of those do so by collaborating with other community organizations to respond to social needs, although some run their own independent services (Garland, Myers and Wolfer, 2009). Motivations for volunteering are important to understand; without motivation there would be no community outreach programs. Garland et al. (2009:24-25), citing Wuthnow, notes that conservatives and liberals have different motivations for social activism in the form of volunteerism.

"Conservatives are more likely to be driven by the desire to give, even to the point of self-sacrifice, whereas liberals believed that caring for others would make them stronger and even that charitable activity is a way of making themselves feel good."

Giving consideration to whether the service has a spiritual element for the volunteer is vital to understanding one's motivation to spend one's free time serving others. Garland et al. (2009), citing ethnographic field observation performed by Bender, notes that this spiritual dimension is important even when the activity itself is not tied to a religious identity. In other words, the

work may take on a sacred dimension even if one is not directly involved with the volunteer work in a religious setting. Among 25 church members interviewed in-depth by Garland's team of researchers (2009), the most commonly cited reason for participating in volunteer service was feeling that they were "called to serve." They also were likely to state that they felt they had a general obligation to God to participate in community service. Others discussed feeling a sense of responsibility toward their neighbors and community. Once they saw the need in their community, they felt obligated to do something about it. (Garland et al., 2009). The present study will involve discussing with the volunteers their motivation for volunteering to determine if they share a similar experience and sense of calling and/or obligation.

The method of administering social service-type assistance to needy members of the local community also needs to be taken into consideration. Sherman (1997) argues that "the church needs welfare reform every bit as much as the government did." She goes on to argue that both the government (through welfare) and local churches (through their outreach programs) have tended to help people *manage* their poverty rather than *overcome* it. She describes the cash that is offered by both entities as a type of "Band-Aid" that covers the immediate need without actually helping the recipient to become self-sufficient (Sherman, 1997). Critical of both conservative policy (which she claims primarily wants to "win souls" without

addressing physical needs or social injustices) and liberal policy (which she says wants to pressure the government to enhance programs without reminding church members of personal responsibility to love the needy), Sherman (1997) notes that the best way for churches to help the needy is to become actively involved in assisting low-income families rather than just handing out cash or other commodities.

Notwithstanding the need to understand how the local church sees its responsibility to low-income community members, and aside from the need to understand what motivates people to become and to remain volunteers, the primary focus of this study shall be on the recipients (or clients) themselves. A review of the literature on the topics of volunteerism among church members, types and number of community outreach programs in rural America, and needs of recipients of those services indicates a great need for further research into this area. The present study, through ethnographic research, will attempt to fill this gap in the literature. By viewing both sides of the story – that of the service provider as an institution and at the individual level, and that of the recipient – a clearer picture will emerge of the symbiotic relationship between the client and the provider. From this information, the service providers may then be in a better position to assess the needs of low-income community members and strive to serve them better.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

This project centered around discussions with clients of First Presbyterian Church of Richmond's Financial Assistance Program, known at the church as the Love Fund. Over the course of several weeks during the months of January and February, 2010, a total of sixteen people were interviewed in an effort to determine what factors had led them to need the assistance of a community outreach program, what other services they were seeking elsewhere and how they felt about the quality of the services they were receiving within the community. The interviews varied in length, between five and twenty minutes each, dependent upon the client's willingness to discuss his or her personal situation. The process for recruitment of subjects to be interviewed involved the researcher's presence in the room with the volunteers of the Love Fund, who introduced the researcher to the client, at which point the client was told that the researcher was affiliated with the University of Kentucky and was seeking to learn what sort of personal situation had brought the client to the church. The client was asked if he or she was willing to spend a few minutes talking to the researcher, and if they indicated an interest in being interviewed, a consent form was given to them for their review and signature. Based upon the body language of the client, those who appeared anxious or uncomfortable were not recruited. Thus, to the extent that their stories may have differed from those who were interviewed, the problems facing

those clients are not represented in this study. Although there were similar features running through the sixteen interviews, it is not possible to generalize this study to the population of Richmond as a whole due to the limited number of clients and the fact that only one outreach program was studied. Nonetheless, the similarities found among the clients indicate that many indigent clients are facing similar problems in this rural area of Kentucky.

