



Comparing Strategies to Maintain Connections Between  
Faith Communities and Organizations Across Religions

Volume Two of the Report:  
Maintaining Vital Connections between Faith Communities and  
their Nonprofits

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## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
<i>by Jo Anne Schneider</i>	
Common Roots of Mainline Protestant and Evangelical Churches.....	10
<i>by Heidi Unruh &amp; Jill Sinha</i>	
Mainline Protestants and their Organizations.....	12
<i>by Heidi Unruh, Jill Sinha, &amp; John Belcher</i>	
Evangelicals and their Organizations.....	26
<i>by Heidi Unruh, Jill Sinha, Isaac Morrison, &amp; John Belcher</i>	
The Black Church and their Organizations.....	42
<i>by Jill Sinha</i>	
Organization/Faith Community Relations in the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) .....	53
<i>by Jo Anne Schneider &amp; Meg Boyd Meyer</i>	
Catholics and their Organizations.....	63
<i>by Patricia Wittberg</i>	
Jewish Communities and their Organizations.....	71
<i>by Jo Anne Schneider</i>	
Comparing Strategies Across Religions .....	87
<i>by Jo Anne Schneider</i>	
Suggested Reading.....	94

## Introduction

Many of the nonprofits providing social services, education, community development, senior services and health care in the United States were started by faith communities; and religious groups still play a significant role in supporting these organizations today. The largest social service networks in the United States are Catholic, Lutheran and Jewish. Catholic health care systems are major players in most communities. Religious day schools offer an alternative to public education throughout the United States. Most of the emergency services like food pantries, soup kitchens, and homeless shelters are either sponsored by or run out of faith communities. While the largest disaster relief organization in the U.S., the Red Cross, is now a quasi-governmental organization, it too started as a faith based organization and still receives significant support from faith communities.

However, as government, secular nonprofits and increasingly for-profit organizations offer the same services, the importance of faith based organizations and their supporting communities in the U.S. social welfare system has become less obvious. Given that many established faith based organizations receive much of their funding from government and private foundations, and increasingly hire professional staff that may not come from the founding religion, some believe that these organizations have become more secular over time. Outward secularization was encouraged by government regulations prior to faith based language in the 1996 welfare reform legislation that required federally funded organizations like Catholic Charities, Lutheran Children and Family Service, or Jewish Educational and Vocational services to ensure that their programming did not appear religious.

Policy efforts in both the Clinton and Bush presidencies aimed at allowing openly religious organizations to provide government funded services and allowing congregations themselves to receive government funds under certain conditions led to ongoing debate and confusion about what defined an organization as “faith based” and what the role of faith communities should be in providing social, health, and educational services. Given changing policy and these perceptions that some established organizations had become secular, faith community leaders wanted to know what made the nonprofits they sponsored faith based and how best to maintain connections to their nonprofits. Faith based organization leaders were equally concerned about these issues.

The *Faith and Organizations Project* developed in the late 1990s in response to these concerns. Started by faith community and faith based organization leaders, the project brings together practitioners and researchers from different faiths to understand the connection between faith communities and the nonprofits they sponsor and support today. In addition to looking at the relationship between founding faiths and their nonprofits, the project explores the ways that faith traditions play out in organizational structure and practice, the role of faith based organizations in their service sectors, and faith based organizations’ interactions with the people they serve. Recognizing that each religion has a unique approach based on their theology and current practices, the project compares faith communities and organizations founded by Mainline Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Evangelicals, Peace churches (Quakers, Mennonites, Brethren), African American Christians, Latino Christians (Catholic and Protestant), and Asian Christians.

This project compares differences among faith communities at several different levels. We use the term **faith community** to refer generally to any religious community that supports a given

faith based organization or set of organizations. For example, the faith community might be a single congregation like a Quaker Meeting that is connected to four organizations: a school and two aging services agencies it founded and an interfaith coalition. Faith community may also refer to a geographical community, like the Jewish communities in Baltimore or the greater Washington area or interfaith organizations concentrating on one suburb or city neighborhood. Or the faith community could be a higher level adjudicatory or general reference to people sharing a particular faith, like an archdiocese, the coalition of synods that support the Lutheran organizations in this study, or networks of Evangelicals that support the Pregnancy Help Center.

This report is the second publication from our second study: *Maintaining Vital Connections Between Faith Communities and their Organizations*. The project was funded by the Lilly Endowment Inc., with research activities beginning in March 2008. It examines the relationship between faith communities and organizations founded by Mainline Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Evangelicals, Quakers, and African American churches located in the Mid-Atlantic (Philadelphia and the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan areas), Midwest (Ohio and Chicago) and South (South Carolina). This report provides details on strategies to maintain connections for each religion, outlines challenges in these relationships unique to each religion, and suggests practical ways that faith communities and their organizations can strengthen their relationship and ensure that faith based organizations receive appropriate support and guidance. Our first report, *Overview Report on Project Findings*, offers a general summary of key project findings and contrasts religious strategies. Each of the religion chapters in this report are also available as stand-alone documents that can be used in courses, workshops or as informational materials for faith community and organization leaders. A series of best practices documents on topics covered in both reports are also in process. These products, along with publications from our pilot study and other information on the project, are available on the project website at <http://www.faithandorganizations.umd.edu/>. The study focused on the following questions:

1. **How do faith communities understand their practical theology, or enacted expressions of faith and religious values, regarding work in the world, and how does that practical theology play out in stewardship of organizations?** What practical guidance would best serve faith communities and what groups or individuals (clergy, lay committee members, organization board and key staff, etc.) should receive advice and training on stewardship and related issues?
2. **How do strategies for guidance and support differ among the various branches of Christianity (mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, Peace Churches, Catholics, African American churches) and Jews?** How should guidance to those faith communities be tailored for each religion and denomination? What lessons apply to all faith communities?
3. **What strategies can a faith community use to address concerns regarding the faith base in organizations under its care or affiliated with that religion?** How do strategies differ depending of the level of formal control that the founding faith has over the organization? How does a faith community remain stewards of an organization when it is legally independent of its founding religious body?

Each chapter provides a brief overview of the history of that religion's approach to social welfare, health and education initiatives in the United States. We outline the *practical theology* behind each religious tradition's approach to justice and charity initiatives as well as their goals for the education institutions they support. Practical theology refers to *the formal and informal mechanisms a faith community uses to enact its theological teachings through its religious*

*culture and structures.* Practical theology changes over time and varies across regions as well as among religions and denominations. Sometimes practical theology varies among faith communities within the same denomination. Practical theology includes explicit evidence of faith such as quoting theological statements or scripture, displaying religious symbols, and employing religious based practices in governance. More often, however, practical theology is embedded in the culture of organizations, and in the particular nature of the relationship between faith communities and the organizations they have created.

Each chapter also describes how the faith communities and organizations in each religion maintain connections between founding or supporting faith community and the organization. We explore the concept of *stewardship* of nonprofits related to each faith, defined as *the faith community's efforts to maintain its practical theology of justice and charity in the activities of the nonprofits affiliated with that religion or denomination.* While many current religious thinkers have narrowed the religious concept of stewardship to mean fundraising and financial accountability, our primary finding is that faith communities practice stewardship in a much broader sense, including varying forms of guidance and connections beyond simply providing resources, though they may not be able to articulate it. We focus on several issues:

- ❖ **Strategies to support and guide organizations.**
- ❖ **The unique ways that each religion maintains connections between the founding faith community and the nonprofits its sponsors**
- ❖ **How faith communities and their organizations respond to opportunities for growth and change.**
- ❖ **Typical problems that arise between organizations and their founding communities that are unique to each religion.**
- ❖ **Ways that each religion and their organization responded to the economic crisis of 2008-2009.**

### Key Findings

Our overview report explores several key findings, which are described in detail for each religion in this report:

- ❖ **While all faiths use similar techniques to support and guide their organizations, the theological rationale and strategies for providing guidance differ across denominations and religions.** Mechanisms like fundraising, board appointments, providing in-kind supports, informal connections to their organization each varied based on the **practical theology** of that particular religion.
- ❖ **Faith communities are much more willing to support organizations that reflect their current beliefs and religious culture than institutions that simply have a historic connection to that faith.** Organizations with strong connections to their founding communities interacted on many levels, with faith based organizations and their supporting faith communities in a dynamic relationship based on practical theology that reaffirmed and strengthened both nonprofit and the faith community. In these successful relationships, faith communities do not define stewardship of their organizations as only providing funding or other tangible resources, as is commonly understood in some religious circles.

- ❖ **Despite unique strategies for each religion, we identified three broad systems that religious communities use to organize their connections to organizations under their care that reflect practical theology and stewardship strategies. These systems come out of the faith communities, shaping both the stewardship strategies of religious institutions and the ways nonprofits from that religious tradition approach faith communities for support and guidance.** While each system can learn from each other, strategies would need to be adapted to fit the practical theology of a particular religion.
  - **Institutionalized** systems organize and centralize supports at the faith community wide level, with expectations that the entire faith community is responsible for those in need. Jews and Catholics used this system.
  - **Congregational** systems see congregations as the central organizing force for justice and charity work, viewing ministries as coming from individual or corporate calls for service that are recognized and supported by congregations. Ministries may start out as efforts within a congregation like a church food pantry, but usually become institutionalized at some point as an independent nonprofit. Nonprofits were sponsored either by individual congregations or groups of congregations, turning to these congregations for all forms of support. In this study, Mainline Protestants, some African American churches, and Quakers fell into the congregational system. While only one of the Evangelical nonprofits in this study sample in fell into this category, some Evangelical groups use this system as well.
  - **Network** systems transcend congregations, drawing together people with a similar faith based vision to carry forward the work based on either social networks of the founders or institutional/virtual networks of people with a similar vision. These organizations are most likely to hire staff or use volunteers exclusively from people who share the same faith and ground programming in that faith. While the only network system organizations in this study were Evangelical Christian nonprofits, we recognize that other faiths also use network organizational strategies.
- ❖ **While most faith based organizations can identify what they expect from their founding faith communities, most faith communities had limited understanding of how to successfully provide guidance and support to their organizations.** With the exception of Jews and some Catholic orders, few faith communities had educational tools or clear goals for organizational stewardship. Board members were often appointed without much guidance on their role in the organization or responsibility to report back to the founding faith community. This suggests that developing and disseminating tools for faith communities to prepare board members, lay leaders and clergy as stewards of their organizations is a critical need.
- ❖ **Informal mechanisms to maintain relationships were often more important than formal mechanisms in fostering vital ongoing connections between faith communities and organizations.** Organizations that kept close contact with their supporting faith communities, and visa-versa thrived while organizations lacking those informal connections had trouble gaining support from their founding communities.
- ❖ **Umbrella organizations proved important resources for both faith communities and organizations and vital links to maintain the faith base for nonprofits.** Umbrellas took

several forms - communal structures like Jewish Federations, Catholic order-created systems, interfaith organizations, nonprofit professional organizations like Friends Services for the Aging, Catholic Charities USA, and the various Jewish professional organizations. Mainline Protestant and Evangelical organizations were least likely to participate in umbrella organizations, though they might take part in informal local networks and coalitions.

- ❖ **In an economic downturn, organizations attached only to a small number of congregations, particularly aging or lower income congregations, had the hardest time finding sufficient resources.** Each religion section reports on responses to the 2008-2009 economic downturn for that faith and overview information is available in our first report, available on the project website.

## Key Terms and Concepts

This project compares differences among faith communities at several different levels. We use the term **faith community** to refer generally to any religious community that supports a given faith based organization or set of organizations. For example, the faith community might be a single congregation like a Quaker Meeting that is connected to four organizations: a school and two aging services agencies it founded and an interfaith coalition. Faith community may also refer to a geographical community, like the Jewish communities in Baltimore or the greater Washington area or interfaith organizations concentrating on one suburb or city neighborhood. Or the faith community could be a **higher level adjudicatory** like a diocese or archdiocese, synod, conference, Quarterly or Yearly Meeting or denomination. In some religions and denominations, higher level adjudicatories have authority over worship communities like congregations, Temples, synagogues and Meetings. In other religions or denominations, these larger groups are conferences of worship communities or members of that religion that gather together to share resources, information and sometimes develop joint social welfare and justice activities. Faith community can also mean a general reference to people sharing a particular faith, like an archdiocese, the coalition of synods that support the Lutheran organizations in this study, or networks of Evangelicals that support the crisis pregnancy center.

We also recognize that theology differs both across religions and within them. We use the term **religion** to refer to clearly delineated faiths – in this study Catholics, Protestants, Peace churches (Quakers, Mennonite, Brethren) and Jews. We use **denomination** to refer to divisions within religions: for example Orthodox, Reform or Conservative Jews, various Protestant denominations (Lutherans, United Methodists, Baptists, independent, etc.). Finally, recognizing commonalities among African American Christian strategies, we occasionally refer to **racial or ethnic** cultures that cross-cut denominations.

In some cases, as with Jewish Federations and professional organizations for faith based organizations, faith communities or their organizations also form **umbrella organizations** that provide services for those organizations. The role of umbrella organizations varies enormously across religions. For example, Jewish Federations and some Catholic orders created umbrella organizations that provide fundraising support, centralized planning, and leadership education. In other cases, umbrella organizations are loose coalitions of people or organizations providing a particular service that share information and sometimes provide benefits to their members. For example, Quaker umbrella organizations for their senior services organizations and schools both offer leadership training for boards that highlight uniquely Quaker practices that Quaker organization boards should follow. The senior services organization, FSA, also offers liability insurance and some quality assurance services to member organizations. Still other umbrellas, like a coalition of faith based crisis pregnancy centers, can cross religions. Interfaith umbrella



organizations serve as places for clergy from different religions to develop shared initiatives, including nonprofits that provide services. Several of the emergency services and community development organizations in the study were sponsored by interfaith coalitions. In addition, parachurch organizations like Habitat for Humanity provide support for local chapters that are, in turn, sponsored by local faith communities and secular organizations.

In addition to formal relationships, connections between both individual faith community members and various organizations prove extremely important in maintaining connections between faith communities and their organizations. These relationships generate **social capital**, *networks among people or organizations based on reciprocal, enforceable trust that can lead to resources like volunteers, funding, guidance or in-kind supports*. As outlined in more detail in the overview report, faith communities and their organizations used three kinds of social capital:

- ❖ **Bonding social capital** refers to relationships among people or organizations from the same cultural community, like a specific faith community or racial or ethnic community.
- ❖ **Bridging social capital** crosses cultural groups, but still involves established ties of trust across people or organizations from different groups. For example, an interfaith organization or a neighborhood based coalition.
- ❖ **Linking Social Capital** involves trust based relationship between people or organizations with unequal power relations, like a hospital that is part of a larger religious health care system that sets policy for that hospital or a nonprofit and its funders. Relationships between faith communities and their organizations sometimes involved linking relationships, but equally often invoked bonding social capital.

### Who did we study and How?

Most of the research in this report comes from our intensive first phase of the study which included 59 organizations and faith communities from the Mid-Atlantic area. More detailed discussion of the organizations and faith communities in the study, as well as the methods we used, is available in the companion overview report entitled *Maintaining Vital Connections between Faith Communities and their Nonprofits: Overview Report on Project Findings*. As outlined on this matrix, we included a mix of organizations providing different services and with different relationships to their founding communities for each religion. We also included some examples from additional organizations that we spent less time with in the Mid-Atlantic and Mid-West in this report.

Organization Matrix, Faith and Organizations Project - East Coast and Southern Sites

	Mainline Protestants	Evangelicals	Catholics	Quakers	Black Church	Jews
Faith Community focus entities	Congregation or congregation clusters/coalitions  Frankford GM Churches Severna Park Churches Disciples of Christ Baltimore Lutheran church network Lewinsville Presbyterian Foundry United Methodist	Congregation or congregation clusters/coalitions  Heritage Community Church	Archdiocese, Order, possibly parish *Hospital System Daughters of Charity School Sisters of Notre Dame *St Mary's Parish St Thomas the Apostle Parish *Archdiocese associated with agencies and schools	Monthly, Quarterly or Yearly Meeting Baltimore Yearly Meeting *Rock Creek Monthly Meeting Friends Services for the Aging Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting Friends Council on Education	Congregation or congregation clusters/coalitions Union Baptist  Cookman Cluster churches  Northwood Appold UMC  Union Bethel AME Church	Federation  The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore  Chizuk Ammuno synagogue  Rodof Shalom Synagogue
Substantially under the care of the faith community	Disciples of Christ programs - Kaleidoscope Catonsville Counseling Center Frankford group Ministry	Annapolis Area Christian School	*Saint Mary's Parish School Georgetown Preparatory School	Friends Meeting School  Friends House Sandy Spring	Union Baptist Church, Head start and housing programs Cookman cluster youth organization	Jewish Community Center of Baltimore Jewish Community Center of Northern VA Krieger Schechter Day School
Strongly affiliated with the faith community	Severna Park Assistance Network GEDCO Lutheran Family Services Chesapeake Habitat for Humanity	Chesapeake Christian Center *The Urban Center *Charitable Christian Fellowship	*Hospital system *Catholic Hospital Caroline Center	*Heather Hills Retirement Community Quaker Senior Services *Rock Creek Friends School	Northwood Appold Healthy Marriage Program Union Bethel AME WAFDCD	Jewish Council for the Aging  Chai
Independent organizations affiliated with a particular faith community	Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Services Bread for the World Bread for the City DC St. Lawrence Place Chesterbrook Residences	Pregnancy Help Center	Catholic Charities DC St. Ambrose Housing IONA Senior Services	AFSC-Middle Atlantic region Center City Crime Victim's Services	Northwood Appold Community Academy Project Garrison	Yachad Sinai Hospital Chesterbrook Residences

\* Pseudonym

Organization Matrix, Faith and Organizations Project – Midwest Sites

Midwest sites	Mainline Protestants	Evangelicals	Catholics	Quakers	Black Church	Jews
Faith Community focus entities	Congregation or congregation clusters/coalitions	Congregation or congregation clusters/coalitions	Archdiocese, Order, possibly parish	Monthly Meeting, Quarterly Meeting or Yearly Meeting depending on organization	Congregation or congregation clusters/coalitions St. Sabina  Lawndale Community Church	Federation
Substantially under the care of the faith community			St. John Baptist Parish Grade School		Beloved Community  Nehemiah Discipleship House	
Strongly affiliated with the faith community			Seton High School (Sisters of Charity)		Good City	
Independent organizations affiliated with a particular faith community*			The Women's Connection  Our Daily Bread		Holy Family Ministries	

\* Note: Neither the Women's Connection nor Our Daily Bread are formally affiliated with any Catholic sponsor, but Catholic parishes (for Our Daily Bread) and the Sisters of Charity and Sisters of Mercy (for The Women's Connection) provide significant financial and/or volunteer help.

The *Faith and Organizations Project* primarily uses a variety of qualitative research techniques to learn about organizations. We spent between six and nine months in most of the organizations and faith communities in this study, observing board meetings, worship services and events, interviewing leaders and key volunteers, and analyzing the various web materials, reports and documents they shared with us. We also created histories of the relationship between the faith community and the organization, some of which are available as case studies on the project web site. Where possible, we also created a financial history for each organization that showed how its sources of funding changed over time. All of these data were analyzed together to develop both our overall findings and description for each religion.

### **Plan of the Report**

This report consists primarily of chapters on each religion. We include an outline of some practical implications from our overview report, with a few additions, at the end. A suggested reading list, organized by each religion is also included.

## Common Roots of Mainline Protestant and Evangelical Churches

### Historic Roots of Protestant Christians in the U.S.

As their name suggests, Protestant denominations originated in Europe as a formal and declared protest against the structure and practices of the Catholic Church in the 16th century, during the period that became known as the Reformation. Three root beliefs have historically characterized uniquely Protestant theological commitments: justification by grace through faith rather than works; the priesthood of believers, meaning that God relates to individuals directly, rather than through church leaders; and the Bible as the primary authority in lived faith, rather than tradition or ecclesiastical authority.