CLIENT FINDINGS

The clients of First Presbyterian would be classified as working class or working poor in the social class structure. Of the sixteen clients, nine had come to the church seeking help with utility bills, three had come to receive a voucher for gasoline for their automobile, three needed assistance paying their rent and one needed funds to purchase insulin. Eleven of the sixteen clients were raising children, three of those raising grandchildren. Only two of the sixteen were currently working, five were receiving unemployment benefits, three were disabled, and one was retired. One client was completing her Senior year at Eastern Kentucky University and another was a volunteer for another community outreach program, volunteering her time to fulfill the work requirements of the welfare program. Twelve clients were either receiving Food Stamp benefits or had a pending application. Five had utilized the services at First Presbyterian in the past along with

other community programs, and nine of them had utilized only some other outreach program in the community.

INTERVIEW EXPERIENCES

In-depth interviewing of the clients indicates that the recipients often experience feelings of shame or embarrassment at having to come to the church seeking assistance. As one female client stated several times during pauses in our discussion, "I hate having to come here like this." Several of the clients pointed out that they did not make a habit of coming to the church or to any other place that offers financial assistance on a regular basis, although when questioned more closely, fourteen of the sixteen had received services in the past, either from First Presbyterian or some other organization. Thus, the verbalization of denial ("I don't like to ask for help" or "I only come when things get really bad") may be serving to help the clients offset their negative self-concept brought about by the need to ask for assistance. When queried where else they received services in the local community, the most common response was Kentucky Foothills, followed by First United Methodist. However, many of the clients who were clients of Kentucky Foothills also pointed out that the documentation requirements of Kentucky Foothills were very burdensome, as that particular organization asks for full disclosure of income, pay stubs, documentation of household residents, etc. This is due primarily to the fact that Kentucky Foothills receives grant funds, which necessitate a greater amount of paperwork and

proof of need. Other organizations that had been utilized in the recent past were the Betty Miller Center, Open Concern, Daniel Boone Development District, and the Salvation Army.

All sixteen clients who were interviewed expressed a great deal of gratitude to the church for providing financial assistance, but more than half also expressed, to varying degrees, feelings of uncertainty about how or if the assistance was actually going to help them. For example, as one client plainly stated:

"I hate it here. I ain't gonna lie to you. You can't get help for nothing. Nobody around here really wants to help anybody. You can't get a job here. I appreciate this thirty dollars for electric, but it won't really help anything. They're still going to turn off my electric if I don't come up with the other two hundred."

When asked where she thought she might get the rest of the funds, she admitted that she didn't know, except that she would be going to First United Methodist later in the week to see if they could add some additional funds to the thirty given by First Presbyterian. When asked how she had paid her electricity bill in the past months, she stated that her dad had been giving her the money, but that he was unable to pay for it any more.

Follow-up questions regarding her family history indicated that she was not from this area, but had moved here with her husband, who had since left her. However, without any financial resources to leave the area, she found herself placed in the situation of not wanting to live in Richmond, but really without any other place to go. She had not been able to find employment

in Richmond, but had no means to seek work elsewhere. Other clients also remarked on the difficulty of finding work in the Richmond area. One couple who received funds for gasoline were job-seeking together. As this wife commented:

"I heard that if you go to Cracker Barrell between two and four, they will go ahead and talk to you right then. And he's waiting to get a job at Miller's Tire as soon as they have an opening."

Similarly, a male client who was at the church to receive a gasoline voucher remarked that he had "finally" been hired by Amazon in Lexington to work in the stock room, but that without gas money, he couldn't get back and forth to Lexington to work. The funds given to him by the church would buy approximately one full tank of gas, but a paycheck was still two weeks into the future.

Yet another female client said:

"My landlord won't give us any more time. He's still going to evict us if I don't come up with the rest of the money. He even told us when we rented from him, if you don't pay on time, I won't let you stay. I'd rather kick you out and go to court than let you stay here not paying on time."

In this particular case, the family had recently relocated to Kentucky from Indiana. The wife had just been hired by Wal-Mart and was slated for orientation within the next two weeks, after which time she would then begin working. However, a paycheck was still several weeks in the future, as she would still be waiting until the end of the first pay-period to actually receive any compensation. Her husband had family in the area, which was

their reason for locating in Richmond; however, he suffers from bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Although she indicated he was "disabled" from these stressors, he was not receiving any type of disability benefits.

Thus, from comments such as these, it is unclear how the clients navigate their financial dilemmas, and it is also unclear to what degree the funds offered by First Presbyterian offset the financial burdens faced by our clients. In the cases of gasoline vouchers, a short-term need is immediately fulfilled, allowing the clients the opportunity to travel to various sites seeking employment or to travel to and from a place of employment, but the vouchers providing only partial payment of electric or rental fees do not appear to satisfy their needs. Several planned to return to First United Methodist later in the week to see if assistance could be given to them at that location; however, two of the clients noted they were unsure if they would have the gas to come back to town later in the week.