The multiple founders and traditions within Protestantism branched into the diverse array of denominational families which are evident today. Examples of modern expressions of Protestantism in the U.S. today include Anabaptist, Baptist, Adventist, Congregationalist, Nazarene, Pentecostal, Charismatic and Reformed denominations, as well as non-denominational churches. A collection of denominations with a strong presence in American religious history became known as the core "mainline" groups, though that label today is not limited to these denominations: Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and American Baptist. The rise of evangelicalism became a distinguishable movement in the 18th century, about 200 years after the Reformation. African American denominations, founded in the legacy of slavery and segregation, include AME (African Methodist Episcopal), National Baptist, and many independent Pentecostal groups.

The revivalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries went hand in hand with the development of a "Benevolent Empire"—a proliferation of home mission agencies, voluntary societies, and religiously based social services, driven by the earnest desires of revival-era Christians to show the "fruits of conversion." Many of the hospitals, schools and other nonprofits founded in this era survive today. In response to the social forces of immigration, industrialization, and urbanization, Christian activism was a blend of relief aid, calls for personal spiritual repentance and society-wide moral reform, and advocacy on controversial social issues such as child labor and abolition. Protestants generally accepted the charge laid down by the editor of *The Watchman*, a leading Baptist publication, who wrote in 1857: "It is ours, not only to fit ourselves and others for a better world, but to labor to make this world better."

As social gospel theology developed in the early 20th century with a focus on economic justice, it was embraced by some Protestant groups and rejected by others, leading to a definitive split between Evangelical and Mainline Protestantism. For Evangelicals this became known as the Great Reversal, a time when many congregations and denominations renounced social activism to focus on evangelistic outreach and personal discipleship. As a branch of the evangelical movement, fundamentalism became distinct in the early 1900s, embracing conservative theological principles and cultural values.

Among the many Protestant branches, distinctive beliefs and practices cluster around such topics as baptism, speaking in tongues, the process of salvation, ecumenism, and the role of women in the church, as well as the role of sacraments and use of liturgy. Significant diversity also exists in church polity, governance, and regional structures. There are also a rich variety of

interpretations and emphases surrounding charitable care of others or social justice, in relation to evangelistic activities.

Despite this great diversity, the Mainline, Evangelical and African American communities share several core characteristics: a common identity as Christian and Protestant, as distinct from Christian and Catholic or Orthodox; a core theological framework featuring faith in Christ, the Bible as a sacred text, and personal spiritual practices—though how these elements are defined and prioritized varies quite widely; and a worshiping community in which the congregation is the organizational and spiritual center—though how congregations are related in denominational polity also varies. The separate sections on Mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, and the Black Church give further details on the beliefs and systems which characterize each faith community and how these relate to their organizations.

## Mainline Protestants and their Organizations

### Mainline Protestant Justice and Charity Work in the U.S.

About a fourth of American congregations may be identified as Mainline or Mainstream Protestant, including American Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian (USA), United Church of Christ, United Methodist, Disciples of Christ, Reformed Church in America, and several smaller denominations. While there is significant diversity in the various denominations represented in Mainline Protestantism, and among the churches within each denomination, a number of studies have documented their overall "this-worldly" orientation and active public presence. Mark Chaves, director of the National Congregations Study, summarizes their involvement, in *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*:

Mainline congregations are more likely to engage in and encourage activities that build connections between congregations and the world around them. They are more likely to engage in social services, encourage educational activity (except sponsor their own elementary or high schools), interact with other congregations across traditional religious boundaries, and open their buildings to community groups. Mainline congregations appear more likely than congregations in other traditions to act as stewards of civil society rather than as one component of civil society.

Mainline Protestants' active role as "stewards of civil society" has historical and theological roots. Episcopal, Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Quakers were among the first religious groups to arrive in America, and their influence seeped into the foundations of the new nation. Protestantism continued to enjoy a position of prominence in American culture and civic life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Protestant church buildings often occupied the literal and figurative center of the community, drawing on historical precedent in the Puritan ideal of a "city upon a hill." In response to growing urban poverty, congregations responded with a wide array of charitable activities such as soup kitchens and caring visitors who provided both practical assistance and moral uplift. They founded an abundance of hospitals, mission societies, social work agencies, educational institutions, and cultural organizations. Many of these initiatives eventually spun off from their founding churches and became separately incorporated nonprofits—some maintaining strong ties to the faith community, others becoming increasingly secular in their management and systems of support.

In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, American Protestantism was indelibly shaped by the emergence of the social gospel movement. The major spokesperson for this movement was Walter Rauschenbusch, whose influential works included *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907) and *A Theology of the Social Gospel* (1917). Faced with growing economic disparities, labor abuses and urban ills that accompanied the industrial revolution, as well as the perceived acquiescence of Protestant churches to these injustices, Rauschenbusch and others argued that it was the primary duty of the church to reorganize society on principles of love and justice. Social gospel theology shifted the locus of the gospel from the individual to the social, emphasizing that the Kingdom of God "is not a matter of getting individuals to heaven, but of transforming the life on earth into the harmony of heaven." The dialogue on social justice has been carried forward in the Mainline community by eminent theologians such as William Herzog, III and Marcus Borg.

Mainline Protestant churches continue to wrestle with social gospel theology, with great diversity of interpretation on how and to what extent this paradigm should be embraced today. The guiding principle of social concern remains strong in the Mainline church tradition. This is seen, for example, in the mission statement of Frankford Group Ministry: “We work with our neighbors and partners to empower the people of Frankford by building stronger families and a stronger community. ... Since 1979 FGM has remained a beacon of hope. Empowerment in action means working together to create a viable community of faith and a vital community of hope.” FGM fulfilled this mission primarily through emergency assistance, a parenting program, a summer youth program, a program to serve families at risk of having a child removed from their home, and other services to strengthen youth and families.

As FGM's example illustrates, social concern is most often identified with services to meet needs in the community, rather than advocacy to address systemic roots of social injustice. Mainline churches support programs of service to the poor and needy at a higher rate than other religious groups, while engaging in lower levels of politically oriented activity. One way that many Mainline Protestant churches express their social concern is by supporting ecumenical social action projects or umbrella organizations that may achieve the goals of both charity and justice.

Mainline Protestant congregants are generally more likely to embrace the value of social concern than to be able to articulate its theological underpinnings. Parishioners tend to be more politically and theologically conservative than their church leaders, and clergy tend to be more conservative than national denominational leaders. Ministers in the Mainline Protestant churches are typically expected to be seminary trained, and most Mainline Protestant seminaries emphasize social justice. Thus, ministers and denominational headquarters may have different agendas than local congregations. Denominational headquarters may assume certain values are a “given” only to discover that some local churches do not agree. For example, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has long struggled with the ordination of homosexuals. While the national denomination supports the ordination of homosexuals, many local congregations do not support it and have threatened to leave the denomination if forced to accept it. As a result, local Mainline Protestant outreach tends to coalesce around issues with broad consensus, like helping those who are homeless, rather than taking up contentious causes like national health care or homosexual marriage rights.

Differences in church polity influence how different churches within the Mainline Protestant community respond organizationally to social justice issues, and how church leaders are involved. In some denominations, such as the Presbyterian Church USA and the Disciples of Christ, ministers are “called” or hired directly by the church, and the pastor's community involvement will generally reflect the priorities of the congregation. In others, such as the United Methodist Church, ministers are assigned by the denomination to congregations for variable lengths of time, and part of their assignment can be to provide leadership to specific ministries, such as the example of Frankford Group Ministry where the executive director was a pastor assigned to the organization. Mainline Protestant polity generally provides for a congregational leadership body that conducts the business of the church, such as the Session of elected Elders in the Presbyterian Church (USA), or the elected Board of Members in the United Methodist Church. In principle, any social outreach a church commits to has been voted on by the church leadership, which gives it official sanction. Unlike Evangelical congregations, where church leaders typically provide direct oversight of a congregation's charitable activities, pastors in many Mainline churches cannot venture to begin a social outreach ministry without first seeking official congregational support. Clergy often play an important role, however, by serving in an advisory capacity as a source of inspiration and counsel.



Members of Mainline Protestant congregations tend to be higher educated and to enjoy higher socio-economic status than the general population, and also tend to be older than the average U.S. adult population. Membership trends among many Mainline groups have been affecting outreach. Six Mainline denominations (Episcopal, Moravian, Congregational Christian Church, Presbyterian Church USA, United Church of Christ and United Methodists) have had negative growth rates—some losing up to a third of their membership. This trend resulted in smaller, often aging congregations, and fewer human and financial resources available for social action. This tendency led Frankford Group Ministry to close toward the end of the study because its four congregations no longer had the membership and resources to sustain the organization in an economic downturn. Despite these changes, the Mainline Protestant faith community continues to provide a considerable volume of charitable relief and social services, and to exert a significant influence on public life.

### **Organizations and Faith Communities Participating in the Study**

This study looked at Mainline Protestant agencies and congregational clusters serving a variety of community needs—including food, utility assistance, affordable housing, homelessness, job assistance, senior services, counseling, school supplies, and programs for children and youth. Particular attention was given to the way that these nonprofits relate to the faith based communities from which they originated.

Some of the programs – Frankford Group Ministry, SPAN (Severna Park Assistance Network), and GEDCO (Govans Ecumenical Development Corporation)—were founded by an ecumenical coalition of congregations. A few were founded by or affiliated with a single congregation or denomination (Kaleidoscope! Children’s Arts Camp; Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services). The Lutheran refugee assistance network, though a national organization working through local Lutheran Children and Family Service entities, also relied on individual congregations for support and outreach. Other groups, such as Habitat, connected with a variety of Mainline churches alongside other faith groups and non-religious organizations.

Christian Temple, affiliated with the Disciples of Christ denomination, offers a good example of the multiple organizational commitments developed by the majority of Mainline churches. The church actively contributes to Chesapeake Habitat for Humanity with both monetary and in-kind donations. The church helps maintain a pastoral counseling center, by advertising for it and sending referrals to the center. In addition, the church prepares meals for Lazarus Caucus, a local homeless shelter, has sent significant contributions for 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina relief, and served as the occasional host site for the local Catonsville Children’s Theatre. The church also started its own children’s program, Kaleidoscope! Arts Camp, which attracts a majority of participants from outside the church.

In many cases Mainline Protestant churches will work together and form an organization to provide centralized outreach. These separately incorporated 501(c)(3) agencies are largely dependent on contributions, donations, and volunteers, and in some cases grants. For example, Severna Park Assistance Network (SPAN) is supported by 14 Mainline Protestant churches, run by a paid director, and staffed by volunteers. This organization tends not to report back to their church sponsors on a regular basis, nor is there any day-to-day oversight by the sponsors. SPAN’s services are available to anyone in need, regardless of religious affiliation. Although many of the volunteers and staff are affiliated with one of the sponsoring churches, they do not attempt to proselytize clients. Volunteers are generally drawn to SPAN because they agree with the organization’s objectives and not because it is a specifically Christian organization in origin.

As SPAN illustrates, ecumenical participation is the norm among Mainline-connected organizations, and many of them featured involvement by non-Christian partners as well, including synagogues, mosques, schools, banks, community organizations, businesses, and city and state government entities. This is reflective of the Mainline Protestant values of tolerance and openness to other religious views, especially where this openness is seen as advancing the practical objectives of the organization:

The only way to do it is to go across the boundaries and work with your ecumenical partners...if there is a Mosque in the area they would be invited to send representatives, the synagogue would be invited. I see it as the very heart of the gospel that we are doing as a people of faith.

This openness, however, may have limits. For example, at a GEDCO board meeting, it was proposed to change the organization's mission statement from: "In partnership with faith communities, GEDCO provides affordable housing..." to "Motivated by the shared values of our faiths, GEDCO provides..." The change was intended to reflect the fact that the GEDCO had recently expanded to include organizations without any religious aspect or affiliation, and to indicate greater inclusiveness that was not religiously restricted. Several individuals raised concerns that the change would be misunderstood by GEDCO's member organizations as representing a shift away from the faith based motivations of its founders. The motion was shelved. This incident offers an example of how a board functions as a steward of an organization's identity, and also how Mainline groups walk a fine line between openness and secularization. While groups like GEDCO are willing to create ties with secular agencies and government entities, they do not want their identity to be defined by these ties.

### **Practical Theology**

In general, two strands of practical theology can be observed working hand in hand in Protestant organizations. On one hand, most individual acts of support for nonprofits—whether in-kind donations, financial contributions or volunteering—come from a sense of charity whose American roots date back to the Puritan precept that caring for those in need is a mark of the pious Christian life. On the other hand, participation in nonprofit activity and ecumenical organizations also draws on social gospel principles that seek to transform the systemic roots of poverty and injustice, in the prophetic tradition of protest. These dual callings are fulfilled through a complex mixture of individual action, projects by the local corporate church body, and initiatives within a denominational or ecumenical structure.

The practical theology associated with Mainline Protestantism emphasizes tangible demonstrations of God's care for the poor and vulnerable as an expression of spirituality. Serving others is an act of obedience to God. As a staff member at Habitat for Humanity explains, "ending poverty, providing housing, being involved in advocacy for the poor, involving congregations in hands on mission is all about ministry and all about faith. I am a very firm believer that one's faith is something that is active, and you live it out. And there's no better way of doing that than building houses for the poor." These themes reflect the ongoing influence of the Social Gospel movement of the early twentieth century, which called Christians to advocate for social justice and support programs of outreach for the poor as a central tenet of faith. Embedded in many social programs is the belief that God's Kingdom of justice, reconciliation and social harmony can, to a meaningful degree, arrive in history as a result of human efforts. While Christians are uniquely called to this effort, the scope of the need calls them to join with like-minded others.

Many of those interviewed for this study cite Jesus' teachings, including his parable of the Good Samaritan, and his assertion in Matthew 25:40 that caring for the poor, hungry and oppressed is akin to caring for Christ himself. The emphasis is on praxis over proclamation. A Presbyterian minister, one of the founders of the ecumenical agency GEDCO, shares this perspective: "I have always seen involvement in the community as an integral part of expressing one's faith." Organizations founded by Mainline Protestants typically prefer to show, rather than tell, the gospel, and they believe they best share their faith by embodying it in service. Overall, Mainline Protestantism tends to be significantly less focused on personal conversion as a motive for outreach than Evangelicalism. Evangelism—persuading others to profess Christian faith and join the church—is not absent, but tends to be implied rather than explicitly verbalized, and to be subordinated to acts of service and advocacy.

Personal faith is largely considered a private matter, though it leads to public engagement. Thus when Mainline Protestants from various denominations come together to advocate on an issue, they would tend to focus on their shared social goal, while rarely making explicit their individual religious motivations or discussing differences in beliefs. While volunteers in Mainline programs are often deeply motivated by their faith, the organizational culture does not encourage them to be forward about their religious identity, particularly in an interfaith context. A Bread for the World staff member shares an example:

In 2007 we had an interfaith convocation at the Washington National Cathedral. Everybody knew that we were a Christian organization, but we have Buddhists, Jewish rabbis, and we have Muslims, and we came there around the issue of hunger. We weren't there to try to proselytize or anything. It wasn't so much that we were downplaying [religion], but we were just really dealing with the issue. It doesn't matter if you are a Jew or Muslim or Christian, if you are hungry.

The privatized nature of faith leads many social service programs in a Mainline context to appear secular in content. Aside from being operated by or at a church, they may have few explicit indicators that the organization is a Christian organization, and might not advertise the fact that they are Christian. Whereas corporate prayer, religious conversations and biblical references are frequently found in programs sponsored by the Evangelical community, these are not typically integrated into Mainline programs. For example, the Disciples of Christ church, drawing on theological values of equality and inter-group understanding, sponsored a youth arts program intended to bring together youth from various racial backgrounds (though most of the participants ended up being white, middle class youth associated with the church). Program materials stressed unity and multiculturalism in general terms, with no overt theological references. Similarly, with the exception of activities directly associated with Christmas and Easter, Mainline organizational events appeared to be markedly nonreligious in their formatting. This was noted at board meetings, employee training sessions, volunteer appreciation events, fundraisers, and community outreach events.

These organizational characteristics reflect the embedded core values of human dignity and religious tolerance, which in the Mainline Protestant context is interpreted to mean that organizations should not attempt overtly to convert those they serve, and that individuals should not impose their religious views on others. Promoting certain moral values or behaviors may be important, but not promoting a particular church or "brand" of religion. In fact, many Mainline organizations would probably rapidly lose support if they openly proselytized, because of the strong belief that organizations should be comfortable environments for people of all religious backgrounds. Thus the implicit character of religious expression in the Mainline context is largely consistent with the professional ethic of social workers. While professional training may

not be a requirement for staff and volunteers, it is not likely to conflict with the existing organizational culture.

Habitat for Humanity exemplifies the embrace of religious tolerance. In the community studied in this project, Habitat's work relied on the active involvement of congregations from diverse faiths, many from the Mainline community. This involvement was spearheaded by individuals who would develop Habitat teams from their congregations who would work on a specific house. Each church-based team worked independently of each other, and each brought the values of their own tradition. So for example, the house completed by a Lutheran congregation had a Lutheran-led blessing ceremony, while different religious groups led the ceremonies for families living in the houses where they had worked. In the Mainline tradition which values religious diversity, this was considered a strength rather than a weakness of the organization.

Mainline congregations tend to occupy the moderate to liberal side of the theological spectrum, though congregants tend to be more politically conservative than their leaders—creating tensions on some social issues. Some Mainline denominations also experience a disconnect between the understanding of social ministry at the grassroots congregational level as personal acts of service and relief, and a greater emphasis on public policy advocacy and structural reform at the level of judicatories and denominational offices. In part, this reflects the theological tension between the ethic of personal responsibility, a value deeply woven into the historic fabric of American Protestantism, and a critical awareness of economic and political injustice as represented by the prophetic tradition in Scripture. Both strands are evident, for example, in GEDCO's self-description: *"GEDCO is committed to a just society that respects the dignity and worth of all people, values diversity, upholds community, encourages each person's contributions, and fosters growth toward personal independence."* This dual framework of social responsibility as both individual and structural presents a common bond in particular with the African American faith community.

Their theological emphasis on solidarity with the poor in praxis for the common good often leads Mainline Protestants to join with others in service and advocacy across denominational or interfaith lines. For example, this ministry leader affirms:

I absolutely believe that this is a Christian organization and all that we do is based in the Christian faith. Although what I have also found out in working with the Interfaith is that it also totally aligns with all of the Abrahamic faiths and as I continue to learn about other faiths, with other faiths as well. So I think that we all have that common calling to reach out to the poor, change the world, transform neighborhoods—all that comes from all of our faiths, not just Christianity.

Research indicates that Mainline churches provide volunteers, space, and funding for about twice as many organizations as Evangelical, Catholic and African American churches, and are also the most likely to connect with secular nonprofits and government agencies. This cooperative work includes public policy issues like national health care reform, disaster relief work, and ecumenical or interfaith coalitions such as SPAN and GEDCO. Many congregations also participate in local chapters of national initiatives like Habitat for Humanity. This tendency toward centralization and collaboration streamlines resources and prevents duplication of efforts at the local congregational level.

Pragmatism is a value that helps drive these partnerships and influences other aspects of how faith-based services are offered. Mainline Protestants tend to view the organizations that they sponsor from a business standpoint and to make decisions about these ministries as would a business organization. If they are fulfilling their intended mission, then funding continues. The

most dramatic example of this was seen during several GEDCO functions, when the executive director encouraged supporters to think of themselves as “shareholders” in the organization. Additionally, many of the Mainline Protestant organizations studied exhibited a willingness or even a preference to employ executive directors with professional business backgrounds. This professionalization is rooted in the middle class, educated character of Mainline demographics, and in the history of Mainline influence in the development of professional care societies and standards.

One Presbyterian minister, a founder and former board president of a retirement home, gave a retrospective account of the process of professionalization:

What we did before [the retirement home buildings] were even built ... was to hire a management company. Being a nonprofit and having a several million dollar a year operation, and having all volunteers on the board, you need some sort of professional management. If it were simply a housing unit type of situation it would be one thing, but when it comes to providing the nursing services and the food services and such, we felt that there was only one way to go, and that was to hire a firm that had experience—a management firm. And they take care of hiring all of the people.

This quote illustrates a common theme among Mainline organizations. Religious principles drive the goal of providing a particular service, such as a retirement home with nursing care—while professional management principles drive the process of achieving it.