These problems (partial payment of fees and travel difficulties) were both evident in the case of the male client who indicated distress at the need to return to his home (close to Mount Vernon) to find documentation and then return to the church the next time the financial assistance program was open. (This particular client was seen on a Wednesday; the church offices would then be closed until the following Monday). In this particular scenario, the client was an older disabled male who was accompanied by his

teenage granddaughter. He had come to the church seeking financial assistance, through word of mouth. He did not have a history of seeking financial assistance, but due to deteriorating health conditions and the recent unemployment of his wife, he found himself in need of services. When asked what type of assistance he was there for, he replied "Well, I really need any kind of help you can give me. It's just been a bad, bad year." When asked what he could use the most, he indicated that he did not have funds to pay his rent that month; however, he did not have a copy of his lease with him, but did have his landlord's name and phone number. A review of First Presbyterian files indicated that there was no "working file" for the landlord, so without the lease, an address to mail the payment was unavailable. He indicated that he had already contacted Kentucky Foothills about rental assistance, but had been advised that rental assistance was currently unavailable until March. His rent was due within the next few days; however, he was advised to return to First Presbyterian the following week with a copy of his lease, at which time the landlord could be contacted. This entire process places a very large burden on the client, in this case a disabled male with a variety of health problems, with the end result that he *might* receive a thirty dollar voucher toward a six hundred dollar rental fee, involving two trips back and forth to his home near Mount Vernon. Additionally, he was advised to check with First Methodist to see if the thirty dollar voucher could be matched by them, although their office is only open

on Fridays, which would necessitate yet another trip back and forth into downtown Richmond. This process seems to foster uncertainty into the lives of clients who are already living in dysfunctional situations. For example, this particular client spent a great deal of time to come to our office, waiting to be served, only to leave with no services and no guarantee of being served once he returned the following week.

While the preceding client did not have a successful outcome at First Presbyterian, the majority of those seeking services on the dates of this research project did receive assistance. In an emotionally-laden offering of assistance, a female client arrived at the church seeking funds to pay for her monthly insulin supply. In this particular case, she had been without her necessary insulin injection for two days and was at the point of needing to seek the injection at the ER. She indicated that she did not really want to go to the ER because she did not qualify for Medicaid and she had no funds to pay the bill. (When asked if she had been told about the financial assistance program offered by the state, which Patty A. Clay participates in, she had not, even though she stated she had been to the social service office in the preceding days to apply for Food Stamps and "try to get a medical card." Rather than advising her of the Kentucky Physician's Care program, she had simply been told she didn't qualify for Medicaid. This indicates apathy on the part of the social workers at the social service office, which is outside the scope of this particular research project.) Returning to

the services provided by First Presbyterian, in this case, the client requested payment of one month's supply of insulin. She had already contacted Health Now and Berea Health Ministry and could not be seen by either of those until approximately three to four weeks into the future. Clearly, an insulin requirement cannot be postponed simply because the health service provider can't get the patient booked until that time. The young lady had already checked on the cost of insulin, and advised the volunteers that it would cost \$112.00. M & M Drugs participates with First Presbyterian and the client was given a voucher for \$50, which would cover the cost of approximately a two week supply of insulin. In this case, the female was not a past client of First Presbyterian; in-depth interviewing led to the finding that she had recently left a situation of domestic violence and had moved in with her mother temporarily. However, she was unemployed (as many women with abusive spouses are) and had no outside financial resources to fall back on. The fifty dollar voucher fulfilled an immediate need, and one can hope that this young lady eventually received the needed services from the local health providers who provide free consultations and reduced-priced medications. This client was clearly grateful for the service she received, as she had tears on her cheeks when she left, and she hugged the volunteer and thanked her profusely as she left the assistance office.

Other clients had similar positive experiences at the church, including the two clients who received funds to pay their water utility bill in full. In

both cases, the amount was slightly greater than the usual thirty dollar payment, but this payment in full released the client from the need to seek additional payment elsewhere. In addition to the lifting of this need, payment in full also reduces the emotional burden for the client of the need to ask for financial assistance from other sources. For example, if the clients feel ashamed to ask for help (as the interviewing involved during this project found that many do), then they experience this shame each time they have to go to an organization and ask for help. Thus, by reducing this burden, it may have the long-term effect of reducing some of the stigmatization these clients experience on a regular basis.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES

Informal discussions were held during the course of the project with the women of First Presbyterian who volunteer their time on a regular basis to distribute Love Fund offerings. It is clear that these members are deeply committed to the program and are continually seeking to improve the lives of those who need assistance. At the same time, it also seems that these members face the emotional burden of working with indigent clientele, as the two regular volunteers both indicated that they prefer to spend quiet evenings at home following their days in the church offices, as they tend to be emotionally exhausted by the end of the day. This emotion is not unusual and is regularly documented in academic research under the name "compassion fatigue." At higher levels, compassion fatigue also involves

the feeling that one's efforts are not productive and may be generally ineffective. It does not appear that the members of First Presbyterian have reached these higher levels of compassion fatigue. Moreover, an in-depth interview with a former employee of the church who was instrumental in the implementation of the current program indicated a deeply held belief that the program was quite beneficial to the clients and to the community as a whole. Each of these church members indicated that they felt that as a church, it is part of our mission to show love and compassion to those less fortunate. Through working with the Love Fund, they are helping to fulfill that responsibility.

LOVE FUND/VOLUNTEER SURVEY RESULTS

In addition to the discussions and interviews outlined above, a survey was also sent out to members of the church, utilizing an online survey format. A total of 109 survey invitations were sent out via the church email list, representing slightly less than 100% of member families, with the primary exception being the very elderly. Of those 109 survey invitations, the survey was accessed 47 times. Six of those resulted in no questions being answered, and those blank surveys were removed from analysis. Of the remaining 41 surveys which were started, 38 were completed (meaning the respondent continued through the survey pages until reaching the final page), although response rates for each individual question varied between 75 and 95%. The three surveys which were partially completed were left in

the analysis, as many questions were answered even though the respondent did not reach the final “thank you for completing the survey page.” (For purposes of this report, where percentages are reported, the number of respondents to the item under analysis is reported in parentheses.)

A full 95% (N=39) reported that they volunteer their time to community outreach efforts, with 36% of them (N=14) volunteering more than once each week. Of those who volunteer, slightly more than half, 57% (N=21), reported that most of their volunteer work is done through First Presbyterian programs. Forty-two percent (N=15) devote 10 hours or more each month to volunteer efforts. The most commonly cited reasons for volunteering were “I feel an obligation to help those less fortunate” and “I feel I have been called by God to serve others.” Most volunteers did not tie their volunteer service to the idea of bringing others to join the church, with 24 of 32 respondents listing this statement as their least likely reason (of four closed-ended choices) to volunteer. These findings support other academic research which indicates that mainline churches such as the Presbyterian Church generally have members who are led by the desire to help others, while evangelical and fundamentalist churches are often driven by the desire to “convert souls.” However, this research does not support the literature findings which suggest that more liberal churches have members who are involved in volunteer activities as a way of making them feel good about themselves, as 61% (N=21) of the respondents in this

survey chose this reason as being the third or fourth reason for volunteering (from the aforementioned list of four).

Related to volunteer efforts or contribution of funds, the survey also provided the following information: Ninety-two percent (N=36) of respondents had contributed funds to the Love Fund during the most recent calendar year. Thirty-three members responded to the question regarding how they would prefer to see Love Fund offerings utilized, with the two options being to (1) help a smaller number of people with larger payments, or (2) help a larger number of people with smaller payments. To these options, 24% (N=8) preferred option 1, while the remaining 76% (N=25) chose option 2, helping more people with smaller amounts. Most respondents (29 of 34) indicated they believed our offices were open a sufficient number of hours, while the remaining five disagreed. The issue of whether the church should offer counseling was also considered; support was almost evenly divided, with 14 indicating they did not think it was a good idea and 19 agreeing with the option. Whether the program should be ran by volunteers was equally divisive, with 18 disagreeing that it should be ran by volunteers and 17 in support of it being a volunteer-ran program. There was very little support for a Food Pantry, with only 9 of 34 respondents indicating they felt it would be a good idea. (This lack of support may be related to past church experience with operation of a food pantry. Face-to-face discussion with a member who previously worked with

food distribution at the church revealed that it was often “difficult to justify why we should help one and not another.” In other words, because past efforts had been limited, there was not enough food available to help every person who asked for food. Trying to decide how much food to give a client, or whether to direct them elsewhere within the community was overly burdensome and emotionally challenging. This program was eventually discontinued partly due to these problems.) However, 31 of 35 respondents indicated they believed our church should partner with other churches to provide community assistance.