In contrast to Catholic and Evangelical communities, the Mainline narrative in the U.S. does not include the perception of cultural marginalization. Mainline churches have historically felt a sense of responsibility to shape and lead society, not protect their members from it. With the exception of certain issues of personal morality, Mainline values have largely resonated with the values of the broader society. This is one reason that Mainline churches are less likely to start private schools than Catholics and Evangelicals; the values most cherished by many in the Mainline community—open-mindedness, religious tolerance, appreciation of diversity, the equal dignity of all people—are already embedded in the public school system. These values also create an affinity with the professional social work code of ethics, and many faith based organizations hired social workers as executive directors or key administrative staff, making it easier for Mainline churches to establish or partner with secular agencies offering similar services.

### **Stewardship and Strategies for Maintaining Connections**

Among Mainline Protestants, stewardship is typically understood as garnering and managing resources – funding, in-kind supports and volunteers – for faith communities and organizations. In the larger sense of maintaining connections, however, a range of formal and informal guidance and support relationships also play a vital role.

The Protestant church in America has a long history of launching social welfare and health institutions that spin off as separate entities. As one faith community leader commented, "We come together for spiritual nourishment to help us do our work in the world and we are not social service organizations. So we can start something and hope that it spins off to maturity and independence. That's great."

The primary incubator for social agencies is the local church. The religious tradition stemming from the Protestant reformation emphasizes the local congregation as the primary vehicle for

carrying out the mandates of faith in a community; denominational structures exist primarily to support and guide congregations in this task. In some denominations with highly centralized structures such as Lutherans and United Methodist, organizations may seek support from higher level adjudicatories, but often this support is limited and the conferences or synods expect organizations to primarily rely on congregations for assistance. For example, Lutherans organize social welfare at the synod level but involve congregations in all aspects of their work.

Thus for Mainline institutions, stewardship primarily involves maintaining connections with local congregations. The variety of congregational connections includes linkages with churches that helped to launch the organization, churches in the same denomination as the organization's affiliation, churches of all denomination in the same local community as the organization, or churches that support causes in the organization's niche; i.e., churches with environmental concern are likely to support more than one environmental organization. Congregational ties are achieved through board appointments, volunteers, and appeals for in-kind supports and funding, both as donations from individual members and as line items in the church's corporate budget. Many organizations are located on church property, often using the space at free or reduced cost. The organization provides the church with a place to refer people in need, and the church provides the program with connections with clients. A certain percentage of the board may be reserved for members of the supporting church(es), and organizations may tap their church community to fill staff positions. This is illustrated by SPAN, founded when thirteen Mainline Protestant churches came together to provide emergency assistance to individuals in the community. The organization was hosted on the property of one of the churches, and the board was made up of a representative from each church. Initially, most staff positions were filled by volunteers, mainly from the churches.

At the same time, a notable feature in the Mainline system is the use of national structures through regional conferences and associations. Similar to Catholic and Jewish structures, and in contrast to many Evangelical congregations, Mainline Protestant congregations typically contribute to their denomination's centralized budget and social service systems. Inter-denominational efforts, such as One Great Hour of Sharing, or community-based ecumenical coalitions also serve to channel resources. Certain types of services are commonly addressed at the national rather than the local level, such as international aid, disaster relief work, policy advocacy, and refugee ministries. The National Council of Churches helps to network these groups and denominational leaders at the national level.

The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services office in this study exemplified this blended strategy. Though the organization is chartered at the national level, it still sees individual congregations as a major component of its work. Using significant federal funding, LIRS passes funds through to regional offices often located within Lutheran Children and Family Services organizations, also chartered at the synod level for the region. Both the national and regional offices rely on individual congregations to host refugee families, with fundraising campaigns sent to individual congregations as well.

Thus, a church may maintain relationships with a complex array of faith-sponsored organizations: local nonprofits with a history of affiliation with the church, denominational programs, local chapters of national organizations, and regional or national ecumenical coalitions—in addition to partnerships with private secular and public entities. A study called the Organizing Religious Work Project found that Mainline Protestant churches are involved with an average of close to nine organizations for the purpose of outreach. For their part, Mainline-sponsored organizations are likely to reach beyond Protestant denominations to Jews, Catholics, other religions and the secular community for support. In such a dense and complex

organizational environment, an intentional effort is required to maintain the vitality of ties. Otherwise these linkages become weak and may be easily broken when a challenge arises, as in case of Frankford Group Ministry.

Mainline Protestant communities primarily understand stewardship in financial terms - as voluntary tithes and offerings given to the church, and as the Church's obligation to ensure that the monies are wisely spent and accounted. Church bodies appoint various boards to keep track of these monies and ensure that they are used in appropriate ways. Most Mainline Protestant churches have stewardship campaigns in which they encourage individual members and families to pledge their giving to the church for the upcoming year. Giving is typically seen as optional, unlike churches in the Evangelical tradition that emphasize tithing, or setting an expected threshold for member contributions. Thus Mainline Protestant church budgets have been experiencing strain, as some members do not feel obligated to raise their contribution as their income increases, or to continue giving if their income drops. This has led to a reorientation of funding strategies on the part of some organizations, generally towards private grants and government funding opportunities.

As follows from a financial interpretation of stewardship, oversight of Mainline Protestant organizations by the faith community is likely to manifest through the degree of support from local congregations. GEDCO and SPAN, for example, were spun off by their founding faith groups into stand alone 501(c)(3)s, and their day to day operations are not explicitly influenced by the founding faith. However, if these organizations are seen as straying from the goals of the original faith community, there may be a corresponding decline in contributions from the founding faith. Member organizations provide a substantial percentage of volunteer and financial support, and in return the organizations are careful to respect the sensitivities of those church bodies, avoiding engagement in activities that would endanger that relationship. Reciprocal aspects of this relationship are also present. Recognizing that coalition groups can provide more extensive services than a single congregation, the faith community generally appreciated and supported the work of these organizations, rather than seeking to challenge and micromanage.

Mainline organizations balance a uniquely religious constituency with largely secular organizational systems. Historically, as the dominant religious culture, Mainline Protestants intentionally mainstreamed their stewardship strategies of board appointments, fundraising, accountability and reporting structures so that they are largely identical to secular nonprofits. On the other hand, these structures are designed to produce outcomes that reflect the religious values of their supporting faith community. Mainline Protestant churches continue their relationship with the organizations they have helped to found in three main ways:

**1. Accountability:** Organizations regularly submit reports to the founding faith group for review, usually on an annual basis. These reports attest to the organization's degree of success in meeting their objectives while maintaining their values. This includes testimonials from individuals served and a quantitative accounting of services delivered. Third-party audits of the organization's finances are also provided sometimes, but the audits are usually performed at the behest of private or public funding agencies, rather than mandated by the faith community. These annual reports also serve to establish the organization's credibility in the eyes of other potential funding sources, including private donors, foundations, and government programs.

**2. Mutual Participation:** The founding faith community usually maintains a presence in the spin-off organizations through delegates, committee members or board members

who are active in both the organization and the founding faith community. In several cases the founders of the Mainline Protestant organizations were local clergy with thriving congregations. Even when these ministers were no longer spearheading organizational operations they generally continued their involvement by acting on the board of directors, regularly volunteering for service activities, and attending public functions. This mutual participation seemed to be driven primarily by feelings of personal investment, rather than motives of control or oversight.

**3. Volunteer activities:** All of the Mainline Protestant organizations relied heavily on volunteers from their constituent congregations and other sources. These volunteer efforts are where the twin goals of charity and social justice are most evident. For example, GEDCO's professional operation builds and supports innovative low income housing initiatives that reflect social gospel objectives. These initiatives draw their boards from the founding congregations and other constituencies. Another program under the GEDCO umbrella is a thriving charitable operation drawing in-kind goods and volunteers from member congregations to provide for the immediate needs of the poor in its neighborhood. While these two initiatives are linked at the organizational and board level, they function independently of each other.

One of the challenges that confront Mainline Protestants is that spin-off organizations develop constituencies within the churches who become closely identified with the spin-off organization. A congregation may have several different affinity groups connected with different organizations, sometimes vying for funds and volunteers. Because these constituencies are embedded in the congregation but may not include the leadership of the church, this sometimes makes it difficult for churches to effectively address shortcomings in the spin-off organizations they support. This tendency was evident in a Habitat for Humanity chapter studied for this project. This entity struggled to raise funds and draw constituencies. It primarily relied on the individual networks of key supporters, who were retired individuals active in their congregations. It was unclear how these congregational teams would continue if the lead organizer were no longer available.

## Addressing Opportunities and Concerns

### *Organizational Transitions*

Expansion of services and capacity seem to be the most common issue driving organizational transformation. During times of expansion, whether driven by demand or opportunity, the first step for most organizations is to turn to their faith community. For example, a large Lutheran organization took steps to increase its outreach to congregations as federal funding was cut. Periods of growth are also often times when the organization re-evaluates the way it applies its faith based mission and its connection to its faith community.

Umbrella organizations are also a valuable resource for groups with a national organizational base that are seeking to grow and expand capacity at the local level. The executive director of the Baltimore-based interfaith Habitat for Humanity described how they use their parent organization to expand capacity: "Habitat for Humanity International, right now they're working with us because we're growing so fast. They've sent in a consultant to work with us to help us figure out how to build more and all that. So they definitely watch to see how the affiliates are doing; and as they grow they send in consultants to help you figure out how to grow."



Highly visible successes can lead to organizational self-assessment, professional development, and transformation by inspiring and encouraging other ambitious efforts. For example, after GEDCO successfully navigated a string of increasingly daunting challenges to bring its largest and most ambitious housing projects to fruition, it found itself in possession of a dramatically expanded support base and organizational capacity. Many of the newly-added organizations were brought in as part of a campaign to demonstrate the breadth of community support for the housing project that the city of Baltimore was somewhat resistant to. Although they successfully grew their numbers, the degree to which those new members were actively involved was somewhat limited. In response, GEDCO implemented an extensive self-evaluation project in order to determine how best to use their newfound capabilities and to more clearly delineate the boundaries of their community. Ultimately they emerged with a clearer sense of self-identity, and fresh organizational focus.

### *Community Conflicts and Concerns*

The relationship between faith-based organizations and the government has been a major area of contention in the Mainline community, reflecting both theological differences and practical concerns. On the one hand, some large Mainline faith-based organizations, such as Lutheran and Episcopal social service agencies, have long depended on public funding, even before the advent of the official policy of government openness to funding of religious social welfare organizations. For these agencies, the new policies allowed them to re-emphasize their connections to their founding faith and increased direct outreach to congregations. Other Mainline groups welcomed the option of federal funding as a means of expanding existing, previously privately-funded services. In many cases federal grants required matching support from the faith community, meaning that the funding stimulated rather than replaced volunteering and other congregational linkages. The religious tradition of such groups saw no theological conflict between government and churches partnering to achieve shared social goals. On the other hand, other groups in the Mainline tradition—most notably American Baptist—have a long history of cherishing the separation of church and state, and these groups have been vocal in their opposition to tax dollars being channeled through private religious organizations.

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services offers an example of an organization that has balanced government funding with a religiously-rooted mission. While they rely on government dollars for their operations, they equally rely on their connection with congregations and religiously motivated volunteers to carry out the more relational side of their work:

As a government partner, we have necessarily emphasized professionalism and technocratic excellence in our programs, and these are strengths we hope to continue. However, as we place more emphasis on the impact and outcomes we hope to achieve, we are more aware that the long-term well-being of refugees and other vulnerable migrants is tied to the quality of their social and community connections. Thus, engaging volunteers, welcoming congregations, ethnic communities and strong families is not an optional or add-on component of our work, but rather the very foundation of what we do.

While divided over faith based initiatives in general, Mainline adherents are generally united in their view that government funds should not go to organizations that proselytize or that limit hiring to co-religionists. Most of the Mainline agencies participating in this study regularly hired staff from outside their denominational and religious orientation. For example, Christian Temple, a Disciples of Christ church, supports a pastoral counseling center whose executive director is Catholic, and GEDCO has had two Jewish executive directors despite being rooted in the local

Christian community. Additionally, none of these organizations have made efforts to quantify or evaluate the specifics of staff members' faiths.

One area of potential conflict relates to the lack of clarity of expectations between the faith community and their organizations. Nonprofits that spin off from a congregation achieve a greater measure of administrative independence and are not controlled in the way a denominationally-run program can be. Influence is largely exercised through voluntary means such as funding and volunteers. Yet despite the lack of formal control, congregations may still look to these organizations as being reflective of their cultural values and their religious mission of service or social justice. In interviews, faith community representatives were often able to detail specific expectations of the agencies they supported. These expectations may not be clearly communicated to the organization, however, until the organization crosses the line and does something that the faith community considers objectionable. Moreover, the obligations of the faith community toward the agency—beyond supplying material and human resources—are even less clear. Many interviewees admitted that they hadn't thought about the question. Mainline faith communities would thus benefit from reflecting on and articulating their expectations in relation to their organizations, and vice versa.

### *Current Economic Situation*

While the structure of board appointments through congregations provides stable governance systems for mainline Protestant organizations, the ability of mainline Protestants to maintain their nonprofits as church membership ages and shrinks in numbers has become an urgent problem. This problem has only been compounded by the recent economic downturn, forcing some agencies to cut services, others like Frankford Group Ministry to close altogether.

The organizations that did well increasingly expanded the network of congregations and secular organizations that provided support. They developed a funding mix that relied increasingly on grants and government funds rather than increasingly dwindling resources of congregations and their members. They also maintained strong ties with their member organizations through active volunteer and in-kind resources.

### **Implications for Practice**

- ❖ **Stewardship in the Mainline context is primarily perceived in pragmatic terms in relation to resource management;** thus maintaining accountability and fiscal transparency is a vital foundation for other kinds of linkages. Whether through formal evaluations or informal feedback, the faith community wants to know that their support is effectively producing benefit to those in need. Where no clear expectations or accountability systems exist, organizations and churches can work to make these processes more explicit. Organizations need to balance business models of fiscal responsibility with mission-driven models that preserve the essential linkage with faith.
- ❖ **The national economy and denominational demographics are compounding the financial struggles of Mainline Protestant organizations.** Survival tactics include broadening their base of congregational support; diversifying their sources to include government and foundation funding; emphasizing non-financial opportunities for support, such as volunteer time and in-kind donations; and providing faith partners with multiple options for involvement. For example, a Habitat for Humanity staff person explained, "Faith communities have basically four options of ways to get involved with the

agency"— church participation in building houses, partnerships with interfaith coalitions, grants from denominational agencies, and financial donations from churches.

- ❖ **Agencies need to recognize the vitality of strong informal relationships in their ability to carry forward their mission.** Besides financial instability, the risk in economically lean times is that organizations' sense of connectedness with congregations may decline along with their contributions, especially if stewardship is understood primarily as a financial transaction. The long-term value of these connections may be lost. Organizations and churches can take steps to sustain their commitment to shared values even when giving is down. They can do this by strengthening informal ties—e.g., communication media, channels of feedback, and opportunities for personal interaction.
- ❖ **In managing their relationships, churches and nonprofits connected with the Mainline community need to take the complexity of their support system into account.** Organizations typically are dependent on support from multiple congregations, and each congregation has multiple linkages with other groups in the community. This creates a complex support net in which particular links may be weak, but the overall fabric of social support in a community is relatively stable. If church groups place competing expectations on the nonprofits they support, or if nonprofits view one another as competitors rather than colleagues, they can damage their relationships with one another and undermine the system as a whole.
- ❖ **Religious tolerance is a hallmark Mainline Protestant value, and this has led to fruitful ecumenical and interfaith collaborations.** Mainline participation in these groups are most effective when they are supported by a reciprocal understanding: churches provide these coalition groups with extensive volunteer and financial support, and allow them to manage their efforts with minimal day-to-day oversight; in exchange, the coalition effectively delivers services that are important to the values of the Mainline faith community, and is sensitive not to engage in activities that their supporters would consider offensive or overly controversial.
- ❖ **Maintaining a distinct religious identity is an ongoing challenge.** As with other religious groups, Mainline-sponsored organizations face pressures from government regulations, professional standards, and client and stakeholder expectations. Because embedded Mainline values are largely consistent with a professional social service environment, this has not produced as much conflict as in other religious communities (though of course tensions do at times arise). However, this heightens the challenge of maintaining a distinct identity and relationship with the faith community.
- ❖ **A common misunderstanding is that because Mainline organizations do not proselytize or openly display their religious roots, faith is not important to these groups.** On the contrary, these nonprofit organizations were founded on the momentum of beliefs about God's expectations for Christian involvement in the world, and ongoing support for these organizations is often motivated by deeply-held religious commitments. This is illustrated by GEDCO's resistance to changing its mission statement in a way that would have weakened its identity as being rooted in the faith community. Strengthening ties with the faith community does not mean making the faith element more public or more compulsory, but it may entail affirming and enriching the private, voluntary religious experience of participants.

- ❖ **Volunteering for nonprofit organizations is an important form of expressing and nurturing faith.** Personal spiritual growth is emphasized in Mainline Protestant religion, and spiritual growth is linked to showing care and compassion to others and (for some groups) seeking social justice. The relationship between nonprofit and faith community is thus strengthened when volunteering is understood as a two-way street: The church supplies volunteers that enable the organization to carry out its mission at minimal cost; the nonprofit supplies the church an avenue for its members to express their spiritual values. Emphasizing the reciprocal nature of this relationship keeps the church satisfied that its investment is meeting a congregational need as well as helping the community. This point was highlighted during an interfaith organization's volunteer appreciation dinner, where the director described the findings of a survey of their agency volunteers. The overwhelming response to the question of why people volunteered their time and effort was because the agency allowed them to “serve people in need.”
- ❖ **Linkages with nonprofit organizations make a church's values visible to those outside the church who share these values.** Although Mainline programs do not overtly seek to convert clients to their faith, a church's sponsorship of social welfare programs may indirectly attract new members, as individuals in the community are drawn to participate in the church's relationship with an organization as a volunteer or supporter.
- ❖ **The lack of training and guidance for individuals appointed as board members to mainline Protestant organizations appears as a clear weakness.** For example, SPAN was founded by a coalition of churches to meet the needs of individuals in poverty. As the need in the community grew, SPAN also expanded its staff and services. However, the board has remained informal and relatively uninvolved, limiting the organization's capacity to address the growing demand. In the case of Frankford Group Ministry, the lack of skilled support from the board was one factor in the organization's inability to raise sufficient funds to maintain its operations. Organizations need guidance on selecting and training board members, particularly when they draw board positions from supporting congregations. Church members are often thrown into these positions without much preparation. In a struggling economy, providing materials and structures to train board as well as staff in their governance roles becomes increasingly important.
- ❖ **Umbrella organizations offer a potentially useful tool for training, supervising professional development, setting standards, monitoring outcomes, fundraising, and networking.** Lutheran social service organizations were in the process of founding a national organization at the start of the research period. However, since many organizations do not belong to umbrella groups beyond local interfaith coalitions, congregations may also offer a venue for providing this training and support.

## Evangelicals and their Organizations

### Evangelical Christians and Their Charitable Organizations

Researchers have noted that it is difficult to describe the history of charitable action in the evangelical tradition, because in reality there are multiple histories. Evangelical Christianity is not a cohesive, organized body but a shifting canopy that covers many independent but like-minded groups. The Evangelical label encompasses an array of Protestant denominations and denominational branches, such as the Presbyterian Church of America, the Church of the Nazarene, the Evangelical Free Church, the Christian Reformed Church, the Free Methodist Church, Assemblies of God, the Missionary Church, the International Pentecostal Holiness Church, the Vineyard churches, and Southern Baptists. About 20 percent of Evangelicals are estimated to belong to independent, non-denominational congregations. Moreover, individuals within other denominations may self-identify as Evangelicals. The Evangelical community additionally includes a number of national parachurch organizations that carry out specific functions across denominations or independently from denominations, including service organizations such as Prison Fellowship Ministries and Teen Challenge, and international aid organizations such as Samaritan's Purse, World Vision and World Relief. Ultimately, Evangelical affiliation is not a matter of institutional membership but theological and cultural orientation.

Evangelicals represent a significant, and expanding, slice of the American religious community. Although defining—and thus counting—Evangelicals is a disputed endeavor, several recent surveys find that they account for about a quarter of the U.S. population, with an estimated 40 million adherents. With growing numbers of members and churches, they are the second largest religious group after Catholics; conservative Protestant churches account for about half of all American congregations. Evangelicalism has at its heart a fairly consistent set of core beliefs and religious traditions: the call to personal relationship with Jesus Christ, as the only way to salvation; the divinely inspired, guiding authority of Scripture; the importance of personal spiritual practices (such as attending church and reading the Bible) in applying faith to daily life; and the mandate to share one's faith with others through evangelism. Around these core tenets there is considerable variation in doctrines, religious expression, and church polity. Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity, a major stream within Evangelicalism, shares these same core doctrinal beliefs, with additional emphasis on the dynamic role of the Holy Spirit in directing the spiritual life and behavior of Christians. While many African American faith communities have an evangelical theology in the core areas of Scripture, personal salvation and the centrality of Jesus Christ, African Americans tend to relate this faith to their understanding of society and their practice of the social mission of the church quite differently from white evangelicals.

Although Evangelicalism is sometimes considered synonymous with Fundamentalism, there are very significant differences. Like Fundamentalists, Evangelicals tend to see the world as deeply sinful and all human institutions as intrinsically flawed, and many look to Jesus Christ's imminent and final return as King to be society's only true hope. However, Evangelicalism is distinguished largely by its emphasis on engaging an imperfect world rather than retreating from it, as well as a more flexible stance on certain cultural/theological issues many Fundamentalists consider "worldly," such as the permissibility of alcohol and participation in secular institutions. Beginning in the late 1940s with Carl F. H. Henry's rebuke against Christian passivity in *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, Evangelicals have seen themselves as called

to a more active involvement in all segments of society. The gospel is seen as a change agent, and Christians are to have a transformational effect, following Jesus' metaphor of being "salt" and "light" in the world (Matthew 5:13-14). The majority of Evangelicals believe religious organizations, not government or secular agencies, can best help those in need. Or as one pastor in our study put it: "We are to be the social center of God's kindness." This activist trend within Evangelicalism has been labeled by researcher Christian Smith as "engaged orthodoxy" (*American Evangelicalism*, 1998).

Evangelicals have been mixed in their understanding of *how* this transformation is achieved. Many focus their energies on programs of Christian education and discipleship, believing that social change occurs primarily through the influence of changed individuals. Others believe that social transformation requires more organized forms of involvement. In the last half-century, this social witness has largely overlapped with political and social conservatism, giving rise to the movement known as the Religious Right. Many Evangelicals remain committed to the vision of a "Christian America," won either by legal fiat or by pervasive and persuasive cultural influence. Recent social advocacy has focused on issues connected with the values of sanctity of life (e.g., opposing abortion and fetal stem cell research) and sexual morality (e.g., promoting abstinence education and preserving a traditional definition of marriage). (These values align with conservative Catholic priorities, leading to some areas of shared advocacy.) Many Evangelicals have also reacted to perceived threats to Christian values in the public square (e.g. the banning of public school-sponsored prayer, court battles over religious displays on public property, the teaching of evolution). One response to this threat has been the founding of private Christian schools and alternative media outlets where an Evangelical worldview may be freely expressed. The evangelical Christian school in the project came out of this kind of concern.

However, the younger generation of Evangelicals has been embracing a broader spectrum of issues, including environmental concerns (interpreted as "creation care"), poverty, and sex trafficking—without losing their theologically orthodox roots. A prominent example of this is the mega-church pastor and popular author Rick Warren, who recently began marshalling conservative Christians to fight poverty and AIDS in Africa. This shift does not represent a departure from Evangelical theology but rather a greater tendency to recognize the Scriptural foundation for compassion and social justice. Well-known Evangelical author Philip Yancey notes in *Christianity Today*, "In one encouraging trend, the fundamentalist-social gospel divide that marked the church a century ago has long since disappeared. Now evangelical organizations lead the way in such efforts as relief and development, microcredit, HIV/AIDS ministries, and outreach to sex workers. ...Evangelicals have taken seriously Jesus' call to care for 'the least of these'" (November 2009). Southern Baptist researcher Ed Stetzer concludes, "Younger evangelical pastors are less likely to self-identify as conservatives than older generations and more apt to view social justice as a gospel imperative." Polling data from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life indicates that evangelicals are now divided about equally between traditional and more progressive camps (though still moderate compared to the typical range of Mainline Protestant positions). Thus Evangelicalism must also be described as an evolving movement in the midst of a demographic transition and identity shift.

One expression of Evangelical activism or "engaged orthodoxy" is the practice of personal volunteering as a discipline of the committed Christian life. Several studies have found that members of Evangelical congregations are more likely to volunteer their time for congregational outreach efforts than Mainline Protestant members or Catholics. The activist impulse has also historically found expression in the founding of institutions, whether designed to strengthen the faith and lifestyle of Christians, to communicate the message of faith to non-Christians, to exert a Christian influence on a secular culture, or to demonstrate the love of Jesus by serving those

in need. Because of their perception that most secular institutions do not significantly reflect Christian values, Evangelicals tend to prefer to create their own alternatives to secular institutions, particularly in the arenas of media, education, youth programs, and social concerns. Another consequence of this sense of the gap between Evangelical and secular values is that Evangelical organizations are less likely to engage in formal partnerships with secular community organizations than Mainline, Jewish or Catholic congregations. From an Evangelical perspective, government welfare programs and secular social work institutions are insufficiently concerned with people's spiritual well-being and eternal destiny; thus rather than contribute to or partner with established programs, churches might launch their own initiatives that incorporate uniquely Evangelical values. Some nonprofits with historically Evangelical origins (such as the YMCA) have become "secularized" over time, while others (such as World Vision) have remained distinct.

In comparison to Mainline Protestant denominations, Evangelical denominations tend to be younger, smaller (with the exception of Southern Baptists and a few others), and less centralized or bureaucratized in their structure. Many churches are not part of any denomination at all. This creates a more open and fluid environment for the development of organizations. As noted in *American Evangelicalism* (1998),

The evangelical field is structurally wide open for inventive leaders to emerge and launch new initiatives. Entrepreneurial evangelical leaders are much freer than Mainline or liberal church leaders to generate their own new evangelical churches, colleges, missions boards, parachurch ministries, radio programs, publishing ventures, biblical teachings, and spiritual programs. ... Largely unhindered by established denominational bureaucracies, very little but imagination and the limits of market opportunities restrict ever new waves of evangelical entrepreneurs from creating expansive supplies of religious organizations and products to both appeal to and mobilize a growing number of evangelical believers.

The leadership structures of Evangelical congregations are diverse, from the lay board-dominant system of Presbyterian and some Baptist churches, to the Episcopal polity of Evangelical Methodist and Lutheran denominations, to the pastor-driven culture of many Pentecostal and independent churches. As a generalization, however, charismatic leadership (whether the pastor or other key figure) plays a more prominent role in Evangelical circles than in other faith traditions.

Another implication of the fluid, entrepreneurial nature of the Evangelical system is the tendency for organizations to work relatively independently from one another. Without a centralized organizing system, Evangelical groups lack a formal vehicle for sharing resources or coordinating their efforts. Competition for members, volunteers and funds can edge out cooperation. On the other hand, their shared cultural values and theological framework provides fertile soil for informal partnerships and networks to take root. Leaders with networking skills may succeed in joining forces with other like-minded leaders and groups to multiply their impact. Because associations are voluntary rather than hierarchically mandated, their viability depends on leaders' ability to maintain participants' commitment to shared goals. Rather than drawing on institutional resources, leaders mobilize by tapping into the passion of individual Christians. Thus independent Evangelical organizations tend to attract other Evangelicals interested in supporting a particular cause. For example, the following quote is from an independent, interfaith organization founded by a Catholic lay person with Evangelical leanings that draws supporters from both the Catholic Church and Evangelical communities:

I don't know if Evangelical would be the correct word as long as that also would include some of the Catholics—in other words, I'm not sure how you guys define that exactly. For us what it

means is that anybody interested in being involved here has to be able to state their personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and how they will be able to share that with someone else, and that will include not only Evangelicals but Catholics in that sense. Not that all Catholics would be able to necessarily state that. The same thing is there would be other people in different denominations that might not be able to. But yes, that's what we mean, that's our definition.

As this quote implies, a driving force underlining much Evangelical activity in the world is the desire to bring others to Christian faith. Three-quarters of Evangelical churches identify evangelism as one of their congregation's primary goals. The very name "Evangelical" derives from the Greek word *euangelion*, meaning "the good news," also the root meaning of the term "gospel." The history of Evangelicalism is grounded in a series of evangelistic revivals that swept the nation in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. During this period, evangelism was typically seen as going hand in hand with social reform. Following the reactive turn away from the social gospel known as the Great Reversal, Evangelicals withdrew from their earlier zeal for social transformation and channeled their resources and organizational initiatives more narrowly into leading individuals to salvation. This drive was captured by a famous quote from evangelist Dwight L. Moody: "I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can!'" The legacy of this turn is seen in the fact that Evangelical congregations still support fewer community-serving programs on average than their Mainline counterparts.

Yet the common perception that the priority of evangelism always displaces social ministries is not supported. In large measure, these orientations are no longer perceived as an either/or choice. Evangelical congregations are increasingly likely to address *both* the perceived need for spiritual transformation and relationship with Christ along with the need for practical relief and social transformation. For a significant segment of Evangelicals, both word and deed are viewed as indispensable and complementary expressions of God's love. Taking seriously Jesus' command to his followers to love their neighbors means engaging in acts of service to any who are in need. Evangelical community ministries thus seldom limit their services to members of the church (except in the case of some education programs). Charitable work may be viewed as a vehicle for bringing non-Christians into the church's sphere of spiritual influence.

Evangelical churches or volunteers that care passionately about saving souls may thus rule out partnerships with groups that they perceive as restricting their ability to communicate the gospel, or compromising their Christian values. Evangelicals are significantly less likely to participate in interfaith or ecumenical coalitions than their Mainline counterparts. On the other hand, evangelism-minded Christians may seek out partnerships with non-Evangelical community groups that allow them to form relational connections with under-reached people groups. For example, the Pregnancy Help Center belongs to a coalition of crisis pregnancy centers from a variety of religious backgrounds throughout the state of Maryland. Either way, the value of organizational linkages may be measured by their potential for spiritual impact alongside charitable relief or societal transformation.

This trend toward integrating spiritual and social concerns has been dubbed the "reversal of the Great Reversal." Some Evangelicals are looking back to reclaim their heritage of social reform that followed on the heels of revival, recalling the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century church's involvement in the abolitionist movement, advocacy for child labor and education laws, and the proliferation of urban mission societies that cared for the needs of the poor. Anglo Evangelicals on this path are rejoining African American Evangelical groups, which typically have embraced both personal salvation and social change. Some moderate Evangelicals are also finding common



ground with Mainline groups that are embracing a more spiritually-oriented approach to social transformation.

### **Faith Communities and Organizations Participating in the Study**

The Evangelical organizations studied in this project provided a diverse array of services. These include a Christian K-12 school; a pregnancy help center; community-based Kindness Centers that provide relief assistance and also skills training for single mothers; a Blessing Room that distributes clothing and food; an Urban Center that provides mentoring and other services to neighborhood children and their families; and a Pentecostal church that operates a food pantry and counseling center and supports various other regional and international aid programs with volunteers and funds. Charitable Christian Fellowship is a hybrid between an Evangelical and mainline Protestant organization. Founded by evangelical Lutherans over 100 years ago, it is now jointly under the authority of Missouri Synod and ELCA synods in the Baltimore area. Its programming shares much in common with other evangelical organizations, but has the governance structures characteristic of Mainline Protestant organizations. Most of the organizations studied are formally incorporated 501(c)(3) organizations, while a few exist only by informal arrangement. With the exception of the Christian school which primarily attracts Christian families, the ministries exist to serve people regardless of their faith.

Most of the organizations in our study were founded by lay individuals rather than clergy. In most cases their governance remained independent of formal affiliation with specific congregations, though they often depended on congregations for support. Annapolis Area Christian School, for example, was founded by a group of parents and originally met at a Presbyterian church, but it developed as a non-denominational institution that has no formal connection with any particular church. The most vital of the Evangelical organizations in this study came out of networks of individuals who shared a concern over a particular ministry. These ministries frequently have college educated leaders with a deep commitment to Evangelical Christianity, and a passionate sense of personal calling for their ministry. They build networks of other individuals and churches who share this sense of dedication to their cause. This is illustrated by the pregnancy center:

We grew out of a calling really that came from Christ to minister to women who were in need and hurting over an unplanned pregnancy. So any churches that are involved with us evidently believe in what we are doing. They are very aware of our services and need our services just as much as we need them to help support us. So any churches that were involved are very dedicated to the ministry and us to them.

These church connections develop in two main ways, according to the director: "Someone at a leadership level is passionate about what we do. It touches some chord with them personally. ... There just happens to be somebody that just is really excited about what they see happening here." The other key connection is volunteers: "People get involved in our ministry, volunteers from that church, and so that part spreads. They're talking about it more at the church level, and so it just naturally connects it more." A sense of passion for a shared vision is foundational to other resource development; building personal connections with the ministry, and with its theological foundations, is a key strategy for tapping into this passion. The importance of shared Christian vision to sustaining organizational viability is one reason the Evangelical organizations in this study did not participate in interfaith coalitions.

The organizations studied practiced a wide range of organizational systems, from the sophisticated management methods and deliberate move toward professionalism at the

Christian academy, to the informal style of the Blessing Room, which has no board, no official budget, and no formal operating procedures. "We do as the Lord tells us," explain the ladies who run the center. "We do not need formal rules; we follow the Lord." While this informal style seems well-suited to the relatively simple program design of the Blessing Center, it is also evident at the more complex Urban Center. The Center, founded to be a "presence for Jesus in the community" in inner-city Washington, D.C., intentionally maintains a "flat" organizational structure that emphasizes staff's relationships with one another and with Christ as the central organizing principle. One of the founders explains, "We don't have a boss and an assistant boss here and that sort of stuff here. We just want to be a family. Maybe [the cofounder] and I are the older parents, but we're not the bosses." This system works because of the shared commitment to the core mission. "Everybody here knows what the goals are. Everybody interprets it different in how they are going to be involved, but they know that we are about who Jesus is about." This leader's job description is thus not based on tasks but on relationships:

My role is to be a presence for Jesus in the neighborhood. ...'What would Jesus do?' is the question that we ask ourselves. And when we ask ourselves that question we see children walking around without fathers, and we see young boys hanging on the corner and not being productively or imaginatively engaged. So that then becomes the mission in my mind. What I feel great about is I am freed up to change that mission everyday.

A staff member observed that this relational style of management also has a cost in that issues can easily become personal. "It's rough because in an organization like this nobody really is standing over you. Nobody in this house is closely supervised, but you have a job to do and people trust that you're going to do it. So on an occasion when [something negative] does happen, it hurts more so than anything else, because everybody in this house is so trusting." This dynamic of *trust* is also a key factor in how the Urban Center, like many Evangelical organizations, relates to the faith community. While formal channels of accountability do exist (such as the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability), they tend to be secondary in supporters' minds to more qualitative assessments that an organization is being faithful to the mission and to their relationships in the faith community.

In Evangelical organizations founded by an individual or group, boards tend to come from networks attached to the founder(s), and function relatively informally. For Evangelical organizations that are more professionalized or national in scope, the board may play a more formal role. It may be an unwritten expectation rather than a formal requirement that board members, directors and (to a lesser extent) all staff share the faith of a program's founders. In the organizations studied, staff and board appeared drawn to the organization by a combination of shared evangelical faith and the individual's belief in the cause addressed by the ministry. Volunteers were often more likely than outsiders to evolve into paid staff, and those who were served were also sometimes invited to become part of the organization. In these independent organizations, worship community and ministry were often merged, as volunteers, staff and sometimes people served and worshiped together on a regular basis.

Fundraising may also rely heavily on the founder's personal networks of like minded individuals, as well as church contributions and in some cases foundation and government grants. The organizations in the study infused traditional fundraising techniques—often including a sophisticated use of media to communicate their mission—with the understanding that God is the ultimate source of all resources. Thus one organization's strategic development session combined prayer with computer based systems to develop their mission and vision statement. A Pentecostal church pastor drew on his connection with the local Business Advisory Board to obtain demographic data to plan the church's fundraising strategy, an idea which he says came

to him through prayer. The Urban Center hosts a series of prayer breakfasts and publishes newsletters that reach many of the powerful and connected in Washington, D.C. who share the founder's faith, yet they attribute their development to God's miraculous provision, with resources appearing just in time to meet a need. The pregnancy center used a combination of word of mouth recruitment, the internet and various media to draw attention and support to its efforts. It too, describes Christians with needed resources appearing just as a need arose. Since God is the ultimate supplier, God gets the ultimate credit. The Urban Center passed on this perspective to their constituents: "Because you can get help here, we try to make sure that they understand that the help is coming from the Lord. We try to take no personal credit."

Explicitly religious practices have a prominent role in these organizations, but often with an outreach-focused rather than inward-focused character. For example, the Urban Ministry organization shared times of corporate prayer directed toward enhancing the neighborhood. The waiting area of the Kindness Centers features Christian music and religious literature, which a leader describes as creating an relaxing environment for people in stressful circumstances. When the ladies at the Blessing Room share the gospel with the people who come in needing food or clothing, it is with the goal of encouraging them so they can better cope with their distress, by reminding them "how much they are loved and not to give up, that we all go through situations, but the Lord is ever, ever faithful." At the pregnancy center, the faith-based identity is clear and religious messages are shared with any clients who are open to them, but the focus is on saving the unborn rather than converting the parents.

Maintaining a clear Christian identity is important to these organizations and their faith supporters. At the Annapolis Area Christian School, while new leadership has been taking steps to professionalize school operations and raise academic standards, the school deliberately and proudly maintains its identity as a Christian, nondenominational institution. One way it does so is by the use of creeds, which link the school to not to a single denomination but to the historic Christian community. However, as the school's enrollment and support has increasingly come from the local Mainline Protestant community, its character is now perceived as broadly Christian, rather than specifically evangelical. Parents who were unhappy with this shift broke off to form a more conservative school that preserved the Evangelical identity.

When the Charitable Christian Fellowship director was asked whether there were any situations in which they would downplay the religious nature of their organization, he replied,

No, we never ever downplayed the spiritual outreach of a Christian message. Jesus was always the center. The message of Jesus was always central. But that was the very reason we were doing this, because this was a compassionate ministry of Jesus Christ and the New Testament and the Christian teaching. So while that was the foundation, that certainly doesn't limit reaching out to groups outside the Christian church. So no, there was not a downplaying of the message, but there was certainly an outreach that gave that basic message, which is a fundamental social message, and took it to the outside community."

This quote illustrates the basic Evangelical principle of being *in* but not *of* the world – the challenge of interacting with non-Christian groups for the purpose of outreach, while remaining true to the Christian principles and identity driving the outreach.

## Practical Theology

The hallmarks of Evangelical faith – the central role of conversion through faith; belief in the unique power of Christ for personal salvation and social transformation; trust in the authority of

Scripture as divine revelation; and a commitment to an active lifestyle that reflects Christian values—have an imprint on the relationships between Evangelical churches and the organizations they support.

In general, because they view humanity as fallen and in need of conversion, Evangelicals are more pessimistic than Mainline or African American communities about the potential of human institutions to effect lasting social change, though they are strikingly optimistic about the potential to influence personal transformation that spills over into societal benefit. Whereas Mainline Protestant theology affirms the potential for realizing the kingdom of God on earth, many Evangelicals believe that only Christ's return will set the world right. Evangelicals are divided in the implications of this worldview for the goal of improving social conditions. Some believe that all efforts at reforming a "wrecked vessel" (to use Dwight Moody's metaphor) are futile, and humanity's only hope is for the world to come. In the interim Christians should display God's mercy and compassion by relieving the needs of hungry and hurting individuals, but their priority remains preparing people for their eternity destiny. Others believe that God has entrusted Christians with stewarding God's human and natural creation until the King's return. This group envisions the church as a caring community that offers a beacon of hope in a dark and dying world. Social action is motivated by faithfulness to God's command to "act justly and to love mercy" (Micah 6:8) rather than the ambition of ultimately achieving it in a fallen world. In either case, ministry programs that embody Evangelical beliefs are seen as a vital part of the appointed task.