Demographic data indicates that of the 36 respondents who provided educational background information, only 2 did not have at least a four year college degree, and of those who had completed college, over half had an advanced graduate degree. Age was found to be an important variable as well, as only 2 of 35 respondents who provided age information were younger than 50, and a full 80% (N=28) were 65 or older. As found in the literature, educational levels tend to be higher among Presbyterians, which is correlated with higher levels of social activism. Regarding age, the literature findings are controversial, but in this instance, activism appears to be positively correlated with age.

DISCUSSION

The Love Fund has been a First Presbyterian community service for many years. It has undergone change over the years, originally beginning

as a direct-to-client payment service whereby the client would call to request funds for a bill. Once approved, the client would come to the church and pick up a check. It was discovered several years ago that a few members of the community were working together to run a scam on financial assistance programs, entailing one community member posing as a landlord while other collaborators would pose as renters needing assistance. Once this was discovered, area churches worked together under a collaboration known as ROCC (Resource Office of Community Services), which maintained a database of everyone who received assistance. However, due to budgeting problems, it was not possible to continue to fund this type of service. At the present time, the Love Fund operates independently, although clients are often given the names of other local organizations which may also help them, primarily First United Methodist and Kentucky River Foothills. Clients come into the church, complete a short application which is reviewed on-the-spot by the volunteers. If their need is related to a business or provider which is known to accept First Presbyterian vouchers, the client is typically approved, assuming he or she has not received help from the church in the recent past (generally six months, although this criteria is not strictly enforced). The clients are given vouchers, and the actual checks are written later that day or the following day, as time allows. If the need is related to transportation or medication, clients are given a voucher to take to a participating vendor. In the event the need is related

to an agency that is not already a participating vendor, the provider is contacted to see if he or she will accept partial payment from First Presbyterian. As explained by a member who previously worked with the Love Fund, utility providers and landlords recognize that clients are making an effort to secure payment from outreach ministries, and for this reason, extensions will often be granted. She went on to share one experience when a landlord refused payment from the church, simply because it was a church that was making the payment. As this landlord explained (paraphrased), "I'm not taking money from a church." In this instance, the landlord recognized that the renter was doing everything possible to make the rental payment, and granted an extension of time. However, this same member also remarked that there were some landlords in the community who were known to be difficult to work with, and who would still penalize or evict renters who could not pay the full amount. In these situations, she explained that she would oftentimes write the check, give it to the client, and instruct the client NOT to give it to the landlord if the landlord was not willing to work with them, as this would simply result in a waste of church resources, without any benefit to the client. However, it was the overall opinion of this member that more often than not, providers and landlords were willing to work with clients who were making an effort at self-sufficiency. Nonetheless, negative outcomes or expected negative

outcomes have been reported by the clients who were interviewed, and have been detailed earlier in this report.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This project was initiated by the researcher, not at the request of the First Presbyterian Church. Therefore, this project was constructed as an effort to understand volunteer and client experiences within this community, as opposed to a study designed to assess the effectiveness of the current program with the intent to suggest or implement change. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the findings from this study will benefit both the church and the community.

Overall, there is wide support for the continued existence of the Love Fund, although respondents to the survey were equally divided as to whether this should be a volunteer effort or ran by paid church staff. Although most respondents (approximately 3 of 4) indicated they were supportive of the current structure of the mission – which pays a small amount to a larger number of needy individuals, the church might give consideration to the effectiveness of this strategy. For example, the clients who seemed most satisfied were those who came to the church and had an immediate need fulfilled, either through payment of their bill in full (which was water services rather than electric services), received a voucher for gasoline or received a voucher for medication. This study has not found overwhelming evidence that partial payments (typically \$30) actually

alleviate a client's need, because he or she is still left with having to seek additional assistance elsewhere, which includes the physical necessity of additional time and travel expenses as well as the emotional burden of having to ask for help, which may increase negative self-concept. In theory, helping as many as possible may be a desirable goal, but whether it is effective in practice appears to be open to debate. Since most respondents to the survey were supportive of the idea of working with other local organizations to provide services, this church might consider the possibility of pooling funds with other churches in order to be able to fulfill needs in full (in the form of rental payment or electricity payments), operating this consortium in one central location so that clients would not need to make multiple trips for service. Alternatively, the church might consider reevaluating how Love Funds are to be utilized altogether, so that if it wanted to maintain its independence and work alone, it might offer only types of assistance that would be assured of meeting a client's need in full, leaving types of assistance that generally require large sums to fulfill (such as rent and electricity) to other larger and funded organizations such as Kentucky River Foothills. Regardless of whether any changes are made to the current program, this study has provided clear evidence that the current outreach mission is needed within the community and is providing a critical service to the people it serves.

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