Similarly, while encouraging others to experience personal salvation is a core Evangelical value, there are a wide range of strategies for achieving this goal. Some Evangelicals regard evangelism as the primary mandate, viewing social service either as a distraction from that priority, or chiefly as a means to that end. Other Evangelicals seek a "holistic" approach, pursuing both evangelism and social action as equally valid, Scripturally-based practices. Some groups pursue these objectives as separately organized outreach initiatives; for example, a church may cover its outreach agenda by supporting an Evangelistic youth program and a local food bank. In other cases, churches may design ministries that integrate explicit religious content with social care. These ministries regard humanitarian service as incomplete if the person being served is not eventually invited to share in the faith of the ministry sponsors and/or to join the sponsoring worship community.

One example of this latter model is the Blessing Room at Chesapeake Christian Center (Church of God), which provides free clothing and a food pantry for the poor, while also encouraging clients who come for services to give their lives to Christ:

When people come in with problems and they need food and they need money and they need clothes, we invite them and try to help them as much as we can. [We] introduce them to Pastor and [the key volunteer], and she encourages them, and we tell them about the Lord, you know, about how much they are loved and not to give up—that we all go through situations, but the Lord is ever, ever faithful.

However, not all Evangelically-sponsored community-service organizations are overtly evangelistic in practice. Nonprofit ministries draw from a range of strategies for communicating faith messages, including more implicit, less verbal relational approaches, depending on the nature of the service and the characteristics of those served. In response to the theological principle of free will (God wants people to choose faith freely, not by compulsion or cultural habit), and also in reaction to the mainstream cultural resistance to overt Evangelism, many are

sensitive not to appear too "pushy" about their faith. For example, this staff member at a pregnancy center affirms,

We don't have an agenda for the woman coming in except that, you know, we hope at some point to be able to share the Gospel, but our point is that we care about her and her outcome and what happens. ...In that sense everything that we do is free, is given freely.

Because Evangelicals look to the Bible as the authoritative guide to all of life, the programs undertaken by Evangelicals are typically motivated, directed or supported in some way by Scripture. Numerous parachurch organizations exist to help Christians fulfill the Scriptural mandate to save souls, in their own communities and abroad. Similarly, if Evangelicals are convinced that the Bible says to feed the hungry, care for those who are sick, and seek justice for the oppressed, they are more likely to initiate and support these activities. Organizations that maintain a strong connection with the Evangelical community are likely to be rich in Biblical references in the communication of their mission and activities, though such allusions may not be understood or appreciated by non-Evangelical supporters.

Evangelical theology seeks to apply the teachings of Scripture and the believer's personal relationship with Jesus to all of life. The culture of the Evangelical community is thus rich in explicitly religious language and activities. The practice of personal spiritual disciplines--e.g., Bible reading, prayer, worship--is likely to be embedded into Evangelical organizations, whether as formal program activities or as an informal byproduct of evangelical culture. Staff, volunteers, and sometimes clients may be expected or required to participate in these explicitly spiritual activities. Some organizations even function as an alternative worshiping community for their staff and supporters, with shared prayer times, Bible studies or chapel services reinforcing the common religious culture. Because Evangelical social action tends to be directly linked to faith, these practices strengthen the motivation for ongoing service.

Another characteristic of Evangelicalism with relevance for community involvement is the strong current of individualism, tracing all the way back to the Reformation, tying into the contemporary theological and cultural themes of personal relationships and religious freedom. Evangelical ministries—with the exception of African American Evangelical groups—are more likely to focus on serving and equipping individuals over advocacy for structural reform (except on selected issues such as abortion). Evangelicals speak the language of personal compassion more fluently than the language of social justice. Evangelical programs also often have an underlying goal of building personal relationships alongside the provision of goods and services; these relationships open channels of communication and trust for sharing faith.

This individualism extends to the decentralized polity of many nondenominational, independent and congregational churches that emphasizes local autonomy over vertical linkages. This may be one factor in why Evangelicals form many organizations, but belong to few umbrella institutions compared to other religious traditions (with the exception of the National Association of Evangelicals and other groups wholly within the Evangelical community). The theme of individualism also contributes to the important role that visionary leaders and religious "personalities" (such as Billy Graham) often play in the Evangelical community, in contrast to investing trust in particular offices or positions as is the case in some other religious traditions.

For the people at Chesapeake – life and ministry are very simple- their major mission in life is to bring people to Christ and their church is their focus while they wait for his return. They do not think in terms such as stewardship or organizational theory. They would not accept any advice unless it comes from their pastor.

## Stewardship and Strategies for Maintaining Connections in the Evangelical Community

Stewardship refers to the faith community's efforts to maintain its practical theology of justice and charity in the activities of its affiliated nonprofits. Because the Evangelical community is so varied, likewise the forms of stewardship are diverse. In some cases, nonprofits are sponsored by a denomination, though their organization and funding may be managed by local churches. Many Evangelical programs remain under the auspices of a church with no independent incorporation, though they may attract volunteers from the community and even from other churches. Many nonprofits that started as a church program spin off with an independent 501(c)(3) status, but remain closely linked with a particular congregation or network of churches. One example of this is the private Christian schools where many Evangelical families prefer to send their children. Many other nonprofits are independent from any church affiliation, originating instead from the vision of a single leader or group. Such initiatives often are driven by the desire to meet a need that is not being met in the community, or that is not being met within an Evangelical framework. A number of nonprofits supported by the Evangelical community have a national or international scope, including mission societies and humanitarian organizations such as World Vision, which calls itself "the Church on special assignment to the poor." Regardless of their origins, Evangelical organizations typically rely on support from churches and individual church members.

Many Evangelical organizations are responsible not primarily to a denomination or hierarchical institution, but rather to their community of supporters -- those who donate, volunteer, and spread the word. This means that ultimately, the viability of stewardship lies in the extent to which supporting congregations and individuals see these ministries as faithful to the authority of Scripture and to their mission. Indicators of this faithfulness include formal measures such as a statement of faith, affiliation with a clearly Evangelical denomination or the National Council of Evangelicals, faith requirements for staff and board members, references to religion in program materials, and explicitly spiritual practices (such as corporate prayer) integrated into regular programming or management routines. Other, less formal elements of the stewardship of spiritual values include the prevalence of religious speech and personal spiritual practices among staff (such as quoting Scripture or talking about one's relationship with the Lord), testimonies from clients and volunteers about the religious nature of the program, and the reputation of leaders as being Godly individuals with a passion for the organization's mission.

We began from a church-based ministry and everything we do we do based on being good stewards of what has been provided us from God. I think - well I know - that everything that we do is prayed about. So I can't see anything that we do that we don't pray about here. Scripture affects our every word and deed.

The stewardship relationship also depends on the organization's ability to communicate the most meaningful aspects of their program in a way that captures the hearts and religious imagination of supporters. In a dynamic, entrepreneurial organizational marketplace, Evangelicals are more likely to invest their resources in organizations where they feel personally connected with a mission that is invested with theological significance.

One implication of Evangelical individualism is that service is largely perceived as being the responsibility of the individual (or the individual congregation), rather than the entire faith community, as is the pattern in some other religious groups. Given the emphasis on personal, experiential relationship with God, Evangelical social service initiatives often are inspired or sustained by a strong sense of spiritual calling. As one Evangelical woman engaged in

outreach in the study commented, "I felt called by the Lord, and then things just sort of happened." Evangelical stewardship strategies thus highlight both personal responsibility for and the personal rewards of service.

Evangelicals operate from a position of deep faith-based conviction and have demonstrated a willingness to commit to social outreach as long as it aligns with their theological objectives and cultural identity. Because Evangelicals seek to ground their beliefs in Scripture and to pattern their lives after Jesus Christ, mobilizing resources for community involvement often begins by connecting Christians with relevant Biblical texts and stories from Christ's teaching and example. Charismatic, entrepreneurial nonprofit leaders who are skilled in communicating this framework can succeed in drawing on the human and social capital of the broader Evangelical community, often across congregational and denominational lines.

It is expected that the people in the centers as they meet people that come in put forth the Christian faith in a way that is not beating them over the head obviously, but to show them that this is a Christian organization and to be ready to help with any need that they have. They come to our centers with all kinds of needs. The centers have their Bible studies and they have their hymn sing. People come in and they see that this is a Christian center. The centers are expected to show this faith to the people. May I add - I don't know where we have seen it - on tapes and that kind of thing. People say, "I come in here because I know it is a Christian place that people treat me so well." This is the type of ambience and atmosphere that people are trying to promote.

On the other hand, the relatively narrow scope of this framework has sometimes restricted significant engagement with strategies and organizations outside of the Evangelical movement. Some Evangelicals lack skill in "bilingual" communication of their message than others—in other words, they cannot translate their mission to a non-Evangelical constituency. Other Evangelicals resist making connections with groups that do not share their core beliefs, out of concern that these ties would compromise or restrict their gospel message.

Basically, like I said, we don't take government money so that we can be a Christian organization. We can expound our beliefs. In our centers we are able to have a cross which you can't in some places and we have Bible studies and we have our child compassion with the parents where the mothers that are taught how to be Christian parents.

Limits to collaboration can also originate from outside the Evangelical community; other religious groups, perceiving (whether accurately or not) that Evangelicals do not share their social commitments or are not "team players," may be less likely to invite them to participate in ecumenical or interfaith efforts. Lacking the reputation and history of Mainline Protestants for civic engagement, Evangelicals do not have an established seat at the public table. This appears to be slowly changing in many communities. Groups receiving government funding for the first time under George Bush's faith based initiative, for example, included Evangelical-sponsored programs. Many evangelical groups felt that they were welcome for the first time to apply for funds.

## **Addressing Opportunities and Concerns**

### *Organizational Transitions*

Leadership transitions are difficult in many Evangelical organizations, as with the African American community, because they are often based on a very personal sense of call, and on entrepreneurial development. The pastor or founder may have spent years, or even decades,

developing a ministry—and they are often not willing to let that ministry go. Or others may be reluctant to step into their shoes. Because the leader's personal network is often the basis of raising support, this network may not transfer to a new leader. Trust is another key ingredient in maintaining connections that cannot be handed over to a successor. Leadership changes in supporting faith communities can also impact their relationship with independent organizations. In several instances, organizations started by a visionary pastor lost support when that leader left. For instance, one Evangelical project received far less support when a new pastor took over the church, and organizations like the Charitable Christian Fellowship are careful to incorporate new pastors into their network to ensure continued congregational participation.

Since evangelical organizations rely strongly on the personal call of their leaders and key staff, leadership transitions can also foster significant changes in the organization. For example, the form and very nature of the programs at the Charitable Christian Fellowship changed each time a new executive director took over. As such, the program reinvented itself to reflect the current direction of its leadership and network of supporters, moving from volunteer efforts focused on one set of needs to its current structure of worship and support communities. Its structure continues to evolve, but consistently combines worship with faith inspired service.

One significant change taking place in the broader Evangelical community is the growing interest of congregations in community service. Historically, conservative Evangelical churches have been less likely than other religious traditions to organize corporate ministries of social concern under the auspice of the church. Many Evangelicals understood the church's priority to be evangelism, while charitable work was the responsibility of individual Christian compassion or nonprofits. Increasing numbers of Evangelical churches now appear to be expressing an interest in sponsoring their own community service programs, and hiring or assigning staff for the purpose of managing community ministry. This is evidenced in the growth of associations such as the Christian Community Development Association and the Externally Focused Church Network, which attract a substantial Evangelical constituency.

This suggests that congregation-sponsored programs, or programs that spin off from a church into independent nonprofits, may become increasingly prevalent in the Evangelical community. Given the expanded interest of churches in sponsoring or partnering with service nonprofits that reflect their values, Evangelical organizations that were founded independently of formal church affiliation might seek to bring their ministries into closer relationships with churches. This is already the case for national and international organizations such as Salvation Army, Compassion, World Relief and World Vision, which have developed extensive ties to Evangelical congregations (as well as other religious groups). Congregational sponsorship of ministries is also a function of size, as Evangelical megachurches are documented to have a higher proportion of service outreach. As larger churches develop both the capacity and the inclination to form their own "in-house" outreach programs, it is expected that more will do so.

Whether this newer generation of Evangelical ministries spin off to become independent nonprofits at the same rate as in the Mainline community, and whether they maintain strong ties to their Evangelical sponsors, remains to be seen.

### *Community Conflicts and Concerns*

Evangelicalism is now divided between those who hold to traditional conservative values and priorities for outreach, and those who want to engage a broader social agenda. A dialogue is now unfolding among Evangelicals how to prioritize these newer concerns such as poverty and creation care alongside traditional issues such as abortion and marriage. While Evangelical



churches have long offered relief services such as food and emergency assistance, the new conversation includes concepts of social justice and economic development. This new movement will affect the number, scope, and culture of organizations founded by the current generation of Evangelicals.

I remember when I was working in the church, one thing my pastor always said, that the way to find out if a church is relevant is if they asked themselves, if we closed our doors would the neighborhood miss us? If we closed our doors today, I can tell you, we would be missed in this neighborhood. Yes, we do make a difference. We plant seeds, and we have been blessed to see a lot of them grow, and we hope to see a lot of the others.

While Evangelicals overall tend to be less educated than members of Mainline denominations, there are increasing numbers of college educated, socially moderate evangelicals serving as pastors and lay leaders, which means that the programs founded by Evangelicals are likely to employ a greater degree of sophistication in their governance and fundraising methods. This professionalization, however, comes with greater pressures to downplay the religious dimension of their work and other potential threats to Evangelical values. Concerns about secularization through professionalization were not uncommon during the study, and it cannot be denied that increased reliance on "professional" administrators and staff changes the character of a faith based organization.

Several Evangelical Christian organizations deliberately restrict their income to private funding sources to avoid a potential compromise of their faith-based objectives. As the director of the Charitable Christian Foundation stated, "You live by the grant, you die by the grant." He explained that acceptance of federal funding for a project like their food pantry would prevent them from including religious material with the food that they distribute. Faced with the opportunity for increased funding, at the cost of decreased opportunities for ministry and evangelism, the organization has chosen to forgo any funds that would restrict or control the way in which they conduct their outreach.

Other Evangelical organizations, however, have espoused the view that since all resources ultimately come from God, God can work through public funding as well as private sources. These organizations often maintain their identity, faith witness and connection to the faith community by focusing on relationships rather than more explicit forms of religious expression. While still a tiny percentage, the number of Evangelical organizations that have accessed federal funding is growing. In fact, one Evangelical organization in our study doubled its size through a government grant, won through the expertise of its faith driven leadership. Interestingly, while a majority of Evangelicals support faith-based initiatives in principle, according to a survey by the Pew Research Center, most do not think that government funds should go to religious groups who proselytize or who limit hiring to those who share their religious beliefs.

### *Current Economic Situation*

This research project has indicated that adaptability and credibility appear key to surviving difficult economic times. The informal, leader-centered character of many smaller Evangelical organizations enhances their ability to adapt to changing economic conditions, as decisions can be made with a minimum of bureaucracy. On the other hand, this same informality may detract from the credibility of the organization, especially outside Evangelical circles. Among Evangelicals, effectiveness is often measured more qualitatively than quantitatively. For example, at a fundraising banquet, one organization presented statistics on their services, but

the main message was the stories about people whose lives were changed by receiving the assistance or by hearing the gospel through this organization.

Maintaining faithfulness to theological principles and cultural values is critical to sustaining support in the Evangelical community, though those same characteristics may present a barrier to expanding support to the larger Christian community or beyond. The stewardship relationship also depends on the organization's ability to communicate the most meaningful aspects of their program in a way that captures the hearts and religious imagination of supporters. Evangelicals are more likely to invest their resources in organizations where they feel personally connected with the mission.

The impact of economic downturn on the clientele of organizations is also felt. For example, the current economy, as well as patterns of urban development in the D.C. area will likely force out many of the residents who have come to rely on the Urban Center. This mobility affects their ability to form meaningful relationships with residents as a basis for effective service. However, the founders and staff continue to be hopeful in their mission to be a positive presence in a stigmatized and often overlooked area of the city.

Our task then is to be prayerful about how to help people accommodate by being able to stay here. So what do you teach? You teach money management, the importance of longevity in employment, about credit reports and about what it costs to buy and run a household and you teach about the government resources available to them. So then, maybe only 10% will heed that advice and be able to stay. But isn't that a whole lot better than no percent or two percent?

### Implications for Practice

- ❖ **What organizations do reflects on the faith community's values and identity, and visa-versa.** The relationship between Evangelical organizations and their faith community often goes far beyond funds and volunteer support; often these nonprofits are seen as an arm of the church (though not necessarily affiliated with any single church), entrusted with carrying out a vital aspect of the church's mission. Increasingly, Evangelical churches are seeing service ministries as a way of building good will in the community in order to earn a platform of trust for sharing the gospel. Conversely, when a church or individual supports a nonprofit that is seen as going astray from the faith, this may be seen as compromising or reflecting negatively on all Christians. Thus there is much at stake in the stewardship of this relationship.
- ❖ **Support systems often depend on communicating an Evangelical identity to people who share the same faith commitments.** Faith is an explicit part of the glue that bonds the network. Organizations display their faith to people requesting services in a variety of ways, depending on the context. Organizations would benefit from intentional considerations of how, and to whom, they communicate their religious identity.
- ❖ **Evangelical organizations use a variety of strategies for combining their strong commitment to evangelism with their calling to serve the needs in community.** One option is to cultivate close ties with one or more Evangelistic churches who can reach out spiritually to the people they serve. Another option is to incorporate Evangelistic activities within the mission of the organization. Evangelicals can be guided in developing strategies for expressing faith that are appropriate to the type of service, the nature of the relationship with the sponsoring faith community, and the skill sets and

Evangelistic commitments of volunteers. Appropriate training is needed to achieve this goal.

- ❖ **Guidance and mentoring may be needed to deal with the difficult issues of how to maintain Evangelical values and identity in an increasingly complex, professionalized environment.** Ministry leaders today are increasingly college educated, with exposure to the social sciences and training in organizational development. They can access the skills needed to lead a complex organization and comply with the administrative requirements of government and foundation funding. They can also attract volunteers and other resources through a combination of sophisticated fundraising techniques and media presentations of their message.
- ❖ **A key issue for many Evangelical organizations is whether and how an organization should continue once the founding leader moves on.** Some organizations do not survive this transition. Structures of governance and support – i.e., board members and donor bases -- often depend on the personal networks of these individuals, and it is important to consider in advance how these structures might be affected by changes in leadership.
- ❖ **Evangelical organizations must carefully weigh the pros and cons of public partnerships,** now that the faith-based initiative has created a more level playing field for seeking government funding. On the one hand, reliance on public funding limits some forms of faith-based expression, though not eliminating it entirely. Current policy bans proselytizing, worship and religious instruction as part of government-funded programs, but encourages organizations to be open about their religious identity, and to fund religious activities through private sources. Organizations also need to be aware of how such partnerships affect the perception of their faithfulness in the religious networks from which they draw support.
- ❖ **The controversy over whether organizations that receive government funding should be permitted to use faith affiliations as criteria in hiring is likely to have a significant impact on whether Evangelical organizations seek government funding.** Because shared religious beliefs and values are so integral to linkages within the faith community, the presence of more non-Evangelicals or non-Christians in an organization could weaken their connection with the faith community, even if this did not change the actual day-to-day provision of services.
- ❖ **Volunteers play a key role in Evangelical organizations, both by providing essential services and by promoting the organization in their congregations.** Volunteering is often perceived in spiritual terms as a form of obedience to the Scriptures and the example of Jesus, and often accompanies a sense of personal spiritual calling to a particular area of ministry. Both organizations and churches would benefit from enhancing the experience of volunteers on the job through training, and in their church through opportunities to share their volunteer experiences with others in the church and to process the implications of the experience for their own spiritual development.
- ❖ **The lack of training and guidance for individuals appointed as board members to Evangelical organizations often represents a weakness in the organization.** Churches could also benefit from training for their various governing boards on how to

conduct the business of the church. Often congregants are thrown into these positions without much orientation or training in how to carry out their role.

- ❖ **There is a need in the Evangelical community for building capacity for effective, accountable systems of management.** Many smaller Evangelical organizations have an informal, leader-driven style of governance. Not only does this make it more difficult for outside groups to understand or assess their accounting, it means that they would not withstand audits necessary for government or private funding unless they revised current practices. We did not see any financial scandals in the network organizations participating in this study, but the lack of fiscal transparency would make them vulnerable to charges of irresponsibility.
- ❖ **Because Evangelical organizational systems are often informal, trust is an essential ingredient for effective management.** Organizations and their faith community partners can look at factors that either diminish or strengthen trusting relationships—within the organization, between the organization and its supporters, and between the organization and those they serve.
- ❖ **Communication between the faith community and their organizations is vital.** The faith community needs to feel connected with the organization's activities and theological framework for ministry; and the organization needs the guidance and feedback from the faith community to help discern whether it is faithfully representing its values, especially in a time when Evangelical values are in flux. Media thus plays an important role in Evangelical support systems – conveying the mission to current and prospective supporters in a way that builds trust, stirs passion and motivates involvement.

## The Black Church and Organizations

The church in the U.S. has long been a source of comfort, community, and help for many communities. For African Americans, the country's long history of slavery, racism, and discrimination manifested a context in which the Black Church has assumed a role and meaning within the community that is unparalleled among other U.S. religious traditions. The Black Church has fostered political engagement, social services, such as community development and education, and provided a safe space for freedom of expression, worship and supportive relationships.

For many Black Christians distinctive worshipping style and the role of the congregation in the Black community were a necessary source of social cohesion when other institutions such as marriage and family were destroyed through compulsory displacement--from their homes and from family by slave traders and owners. The comprehensive ten-year survey of Black churches in the U.S. by C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya established the Black Church as one of two major institutions in African American life, along with the Black family. It would be difficult to overestimate the significance of this formerly "invisible institution" in the history of African Americans.

African Americans are more likely to attend and participate in worship and social serving activities through a congregation. The National Survey of Black Americans (1979-1980) found that of the 89 percent of about two thousand individuals who were surveyed were religiously affiliated, with 98.6 percent of them identifying themselves as Christian. On-going surveys conducted by the Barna Research Group and the Gallup polling center observe that more than two-thirds of adults in the U.S. identify themselves as members of religious congregations—and African Americans are even more likely to belong to a congregation.

In addition to membership in a congregation, African Americans report higher rates of attendance than either Whites or Hispanics. African Americans are also more active than other Americans in worship, personal prayer, and reading of religious material. These patterns were observed in several independent surveys including the National Social Capital Benchmark Survey of 2000, a survey of Black and White, lower income 11<sup>th</sup> grade adolescents conducted by Carol Markstrom in 1999, and in several articles and chapters by Robert Joseph Taylor and Linda Chatters (1989, 1991).

### History of Black Congregations and Community Service in the US

Prior to and after the Civil War: banks, hospitals, credit unions, low-income housing aid, nursing homes, schools and colleges by and for African Americans grew out of religious communities. The Black Church has also been recognized as the birthing place of African American identity, political action, religious and secular education, entrepreneurship, family resiliency, the tradition of self-help, and community aid. Multiple publications demonstrate the historic and contemporary role of Black congregations in social support (see McCubbin, Thompson, Thompson & Fromer, 1998, Hill 1999, Raboteau, 2001).

Today, the Black Church remains an important source of practice and local help in African American communities. Family support programs offered through Black churches have been found to have a measurable impact on upward mobility for low-income families by Andrew Billingsley (1992). In black communities, when federal cutbacks result in fewer funds for

programs that serve the homeless, poor, elderly, mentally ill and children, the “private organizations” that stepped forward to meet needs were often black congregations. The Philadelphia Census of Congregations data indicate that black congregations provided more than half (54.6%) of all community-serving programs reported in the study.

### **Communities and Organizations in the Study**

The study included five African American churches and seven organizations which represented three protestant denominations: United Methodist, Baptist, and African Methodist Episcopal. Organizations include two community development corporations; a public charter school; a Head Start program, a marriage education program; and a human development, economic development and public safety series of services; and an alternative school for out of school youth. Churches being researched are located in Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Philadelphia. All sites were located in predominately African American communities and most are in areas that have experienced decline.

The United Methodist Churches – Northwood Appold and Cookman are similar in that they operate under the auspices of a Conference, where the pastor is reappointed on an annual basis. The structure of the African Methodist Episcopal church – Union Bethel – is similar. The Baptist Churches operate more independently of an adjudicatory body. It has been noted that many African American churches are managed top-down, with the pastor in the key leadership role and other officers and program administrators operating under the pastor’s direction. This does appear to be the case in some degree in the churches in the study. There is a tendency towards an entrepreneurial spirit and a focus on empowerment of those to whom outreach is targeted as well as to their communities.

There is variation in how the observed programs are linked to their respective churches. Cookman United Methodist Church (CUMC) in Philadelphia has opted to operate its youth alternative program under the nonprofit status of the conference rather than institutionalize a separate 501(c)(3). The Eastern Conference of the United Methodist Church provided seed money to initiate the youth alternative education program; however, more recently funding has come from government sources. The Head Start program, although also government funded, comes under the auspices of Union Baptist Church’s (UBC) nonprofit status. The government-funded marriage education program, at Northwood-Appold United Methodist Church (NAUMC), started out under the nonprofit status of the church but has now received its own 501(c)(3) status. This is the same for the CDC at Union Bethel African Methodist (UBAME). The public charter school created by NAUMC and the human development, economic development and public safety programs linked currently to Wayland Baptist Church (but created by a collaborative of churches), started out as their own separate nonprofit entities. These programs work in conjunction with the Wayland Baptist Church CDC, which includes the development of senior housing. So the trend among these sites was to establish a program-related 501(c)(3) which is legally, or “financially” distinct from the congregation.

All of these programs benefit from space provided in church-owned facilities, either as a contribution from the church or through a formal lease agreement. Program directors would agree that if they had to pay full market price for a space similar to what they are using for free or at a reduced rent, the cost would be prohibitive. The same goes for the cost of utilities and other facilities related services which are subsidized by virtue of being located in a building operated by or shared with a congregation. In addition, in many of the sites, church fundraisers were used to augment program funding which was received from governmental and other outside sources and fee for service income. In none of the programs were participants required

to be the same faith as the respective church. Programs are open to members of the churches, but most served participants who are not members of the affiliated faith community or congregation.

In these sites, organizations that have their own nonprofit status did not have formal requirements that board members must be the faith of the church; however, church members did predominate on the nonprofit boards. Except for an established public charter school, most programs and organizations drew their staff from the ranks of the congregation; although, again, there was no formal requirement for this. Most of these churches were small- to medium-sized congregations, but also had congregants with expertise in areas required for the programs. In cases where church members with certain skills or expertise were not available, the hired staff did not necessarily come from the same denomination, but tended to share a commitment to faith or the mission of the organization. Whether with their own 501(c)(3) or not, all of the churches being studied maintained strong links to the organizations that they created. This close connection to the original faith community is a distinctive characteristic among African American, faith-based service provision.

### **Practical Theology – Pragmatic Influences and Black Church Mission in the US**

Faith communities manifest their lived theology, or work in the world, through how their organizations are supported and run. The following sections trace the roots of service within the Black church and the African American community and specific observations are drawn from the African American sites in the study. Woven throughout these sections is the underlying theme that for the Black church, “theology in practice” has been both a response to slavery, oppression and existing marginalization, as well as a reinterpretation of what it means to be a community of faith. Thus, these sections present theological commitments and the practices which follow from them.

In addition to its spiritual and religious mission, the Black Church remains an important source of at least three categories of service: political engagement; social services to the community, with an emphasis on education and community development; and a community haven. Three sections are grouped by these themes.

#### *Political Engagement.*

The Black Church has nurtured awareness and impetus for the advancement and legal rights of Blacks, including providing much of the people power for the massive civil protests of the 1960s, and creating and mobilizing local and national networks in electoral politics. African Americans, more than other ethnic groups, include church as an appropriate forum for political and social change. Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) found that 92 percent of black clergy approved of church involvement in political tasks and felt that it was appropriate for them to express their political views as religious leaders. In 1998, a USA Today survey found that blacks were three times more likely (28%) to say that religious leaders discussed politics than whites (8%). Black Churches have promoted voter registration and “get-out-the-vote drives” (Wilcox & Gomez, 1990). Beyerlein and Chaves (2003) found that Black Protestant congregations were almost seven times more likely than evangelical/conservative Protestant congregations, six times more likely than Catholic congregations, and more than nine times more likely than Mainline/liberal Protestant congregations to host voter registration drives. Among the African American congregations and organizations in this study, two sites held voter registration drives. Union Baptist has a significant history as a center for the civil rights movement in Baltimore and

sponsored speeches by local politicians during the study. Our study did not ask specifically about other types of political engagement.

### *Social Services and Education*

Promoting education holds special importance for the Black Church in the US. During and immediately after slavery the Black Church was often the only, if not the primary source for children's secular and religious education. Religious leaders founded schools and used church basements as classrooms, and deacons and elders served as teachers, when black children were not permitted in public schools. Even after segregation of schools was outlawed in the 1970s, in the face of substandard urban public education systems, many Black churches responded by running private schools as an alternative to public education and there was evidence for this trend our study sites. The organizations and affiliated congregations in this site supported academic and educational achievement: Three out of the five African American sites in this study provided formal education ranging from pre-kindergarten, which was a Head Start program, through primary schools, including one alternative high school and one charter school.

Throughout our research, pastors stressed the importance of the church supporting these education programs as a way to improve conditions for the African American community. For example, the charter school came out of a strategic planning initiative for the church community, where, members of the congregation called for the creation of a school. Most thought along the lines of a private, Christian school, but the pastor guided them over a period of time in seeing that a Charter School could be more relevant for the needs of the community.

The Philadelphia Census of Congregations published a report (2001) which found that Black congregations are more likely than non-Black congregations to provide informal education and personal development type programs including mentoring, rites of passage programs, programs for gang members, computer training, and recreational programs for youth. Similarly, the National Congregations Study of 1236 congregations found that African American congregations supported a higher percentage of education or training programs than non African American congregations, including non-religious education, job-related, and tutoring/mentoring programs. Because our study focused primarily on programs which were operated through nonprofit organizations, we did not survey congregations about these other types of informal programs which may be provided.

These studies highlight the strong value placed on academic achievement and education by Black communities, and suggest that education, moral training, and civil rights were seen as prerequisites -- even to economic development. Several Black scholars have published detailed studies which document the importance of education among the Black Church and the role the church has played in advancing education among African Americans. For example, the mission of the charter school is:

to cultivate with regularity and predictability young people who are proficient relative to academic achievement and intellectual skills; advanced, constructive, and healthy relative to character development; empowered to make a life; equipped to make a living; and positioned to participate fully in freedom and democracy.



*Social Services and Community Development: ie: "Uplift"*

A third strand of how theological commitments in the Black Church are played out through social service and practice is often described as "social uplift." In this study, African American pastors and laity used the term "social justice" as a way to describe their motivation and commitment to ministry, service, or programs in the community. An embedded and common understanding was that it is the mission of the Black Church to uplift all African Americans, as an oppressed minority – not just to serve others as a more general part of doing "good works" but specifically to serve (African American) members and non-members as a way to empower the African American community.

One Black pastor used the term "empowerment" to summarize the theology behind their programming. Another pastor also emphasized the African Methodist Episcopal Church's focus on social justice as a primary motivation for programs.

I think the biggest thing and I will just say this, the AME Church has a lot to do with social justice. That is one of the major reasons for the founding the AME Church. It wasn't to establish another branch of Methodism. The whole social justice piece. So outreach ministries that benefit the neediest of us and those who are lost and forgotten are just crucial to everything that we do and everything that we believe.

Reflections by a Black Baptist nonprofit executive director told how a pastor's extensive involvement in the 1950s and 60s with nationally recognized figures in the Civil Rights Movement impacted programming of the congregation and nonprofit. In the 60s the term "social Gospel" was used in a similar way as social justice is used today.

For him it's purely a social gospel movement. The idea that the Gospels are intertwined with politics and civil rights and he basically preached about churches fulfilling that mission.

A related observation which was present in our data was that of the African American church community as the "first response" or responsible party as opposed to other institutional structures which discriminated against or ignored the African American community. Rather than trusting or relying primarily on public (government) social welfare programs, the church community recognized that public welfare sources were insufficient. This concept of the Black Church as the first response for the uplift of African Americans are exemplified in the types of social programming that Black congregations and nonprofits organized. Programs in housing, and personal development such as a variety of education programming are common. Education programs observed for this study including Head Start programs, an alternative high school, GED or diploma equivalency programs, primary schools, and computer training programs. Other development programs include community health initiatives such as screenings, health awareness programs and nutrition and fitness classes. The focus on personal and community development has also been expressed through many employment training and welfare to work programs.

Historically, African Americans have been excluded from or marginalized in employment opportunities which are the traditional avenues to personal and community, economic betterment. Many Black churches have sought to remediate the effects of this economic oppression though various means including establishing alternative sources of credit and

employment through forming credit unions, small business incubators, and advocacy around community concerns for such amenities as public safety, local grocery stores and banks. In addition, as noted, African American congregations have long provided exclusive or complementary service in primary education, daycare, computer and job skills training, literacy, lay health support, care for elderly and other community development services. In this study, two of the five African American congregations supported community economic development organizations and another provided personal/family development through the publicly funded marriage education program. The congregations and organization provided additional formal and informal programs which supported public safety and senior housing or senior day centers.

Volunteering or working within the congregation also affords an alternative venue through which members can exercise skills, particularly when these skills were not recognized or valued by the wider society. For example, an African American who worked as a cleaning person or waiter for their paid employment might also be head of a women's auxiliary or serve as a deacon in a congregation and the congregation provided an alternative society where skills, leadership, expertise and authority could be exercised. These volunteer positions provided high social status and recognition which was not given in the individuals' paid employment. Our data shows consistent evidence for high levels of participation from church members in voluntary and staff positions within congregation services and their affiliated nonprofit organizations. The high proportion of congregation members who served on nonprofit boards, as program staff and as volunteers stood out as a distinctive occurrence as well as a stewardship strategy among the African American sites.

For example, at Cookman United Methodist, two separate boards exist which both provide oversight for the programmatic arms: There is a "traditional" church board, and there is a "program council" which appears to provide more of the management oversight for the various programs on a day to day basis. Pastor Jones is the Executive Director and the Program Director also chairs the Program Council and is a member of the church. Pastor Jones relies heavily on the input of key staff, (about 8) half of whom are also members of the congregation, to influence the culture and "faith-base" of the programs. Overall, of the 21 staff on the directory, just less than half (10) are also members of the church.

### *The Church Building as Haven*

This study did not specifically categorize data about the spiritual and personal significance that the Black Church holds for African Americans. Yet, literature on the Black Church frequently draws attention to this unique role of the Black Church in the US-- as a communal place of refuge, a place in which to affirm cultural and ethnic identity, and space for "norming" and healing the experiences of persecution and being a minority population. The use of the term "safe haven" has been used to describe one of the roles of the Black Church. Historically, the sanctuary provided both autonomy and anonymity for African Americans where a sense of self, culture, and opportunity could be nurtured. Several of the scholars already cited within this section have pointed out – with great eloquence – that within the church walls, in and through church life, African Americans who faced oppression and dehumanizing experiences developed and sustained a culturally distinct identity and view of reality (Haight, 2002; Lincoln, 1999; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

In our study, this common experience and communal understanding of what the Black Church represents was often implied during interviews. One pastor stated it more explicitly, suggesting that for persons who have experienced oppression, the history of the Church in the Black community means that merely entering a church building brings a sense of safety and hope.

We note here and will discuss at length in the following section, that the African American sites were more likely to house their service programs and nonprofits within a congregation-owned facility or building.

### **Distinctive Strategies for Stewardship and Maintaining Ties with Community of Faith**

Various communities intentionally or unintentionally utilize various strategies to maintain a relationship with their faith base in organizations under its care or affiliated with that religion. The following patterns were observed regarding the level of control that the founding faith maintains over the organizations among primarily or exclusively African American sites.

#### *Overlap of Organization Leadership Roles and Church Membership*

Overlap of religious positions, such as pastor and church members were appointed in staff leadership positions of the program or community development corporation which had a separate formal designation as 501(c)(3). For example, at the Head Start program at Union Baptist, the four directors were either pastor or prominent church members and the board which oversees the nonprofit programs were almost entirely members of the congregation. Volunteers came from the congregation as well. At Union Bethel, which incorporated a CDC after almost 20 years of leadership by one pastor, the same pastor became the Chair of the CDC and the Asst. Pastor is the Executive Director. Similarly at Northwood-Appold, the pastor is the head of both the 501(c)(3) for both the marriage education program and the public charter school, although lay members of the church serve respectively as director and principal. At Cookman, they chose not to incorporate formally as a 501(c)(3), and similar overlap between prominent church members and staff leaders is seen. The pastor serves as executive director and the program director is also a prominent church member. Not all the staff are church members, but key staff appear to be directly involved in both the congregation and the programmatic arm or nonprofit hosted. At Union Bethel, while just 3 out of 9 CDC board member positions are reserved for church members, it so happens that many influential community members who serve on the CDC board are also members of Union Bethel.

#### *Use of Separate 501(c)(3) Designation*

Forming separate 501(c)(3) was observed as a relatively recent phenomenon among the African American (church) community. It was viewed by the Pastor of Union Bethel as a way to “enhance, embellish, or expand” the services that the congregation was already doing, and would continue to do. This pastor said that it is a matter of semantics that religious people call such programs “ministry” and others call it “service.”

Cookman UMC is unique in choosing not to form a separate, program-related 501(c)(3). In the late 1990s, early 2000s, church leaders started the paperwork to form a separate 501(c)(3) for the programmatic ministries of the church and then decided against it. Under the pastor’s leadership the congregation has kept its nonprofit status through the regional denomination office. For accounting and financial purposes, the congregation partners with a local coalition as a fiduciary agent to manage the large, primarily public grants (city, state, or federal) for programs. Working with a fiduciary partner is an innovative alternative strategy to forming a separate 501(c)(3) and helps maintain ownership of the programs under the congregation. The congregation/organization has a finance person on staff to keep proper records for the program budget, distinct from the church budget.

Stewardship differs among the various branches of Christianity (Mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, Peace Churches, Catholics, African American churches) and Jews. A final distinctive pattern was observed among the African American sites in the project. As noted earlier, the church building or a congregation-owned facility was consistently used as the place where separately formed organization programs were carried out in each of the agencies. Use of the congregation building is rent-free or is provided for lower than market cost for similar space. In one case, a pastor explained that the in-kind provision of space is used as the congregation's required match for its federal funding. This finding was corroborated in the Philadelphia Census of Congregations (PCC) data.

### **Addressing Opportunities and Concerns**

#### *Organizational Transitions – Sensitivity to Leadership*

Despite including two study sites' whose United Methodist heritage follows an appointment process directed by the regional conference rather than through an independent call process, it remained clear that pastors within Black congregations enjoy a greater degree of local autonomy and support of their congregations than may be typical of other congregational systems. This tradition makes Black congregations more flexible in their approach to providing local services, but also can result in an environment which is highly sensitive to the leadership.

Because of the African American respect for charismatic leadership and reliance on highly talented leadership, Black pastors in many traditions typically have greater autonomy within the local congregation. This means that the level of organization or administrative hierarchy is determined by the local pastor. As such, transitions in leadership can have a great impact on how things are done and what programs are supported. This is very different than for example, denominations with highly structured and centralized administrative routines for leadership transition.

One Baptist pastor described his experience of assuming leadership after the former pastor who had a long pastorate:

He was really more into being charismatic. As a result... the Church programs were somewhat in disarray, they weren't highly structured, lines of authority were very vague and responsibilities were very vague.

Additionally, within the Black Church it is more commonly accepted and practiced that the retired pastor remains an integral and respected member of the faith community. This is in contrast to more structured denominations where the retiring pastor is either appointed to a new position or is expected to find a new faith community. The on-going presence of an emeritus pastor is more common among Black congregations and this may impact programming and polity.

### **Community Conflicts and Concerns**

For African American churches, at least in urban areas, they may be likely to be experiencing some "dis-location" between their original site and immediate community, if established members have been socially "upwardly mobile" and have re-located out of the vicinity of the church building. At three sites (Northwood-Appold, Union Bethel and Wayland Baptist), the researcher noted that while some members have relocated, the communities straddle both

lower income and more upwardly mobile neighborhoods so that many members are still living in the same community.

At Union Bethel, one-fifth of the staff were estimated to live in the neighborhood. Since the majority of the staff were also members of the congregation, this is likely to be a good estimate of the proportion of congregants who live in the community as opposed to those who drive from a further distance.

This observation regarding a congregation's "residential presence" in a community may be especially salient to the programming of Black congregations and their affiliated nonprofits, given the theological value of the faith community as a source for social uplift and empowerment of the Black community. Strong Black churches which have been located in neighborhoods which experienced decline over the past several decades are an institutionalized strength and have advocated for their neighborhoods. It remains to be seen whether these Black congregations will sustain programming focused on neighborhood residents if a majority of the church members no longer live in the neighborhoods surrounding the congregational buildings and property.

This phenomenon, where by members of the congregation no longer reside in close proximity to the building, does not only affect African American congregations, but is more likely to affect younger, non-Catholic or non-Orthodox Jewish, and immigrant congregations (see Sinha, Hillier, McGrew & Cnaan, 2007). For African American congregations, the strong commitment to serving the local community may result in a stronger pull to stay rooted or connected to their local residential community. The traditional commitment to social uplift and giving back to the community may make Black congregations and their affiliated nonprofits better able to find volunteers even among members who may no longer live in that community.

#### *Ownership of Programs and Financial Accountability*

Because Black congregations have retained a closer control over established nonprofits through a high proportion of overlap between nonprofit staff and boards with congregation members, careful dialogue about decisions, turf or "ownership" of building space, properties, programs and budget transparency are raised.

One pastor described a change in policy and understanding between the congregation and the nonprofit. There was tension between the congregation and the nonprofit on control of assets. When the current pastor assumed leadership, he gave the congregation more power and re-stated the nonprofit as the affiliate of the congregation rather than as a somewhat independent program:

...there was a tension between those that kind of felt like they were safeguarding assets that were accruing in our affiliate organization and those of the Church leaders who were saying, "Now wait a minute, we paid for those assets." ...now I have them very clear that every asset is to be, that an irrevocable trust is to be given to the Church on every asset that is developed through an affiliate agency, so that everything has to have the name of the Church on it. Any, nothing can be sold or dissolved of without the approval of the Church.

As noted earlier, one Black congregation made the decision not to incorporate a separate 501(c)(3) for the purposes of community programs. The congregation went so far as to submit the paperwork to obtain nonprofit status, but never incorporated. In part this decision reflected

the leaderships' concern that the programmatic outreach remains an expression of the congregation's work in the world and does not become a separated, secularized arm of service.

### **Implications for Practice among African American Communities of Faith and Agencies**

Two features in particular distinguish social service provision by African American faith communities. The first is the intentional or unintentional use of church members on agency boards and in leadership and staff positions. A second distinguishing feature among African American communities of faith and affiliated service provision is the historic and deeply held commitment to the social uplift of the poor, disenfranchised, African Americans, and the community.

- ❖ **Use of church members on agency boards and in leadership and staff positions.** While church membership was not a formal, written requirement in any of the agencies or programs, there was a consistent overlap among agency leadership and board members with persons who were also worshipping members of the original faith community. It is not clear whether faith community leaders seek out this overlap, or whether it occurs due to informal "word of mouth" advertising for positions, or because of the convenience of available expertise among church members. All of these reasons may influence the common overlap of church members and agency positions and board membership. An implication of the overlap between church members and agency staff is that while being effective at keeping the agency and the faith community closely linked, managing overlapping communities required savvy leadership. Leaders of such agencies and congregations need to maintain and nurture open communication and clear direction for distinguishing who provides oversight and vision for the agency and the congregation.
- ❖ **Historic and deeply held commitment to the social uplift of the poor, disenfranchised, African Americans, and the community.** While this is not a "strategy" as much as impetus for maintaining close ties with the original faith community, its importance in visioning and implementing outreach and the types of services provided should not be overlooked. For example, the types of programs provided all were geared toward development, including two community development corporations; education—which included the public charter school, a longstanding Head Start program, and an alternative school for older youth; and human development—which included a marriage enrichment program and public safety programs. This historic commitment provides a common set of concerns that can unify agency efforts and help to recruit and solicit help from the wider community.
- ❖ **Special considerations for hiring policies.** One implication for practice among African American communities of faith which also sponsor or provide social services, is that agencies and congregations should be careful not to write policies or by-laws which infringe on their legal right to hire co-religionists, if indeed this is an important value for the sponsoring faith community. For example, a sponsoring faith community would not want to write by-laws which required that a majority of agency board members be from the community but not from congregation. Also, sponsoring faith communities need to be clear about the level of professionalism or quality of service they wish to and need to provide and to seek individuals who are accordingly qualified for agency positions. The pressure to hire a church member or referred person, as well as the potential inconvenience of publicly advertising agency positions should be carefully monitored to ensure that individuals with the right qualifications are hired.

- ❖ **Special attention to financial reporting and budget transparency.** A final implication is that congregations are not immune to calls for more budget transparency for mid-sized and larger nonprofits. Black congregations which are highly connected in staffing and expenditures to affiliated nonprofits must become proficient in maintaining accounting records which distinguish the congregation budget from the nonprofit budget and be able to show to external funders how the funds are invested.

## Organization/Faith Community Relations in the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Quakers are one of several sects that developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in response to the new Protestant state religions. Unprogrammed Quakers in this study have no formal creed, but share central testimonies of simplicity, equality, integrity, nonviolence, and *seeking that of God in everyone* which guide both worship and work in the world such as the development of nonprofits involved in social services, education, health and senior services. Decisions are made by waiting on the lord in silence in community, there are no votes. Quaker practice is largely learned by socialization, which leads to wide variation in interpretation of what makes an organization Quaker and appropriate forms of governance for organizations. Quakers share the following attributes with the other historic peace churches such as Mennonites and Brethren:

- ❖ **An emphasis on experiential religion**
- ❖ **Belief that all members - not just ordained clergy - are vital members of the religious community called to live out their faith.** Quaker administrative leader and nonprofits scholar Thomas Jeavons comments that Quakers did not abolish the clergy, they abolished the laity.
- ❖ **Communal and non-hierarchical decision making systems and organizational structures**
- ❖ **Commitment to equality and respecting the beliefs, values and lifeways of everyone, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, gender, or disability**
- ❖ **Central value placed on living in peace and creating a peaceful world.** While Peace Churches are best known for their anti-war stance, commitment to peace includes non-violence in all aspects of life and is closely linked to the commitment to equality and respect for all peoples.

### History of the Religious Society of Friends and its Organizations

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) started around 1652 in England. A small sect of followers of George Fox, Friends base their worship and practice on “waiting upon the Lord” in silence. The label “Quakers” was applied by outsiders based on the fact that some people would shake as they delivered messages. The early religion was heavily inspired by the Bible, but Friends believed that true religion came from direct reinterpretation by the individual rather than the teachings of “hireling ministers.” As a religious institution, Friends have a bottom up structure, with the Monthly Meetings (congregations) as the central organizational entity. Friends practice an experiential religion, based on evolving faith through every day activity. Central tenets of early Quaker faith include abjuring all outward signs of traditional religion such as baptism, holidays and even a formally structured worship service. There was no formal hierarchy nor were there paid ministers. These beliefs and practices are continued in “unprogrammed” Meetings today. Instead, faith and practice are based on “continuing revelation” of the word of God through the experience of believers.

By the end of the 17th century, Friends had also developed larger structures which played a role in maintaining the religion. The structure partially reflected boundaries created by horse and



buggy modes of transportation. In the northeastern United States, “Quarterly Meetings” consisted of several Meetings in close proximity to each other which met on a quarterly basis to carry out business in common for those Meetings. Quarterly meetings are grouped together into Yearly Meetings. Both Quarterly Meetings and Yearly Meetings are creatures of the Monthly Meetings, not the other way around. While Yearly Meetings have more voice and formal functions than the Quarters, they also exist to serve the members of individual Meetings, not determine policy for the local level. As larger administrative bodies, the two Yearly Meetings in this study have educational and administrative resources used by the Monthly Meetings and the social service projects under the care of those meetings.

Baltimore and Philadelphia Yearly Meetings are the two of the oldest and institutionally complete Yearly Meetings in the country. Today, both have campuses that share the Yearly Meeting offices with Quaker institutions and multiple paid staff. Both evolved in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as Meetings established in both the Quaker colony of Pennsylvania and the extended area from Virginia to Maryland formed into larger conferences. Both Meetings also split into two in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as Hicksite Quakers that reflected a strong belief in continuing revelation split from the Orthodox, which had evolved into a more rule led form. Both Hicksite and Orthodox Meetings and Yearly Meetings met independently into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, gradually merging again by the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both Yearly Meetings include a wide range of Monthly Meetings as constituent members.

Despite these similar histories, the tone of the two yearly meetings and the largest Meetings that contribute much of the leadership is somewhat different. In Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting (CPMM), the largest original Hicksite Meeting and several other formerly Hicksite Meetings in Philadelphia and elsewhere dominate the Yearly Meeting. These Meetings also include many members who are national staff for AFSC (American Friends Service Committee), FGC (Friends General Conference), and people involved in a large array of nonprofit social justice initiatives. FGC functions as a resource organization to Monthly and Yearly meetings throughout the United States that have chosen to join this conference, with no joint decision making functions. The Yearly Meeting is located in the same structure as CPMM, AFSC, and a national umbrella group for Friends Schools, and has significant staff that support the social justice ministries and other work in the world of constituent Meeting members.

In Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Hicksites comprised 4/5 of the membership, but Orthodox continued to have significant influence. The Yearly Meeting rejoined, but did not reunite; this process took many more years than in other Yearly Meetings. The Yearly Meeting campus is located on ground adjacent to the large, historic Meeting at Sandy Spring along with a Friends School and a retirement community under the care of the Yearly Meeting. While several of the Monthly Meetings include a large number of activist members engaged in social causes, Yearly Meeting has limited staff and none devoted to their support. Instead, the Yearly Meeting nominating committee identifies individuals to serve on the boards of one school and one retirement community. The retirement community, located near the Sandy Spring campus serves the largest percentage of Quaker elderly of all of the Quaker retirement communities nationwide, in large part because it has low to moderate income housing options.

As Friends spread across the United States, adapting to the local culture and responding to variation within society, the religious community split into several factions. “Unprogrammed” Meetings continue the practice of silent worship with no formal structure. Many of these meetings belong to the larger umbrella group FGC. In some other parts of the country, particularly the Midwest and parts of the Pacific coast, Quakers adopted the belief systems and worship practices of the other Christian sects in their communities. “Programmed” meetings

often resemble Methodist or Evangelical churches with paid ministers, a formal worship structure, and more Christocentric belief systems than the most liberal unprogrammed Friends. However, programmed Quakers share core beliefs and communal decision making structures with unprogrammed Meetings. Friends United Meeting (FUM) and Evangelical Friends International are the two largest Friends conferences for programmed Meetings in the United States. Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) attempts to draw together these various strands of the Quaker community in joint meetings and through providing some general resources.

“Work in the world” has long been important in the Religious Society of Friends. As with other promptings of the Spirit, individual Friends are led to work on social issues. Most Quaker social service stems from the concept that there is that of God in everyone. As with Friends like John Woolman and Lucretia Mott who sought to end injustice toward native Americans, slaves, women and the poor, this sense that everyone is equal in the sight of God leads to work to foster equality and justice for those excluded from social goods. In many cases, Friends work is characterized by one on one contact which seeks to expand boundaries in the best sense of sharing social capital.

Most established Quaker organizations came out of leadings by one or two Friends who garner the support either from their Meeting or like minded Friends to develop ideas into institutions. These leadings have included innovative approaches to mental health, prison reform, and a variety of social justice issues such as anti-slavery initiatives, peace work and civil rights activities. Some of these organizations have evolved into large formal structures such as hospitals. Others include settlement houses, schools, mediation clinics, organizations to discourage military enlistment, and an array of projects among marginalized populations like low income people, immigrants, and people of color. These organizations continue to develop on a regular basis and Friends are led to develop new projects. This study included several of the older established organizations as well as recently formed entities.

Other Quaker organizations initially develop to employ and serve Friends, but evolve into institutions largely serving others, with few Quakers as employees. The largest and best known of these is the American Friends Service Committee. This study included the Middle Atlantic Regional Office for the Service Committee as well as discussion with older Quakers and national office staff familiar with the earlier years of the organization. One regional board member recalled:

Essentially it was Friends that were led to try to provide some services back in World War I actually, particularly for children is one aspect. But the other one was more conscientious objection to try to find a route through people who for spiritual reasons did not want to engage in combat. As I understand it initially the notion was that they were trying to find a way that they could serve in other ways. So a number of people became medics and other things and helped save people as opposed to kill them.

AFSC remained a largely Quaker organization with strong ties to Friends through World War II, gradually developing into both a national and international social service and development organization with the mission as *a practical expression of the faith of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Committed to the principles of non-violence and justice, it seeks in its work and witness to draw on the transforming power of love, human and divine.* During the Vietnam war many non-Friends were drawn to the AFSC as a place to perform alternative service, and many of these people, in turn joined the Society of Friends. Coming from diverse religious backgrounds and reflecting the range of strategies of the antiwar movement, these newcomers

gradually changed both the organization and Society of Friends. In 1978, the AFSC passed a historic diversity policy that greatly broadened the staff sources, voices and approaches in the organization. As the number of non-Quaker staff rapidly outnumbered Friends and the organization moved away from significant volunteer involvement of Quaker youth and adults in the organization, it became attenuated from Friends.

As noted in earlier research (Schneider 1999), Friends values of equality and answering that of God in everyone often leads to rapidly including the people served by the organization in decision making structures, regardless of their class, race and religious backgrounds. Our pilot study revealed that organizations that make efforts to orient staff and people served into Quaker culture and process retain a Quaker ethos, organizations that have been less careful to socialize outsiders into Quaker process can eventually come to resemble secular organizations dominated by people from the various groups that staff the organization or use its services (Schneider 1999, Jeavons 1994). As relationships between the Religious Society of Friends and organizations created by Quakers but largely dominated by non-Friends become attenuated, the various religious entities among Friends have questioned those connections (Schneider 1999, Fager 1988). As with the AFSC office studied here, organizations sometimes make an effort to re-engage with Quaker practice. In other cases, the relationship between the religious community and nonprofits remains conflicted with both organization staff and the wider community of Friends expressing frustration with each other due to mismatched expectations and cultural misunderstandings. We saw similar problems in one smaller institution in the current study.

The same issues appear with Quaker schools, but often with different results. Friends initially started schools to serve their own members, with entirely Quaker staff. However, by the mid-19th century, these schools were serving anyone who could afford to pay, with some making consistent efforts to include youth from diverse backgrounds through scholarships. Like with AFSC, most of the schools evolved into institutions where both Quaker staff and students were a minority. Most of the schools provided Quaker style education to upper middle class students, with Meetings and schools providing scholarships for Quakers and targeted others who could not afford increasing tuition. However, unlike the AFSC, most of the schools retained strong connections to one or several founding Meetings, incorporating Quaker values and practice in all aspects of the organization. As a result, the schools appear less likely to draw criticism from Friends that they “are not Quaker enough.” Instead, the schools have served as a mechanism to draw people to the Society of Friends or develop adults who share Friends values while practicing other religions.

The retirement communities also share the same trajectory. Initially founded to serve Quakers, many now have majority residents who are well to do seniors from other religions. Most of the retirement communities share Quaker organizational practice that includes shared decision making with residents, through listening to residents’ point of view. In retirement communities with a strong Quaker ethos embedded in their processes, resident involvement extends Quaker values throughout the organization. However, in retirement communities where upper class, non-Quaker resident voices dominate decision making, Quaker values can be undercut in favor of developing a consensus that includes the values of residents. Our study included retirement communities that reflected both ends of this spectrum.

### **Organizations and Faith Communities Participating in the Study**

The project deliberately chose to include a mix of organizations that represent the range of types of Quaker nonprofits, both large established organizations and smaller or newer ones,

and those with different relationships to their founding faith community. Large established organizations included the regional AFSC office, one school that is over 200 years old, and two of the established retirement communities, all located in Baltimore Yearly Meeting. Newer and smaller organizations included a senior services organization and newer school located in Baltimore Yearly Meeting as well as a crime victim's services organization in Philadelphia.

We also sought institutions with different relationships to their founding faith communities. One of the schools is a separate 501(c)(3), but with strong relationships with its founding faith community. The other, also a 501(c)(3), is under the care of a small worship group involved in its founding. However, during the project this school unsuccessfully sought support from the Quarterly Meeting in order to draw stronger board participation and financial support from Friends. As the project ended, the Baltimore Yearly Meeting agreed to take it under its care and provide similar supports.

The two retirement communities enjoy positive relations with their faith communities, but one is under the care of a Monthly Meeting and the other the Yearly Meeting. The third senior services organization has a long history of conflicted relations with its founding Meeting, which came to a head during the study period. The crime victim's services organization originally received strong support from its founding Meeting, but about 10 years ago spun off as a separate organization and now has little contact with the Meeting outside of spiritual support for the executive director. The AFSC regional office has strong support from Baltimore area Friends and some Quaker staff.

The faith community entities supporting these institutions also varied. We included two large, city meetings, one in Philadelphia and another in Baltimore. The Baltimore Meeting had connections to three of the organizations in the study. We also included the Yearly Meeting's relationship to the retirement community and both the connections between the small preparative meeting currently supporting the second school and its subsequent search for Quaker support.

## **Practical Theology**

Friends believe that each individual - regardless of membership in the Religious Society of Friends or any other religion - contains the light of God within themselves. Participants in Friends worship wait in silence for divine messages. Occasionally prompted to speak by the Spirit, any participant can rise to give a message. Worship thus consists of the voice of the spirit flowing through people engaged in the community of worship. In present day Meetings, anyone can come to worship and everyone technically has equal right to speak.

This practice of encouraging participation of everyone involved is a hallmark of Quaker organizations. All of the organizations in the study involved staff and program participants in committees involved in decision making for the organization. For example, one school involved students, parents and staff in decisions related to a new diversity policy for the school. The retirement communities had committees of residents who were active in supporting the institution, developing activities, and recommending policy. Likewise, all of the board meetings used Quaker practice which included allowing all involved to participate. Organizations' use of Quaker worship in their activities varied significantly. The schools and retirement communities regularly sponsored Quaker worship. In the schools, attending Meeting was part of school practice. Quaker practice in staff or participant activities was less common in the social service agencies and the retirement community with non-Quaker executive director and dominated by non-Quaker residents, however is present to some degree at the schools.

While Friends practice allows participation by everyone in attendance at a given meeting for worship or business, the community has always controlled membership and patterns of speech and behavior. Authority in the Religious Society of Friends resides in the “Monthly Meeting”: a small group equivalent to a congregation. Individuals join a particular Meeting; one cannot declare oneself a “Quaker” without first joining a Monthly Meeting. The entire community agrees to admit a new person to membership after a committee has determined that they are “clear” about their calling to membership and understand the basic beliefs and practices of this particular meeting. As a result, Quaker communities consist of known people who participate in shared decision making processes. People who have been part of the community longer or who are known for culturally appropriate behavior and wise council are given more “weight” in the decision making process.

Quaker business practice in both Meetings and organizations that follow Friends practices rely on the theological patterns of waiting on the Lord for decisions and group discernment processes similar to worship services. A “meeting for worship for the purpose of business” involves Friends gathering together to discern the will of God regarding a particular point of community business. Quaker process calls for the group of people gathered to conduct business to develop a shared sense of Meeting on any given issue. There are no votes and all must agree or “stand aside” before the Meeting can proceed with a decision.

While all of the boards used Quaker practices in board meetings, whether these board meetings more closely resembled a Meeting for Worship or a secular consensus process varied enormously depending on the understanding of these processes by Quaker and non-Quaker board members alike. As a non-creedal religion where faith is learned by socialization, the tone of any Meeting for Business can vary widely. Established Friends note that one recognizes good Quaker process when one sees it, but its elements are hard to define. We witnessed cases of extraordinarily rich discernment in some Quaker business meetings while others started with a very brief “moment of silence” and quickly devolved into debate.

As discussed under the stewardship section next, organizations where Quaker business practice was less strong generally had fewer established Friends as board leaders and limited processes to explain Friends practice. For example, in one instance, we witnessed two board members - one a fairly new Friend and the other a Quaker with years of experience - providing contradictory information on Quaker practice to a new board member. The executive director, also not a Friend, watched from the side perplexed.

Members that feel called to develop a ministry bring their project to their Monthly meeting for discernment and support. Many Quaker organizations evolved out of either individual “leadings” or Meeting wide discernment that the community should engage in a particular service. For example, the crime victim’s services organization started out when a state agency approached this organization to offer crime victim’s services and a Meeting member decided that this opportunity was a leading to allow her to put a concern for restorative justice into practice. These “social concerns” are tested by Quaker Meetings and supported by the individual Meeting and sometimes larger structures like Quarterly or Yearly Meetings. While this practice of discernment is described in a number of Quaker documents on leadings, in practice the role of a Meeting in discernment varies widely. One Meeting former clerk in an activist Meeting that had generated many ministries commented:

I think I would say to some innocent bystander that I don't think there is any consistent pattern. I do think that ministries arise largely from an individual's leading. Sometimes

they are quite quirky. I am guessing that the patterns about that among Quakers broadly are quite uneven.

What happens after a leading is either approved by a Monthly Meeting or gathers support from a group of like minded Friends varies enormously. In some cases, organizations followed the trajectory of first becoming a project of the Meeting, then spinning off as a separate organization. These nonprofits generally were under the care of one or more individual Meetings, but sometimes large projects or those that sought to involve a wider audience among Friends, came under the care of a Quarterly or Yearly Meeting. In some cases, like the AFSC, initially started independent of any single Meeting, organizations develop structures where Monthly, Quarterly, or Yearly Meetings appoint board members. In other cases, as with the crime victim's services organization, the project remained a Meeting project for many years, then spun off as a separate entity with no Quaker connection. In this case, as with others, developing an ultimately separate organization with the philosophy of Friends was the initial intent.

The other key testimonies that make up practical theology of Quakers: simplicity, non-violence, equality, integrity, and seeking that of God in the individual have many different interpretations. For example, non-violence may play out as efforts toward conflict resolution in agency processes or governance. Sometimes, non-violence translates into fear of conflict, which can lead a board to come to stalemates over difficult decisions or allow more assertive members to control. Seeking God in the individual can lead to an emphasis in finding the good in everyone or an emphasis on providing for each individual.

Quaker Meetings are intentional communities with members developing trust with each other through face to face contact. In the best cases, this means that Friends go out of their way to get to know each other and support each other. But Quaker communities can also devolve into cliques, backbiting and accusations of favoritism. For example, one well respected Quaker leader noted:

I think when you brought to bear on their work what I believe what would be good Quaker practices and principles, they didn't necessarily understand. They wouldn't call it that, but they came to like this thing. It seems to me in some ways being a good Friend is a higher order of functioning. It is easy for people to throw stones at someone. It is more difficult to go and sit with them and break bread with them and talk through things to try to bring them to where you want them to be. I didn't let somebody play by one set of rules and have everybody else play by another because I believe in equality and believe that you should be consistent in your practices. So out of that invariably people will say things like, "I know so and so is not one of your favorite people." You know. The fact that I try to insure that someone does the right thing - there is no favoritism here but people struggle with those kinds of things and want to make attributions in terms of their own personal struggle. So my point is I think when we can reach a point when our actions are not guided by personal feelings that they are guided by God and everyone that is a higher order functioning. I think folk who try to practice that are in a much better position, who believe in that and try to affect that in their personal lives are in a much better position to do that professionally.

This importance of the quality of interpersonal interaction and trust of known individuals plays out in organizations in diverse ways. In the most positive sense, organizations run with a philosophy like this leader's promote egalitarian, creative decision making with a strong sense of communal experience. People return to these organizations, for example, the history of one of the Friends schools reported that a number of teachers were hired from among former students

who may not have been Quaker. However, a tendency to hire known individuals from within the organization can lead to bad hiring decisions as people lacking gifts of administration can be placed in positions not appropriate for their skill set. Or a well respected former employee who is not a Friend may support agency practices less in keeping with Quaker process. We saw all of these tendencies in the organizations in this study.

### **Stewardship and Strategies for Maintaining Connections**

The primary way that Quakers maintained connections to their organizations was board appointments. Most organizations had by-laws stipulating that a majority of board members should be Quaker. The percentage of board members required to be Quaker varied from a simple majority (51 percent) to 100 percent, although one school changed its bylaws during the study to permit fewer than a majority of Friends. Mechanisms for appointing board varied from the sponsoring Meetings or higher level judicatories appointing members, to appointments through various regional bodies, to independent nominating committees. The crime victim's services organization that maintained no formal relationship with its founding Meeting had no such stipulation. A few years after it was launched as a separate organization, it had no board members with any connections to Friends.

While these board appointments provided an important link between organization and founding faith community, the Meetings and Yearly Meetings often provided no guidance on how those board members should either report back to the sponsoring religious body or their responsibilities on boards. In general, we found that strong organizations tended to have little trouble receiving appropriate board appointments, and most of the people asked to serve on these boards had previous board experience. However, organizations with less stellar reputations had more trouble, and reports of meddling or inappropriate board members occurred. In addition, Meetings overseeing several organizations or communities with a limited number of Friends reported continuing problems, as one organization leader commented: "there isn't the volume of Quakers to easily fill all of the Quaker board positions in Quaker organizations." One comment illustrates the challenges regarding Quaker board members:

And I know with some other Friends' organizations that are struggling with governance because there is confusion over different things. I think that ours has been fairly straightforward. You get on the corporate board, this is your role. ...the only thing that Friends struggle with sometimes is where governance ends and implementation begins. You have to constantly remind.

Two highly respected umbrella organizations, Friends Council for Education and Friends Services for the Aging offered board trainings and materials. We found that use of these resources was uneven, unfortunately with board members at the better governed organizations more likely to take advantage of workshops or other materials than those that were struggling, although one new school was very active in using these resources.

Beyond board appointments, organization by-laws sometimes stipulated Quaker practice and mission statements often stressed the Quaker roots of organizations. Here again, board leaders had a strong role in implementing Quaker practice at the board level. For example, one experienced Friend introduced Quaker queries related to board governance at the beginning of every board meeting. Queries are questions that ask people to think about how they approach a particular issue in worship and are useful in an organization without a creed.

While board appointments were the primary formal mechanism for stewardship, informal

networks and interactions with the organization proved the most effective way that organizations maintained ties with their founding faith. This was easiest in organizations that served Friends such as the schools and retirement committees. Active boards and volunteers played a similar significant role in all organizations, particularly in the social service entities. Where this social capital was attenuated or missing, organizations frequently lost touch with their founding organizations.

Boards hire organization executive directors, and the care that they took to select directors that reflected their beliefs powerfully impacted on the ability of Quaker organizations to maintain their religious ethos throughout the organization. The most effective directors were not always Quaker themselves, but they understood the values and process behind a Quaker organization. Effective directors also maintained close ties with members of the Society of Friends, particularly the Meetings or other Quaker communities with oversight for the organization. They also maintained strong ties with leaders in other Quaker organizations providing similar services, often through umbrella organizations where they existed. This social capital provided a mechanism to draw resources and more important informal supports for organizations.

Some organizations made formal reports to their sponsoring Meetings or had information sessions at Yearly Meeting and FGC meetings. AFSC, in particular, managed its relationship with Friends through a combination of media heavy, scripted presentations at Yearly Meeting and FGC gatherings combined with informal conversations with Friends. Quaker organizations also sent out newsletters and flyers for events to Quaker networks, sometimes using mailing lists garnered partially through their sponsoring faith communities.

Fundraising for Quaker organizations was usually initiated through the organizations, with annual donation letters or events like barn sales and low cost social events with speakers or music. Sometimes organizations directly asked for donations from sponsoring Meetings or other Quaker religious institutions. Organizations with strong support from their religious bodies sometimes received small annual donations to their budgets, but fundraising from Quakers was a minor source of income for these organizations. Instead, donations for a wide array of individuals, grants, fees, government funding and bequests provided major funding sources. Most Quaker organizations, however, do not seek government funding.

Quaker organizations were more likely to receive in-kind support from Friends in the form of land or facilities located on Quaker property. Most organizations started in Quaker sponsored facilities and many remain today. Others were able to obtain land at favorable rates through Quaker networks or bequests from older Quaker families. Earlier properties like Meetings, boarding homes and schools sold by previous generations of Quakers also provided endowments that offered significant initial donations for organizations or capital for specific projects.

### **Opportunities and Concerns**

We saw two patterns among Quaker organizations. The stronger organizations had significant support from both Quakers and the wider community, with smooth transitions and ability to address current economic conditions without eliminating key services. Most of those with weak boards, which often led to weaker leadership and limited ties to Friends or the wider community, appeared in continual crisis.

Part of the problem involved the fact that Quakers often fear conflict, and would rather complain among themselves then directly face an executive director or board that is not performing to



Quaker standards. Concerns generally rested on several factors. Often, financial statements that were not transparent drew concerns because of a strong Quaker value of plain dealing and clear financial records. Organizations that violated principles of equality and non-violence also drew concerns. Preferential treatment of some groups over others would also raise comment. Finally, organizations that did not create an inclusive process so that Friends could get involved and comment on organization activities caused concern. This was typically true of the AFSC, where an organization leader commented that “some Friends expect them to pursue any idea that a Quaker has.” Organizations addressed these issues through public comment and ongoing communications, not always with success.

### **Implications for Practice**

The wide range in the success of Quaker organizations to incorporate Quaker process and ethos in the organizations over time and the variable ability of Quaker faith communities to maintain strong ties with their organizations suggests several strategies for practice:

- ❖ **Sponsoring Quaker Communities need to clarify their role in overseeing their organizations and providing governance.** Since board appointments are the primary mechanism for stewardship, perhaps material for Meetings on nominations, board roles and the interface between organizations and faith communities would be particularly useful.
- ❖ **Strengthening and clarifying feedback systems between nonprofits and their sponsoring Meetings would help both nonprofits and faith communities understand how best to support their organizations and address concerns.** Most Meetings relied on a combination of annual formal reports from the organizations combined with informal gossip about the organization, both positive and negative, as sources for information on agency activities. When Friends perceived problems in the organizations they often lacked formal mechanisms to address their concerns. While appropriate feedback mechanisms will vary depending on the nature of both the formal and informal relationship between sponsoring Meeting(s) and nonprofit, both would benefit by creating systems to address concerns from Friends about the organization.
- ❖ **Informal social networks and communications are often key mechanisms to ensure connections between organizations and faith community.**
- ❖ **Leadership choices often prove crucial in maintaining the Quaker ethos in organizations.** Careful discernment of potential leaders for their ability to both carry out organization core functions and to maintain the Quaker ethos and connections to the founding body are particularly important. The practice of hiring from within organizations to reward staff for long service regardless of their ability to achieve these goals should be re-examined. Board training on their role in hiring and managing organization leaders to ensure faith community goals would also facilitate the ability of Quaker organizations to successfully provide guidance to their organizations.

## Catholics and their Organizations

The Catholic agencies chosen for this study represent the manifold and varied ways the Church relates to its institutions. Several were directly related to their diocese:

- ❖ **Catholic Charities:** We studied one of the diocesan members of the umbrella association, Catholic Charities USA. There are 167 such member organizations – one for each Catholic diocese. Each diocesan member is directly subordinate to its bishop and is responsible for the various charitable services of the diocese. According to the *Catholic Charities 2008 Annual Survey*, nationwide, all 167 member affiliates administer or supervise 2,509 local Catholic Charities organizations. We visited and interviewed administrators and staff at both the local diocesan Catholic Charities headquarters and at several of its field agencies.
- ❖ **Parish schools:** We also studied two parish grade schools, St. Mary's in Virginia, and St. John the Baptist in Cincinnati, Ohio. Both are directly supervised by their local parish priest, and indirectly by their respective diocesan education office.

In addition, the following study agencies were affiliated with or sponsored by Catholic religious orders:

- ❖ **Two high schools:** Georgetown Prep in the Washington DC area and Seton High School in Cincinnati, Ohio were owned and sponsored by the Jesuits and the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, respectively.
- ❖ **Caroline Center** is a job-training program for inner-city women in Baltimore. It is sponsored and administered by the School Sisters of Notre Dame.
- ❖ **Catholic Hospital** (pseudonym) was originally owned and operated by the Sisters of X. It is now affiliated with a large Catholic health system, which supervises the hospitals formerly run by several religious orders.

Finally, we studied several agencies which, while originally or currently staffed by members of religious orders, do not have a formal affiliation with either the order or the Catholic Church as a whole:

- ❖ **St. Ambrose Center** is a housing agency in Baltimore which, while originally begun and staffed by the Jesuits, has since become independent of all formal Catholic ties. Its head, however, and several of its older volunteers and employees are Catholic, and a residual Catholic culture remains because of this.
- ❖ **Our Daily Bread** provides a hot meal daily to several hundred homeless people in Cincinnati. It was begun by a Catholic laywoman and a Catholic sister is currently the administrator, but it has no formal affiliation with any denomination or faith. Many local Catholic parishes, however, do provide volunteers and food.
- ❖ **The Women's Connection** in Cincinnati was founded by a Sister of Charity, and a few other sisters volunteer there, but it, too, has no formal church affiliation.

### Catholic Practical Theology

The longstanding involvement of Catholics in teaching, healing, and social ministries has roots in their underlying belief that this is a way of working for their own salvation and for the salvation of others. The idea that one would save one's own soul by tending the needs of the poor and the sick is based on the "Last Judgment" scene of Matthew 25 – "Whatsoever you did to the

least of my brothers, you did to me.” The sick and the poor were considered literally to be Jesus Christ. As one interviewee put it (quoting the Epistle of James), not to meet the bodily needs of the poor is to show that one’s faith, one’s religion, is actually dead. Catholic involvement in healing and helping the poor thus goes back literally to the foundation of Christianity. Education as a spiritual task came somewhat later, around the time of the Reformation.

Additionally, Catholics wished to save the souls of others. Since Catholicism in general has a more communal ethos than Protestantism, Catholics have tended to focus on saving groups or categories of people within their social context, rather than approaching individuals singly. Thus, Catholic hospitals were originally intended to foster repentance, penance for one’s sins through acceptance of one’s sufferings, and preparation for “a good death.” Only secondarily were hospitals intended actually to heal anyone – the state of medicine was too primitive for that. Education was primarily to train the young in religious knowledge and good spiritual practices – only secondarily to teach secular subjects. According to the historian of Georgetown Prep, “Most importantly, the Jesuits of Georgetown regarded the Christian formation of students as their primary mission. Knowledge and skills, although important, were approached as a means to an end: the knowledge and love of God.” Finally, social work was engaged in primarily to rescue poor families, single women, widows, and orphaned children from the danger of dissolute lives. In religiously pluralistic societies such as the United States, Catholics attempted to create an institutionally complete subculture meeting all of these needs, both as a shield from pernicious and secular influences and also to model “an integral Catholic culture and ultimately to convert the larger world to that culture” (Gleason 1995: 90).

In the mid-twentieth century, several changes occurred, both in the Catholic Church and in the larger society, which altered how this practical theology was expressed – and may, in some instances, have altered the theology itself:

- ❖ **U. S. Catholics became largely assimilated to middle-class American culture.** By the third and fourth generations after immigration, they earned approximately the same income and had the same level of education as the average American Protestant. They no longer needed – or wanted – to be protected from American society; they were part of it.
- ❖ **Hospitals, schools, and social service agencies became professionalized and bureaucratized.** State standards governed who could provide services, who could be served, and what kinds of services could be provided. Catholic schools, hospitals, and other agencies increasingly resembled other organizations in the same field (DiMaggio 1998).
- ❖ **The Second Vatican Council articulated a new language for expressing Catholics’ relationship both to God and to the rest of humanity, as well as new rituals and iconography to embody it.** Hierarchy was de-emphasized in favor of seeing the laity as “the People of God,” called equally with the clergy and religious orders to holiness and to leadership in the Church. The Council taught that salvation was possible for members of other faiths; the need to insulate the faithful from other religions or from secular society was ridiculed as “ghetto Catholicism” (Wittberg 2006: 120).
- ❖ **The Council document on “The Church in the Modern World” (*Gaudium et Spes*) urged all Catholics to become active in addressing the most pressing social needs.** These changes were reflected in the Catholic organizations in this study. At the

same time, the older theology and practices also persist, mixing with newer rationales and images in a sometimes uneasy synthesis.

- ❖ **The new image of the Church as “People of God” removed Catholic religious orders from their supposed superior state of holiness and relegated (non-ordained) sisters and brothers to the status of laity.** The numbers of sisters and religious order priests and brothers fell precipitously, to the extent that few, if any, still serve in the schools, hospitals and agencies we studied. This was not merely a financial burden; it also removed a basic icon or symbol of the religious status of the organization. In most of the organizations we studied, our interviewees mentioned the impact of the loss of the sisters’, brothers’ and priests’ presence. Both parish grade schools, both high schools, and the hospital, all mentioned this. Newer agencies such as Caroline Center and The Women’s Connection, which were recently founded by religious orders of nuns, both worried what they would do when the current sisters on staff retired. They knew the sisters would not be replaced. The only two organizations *not* to mention this concern were Our Daily Bread in Cincinnati and St. Ambrose Center in Baltimore, which, as we will see, were unique in other ways as well.
- ❖ **Since most Catholics are no longer poor immigrants, they no longer need many of the services the institutions once provided.** The majority of the clientele of Catholic Charities/Catholic Social Services are not Catholic. As another example, the School Sisters of Notre Dame first came to Baltimore in the mid-19th century to educate the children of Catholic German immigrants. By the late 20th century, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of these immigrants had moved well into the middle class, and the neighborhood around their first school had experienced racial, religious, and economic transition. If the sisters wished to continue their original mission of educating the poor, they needed to focus on the residents of the inner city, who were, for the most part, *not* Catholic. The same situation applies to The Women’s Connection in Cincinnati.
- ❖ **State-mandated regulations, insurance standards, and other “isomorphic pressures” impact the organizations.** This was especially true for the hospital we studied. Uniform standards for Medicare and insurance reimbursement regulated services to patients and required nonsectarian standards for admission and treatment. Hospital executives (who were increasingly likely to be laypersons, or even non-Catholics, rather than members of the originally-sponsoring religious order) were expected to display business and administrative credentials rather than spiritual vision. Economic constraints made it difficult, and soon impossible, for a hospital to operate as a stand-alone facility, so it was absorbed into a large system with headquarters out of state. All this made it more difficult to retain a religious ethos. The *Catholic Charities 2008 report* notes the same situation holds for the diocesan Catholic Charities affiliates, which on average receive 67% of their funding from the government and only 3% from diocesan and church support. This government funding limits how “Catholic” Catholic Charities can be in its staffing and its daily operations. Between 85 and 90% of the staff at the large Catholic Charities agency in this study are not Catholic. The possibility of the eventual loss of their religious identity bothered some organizations, while others, like The Women’s Connection and St. Ambrose Center, did not feel it would matter. Still others, notably the two parish grade schools and Our Daily Bread, were adamant about retaining their religious founding vision – even to the point, for Our Daily Bread, of refusing to accept government money or to be part of the United Way.

- ❖ **The Second Vatican Council's influence can also be seen in the reluctance of many of the organizations to advertise their Catholicity very strongly.** Sometimes, as with the Caroline Center in Baltimore and Our Daily Bread in Cincinnati, this may have been to avoid offending their clientele who were not Catholics. But even at Georgetown Prep, whose student body is between 70% and 80% Catholic, one interviewee said "It is not a school whose foundation is oriented toward evangelization... I think during the course of their time with us, people find their own faith traditions stimulated so they find out more about their faith... But we are very comfortable in helping people to come to understand their own faith tradition better – to become more faithful persons within the context of their own faith."

In spite of these changes, much also remains the same. The two grade schools remained strongly Catholic, with religious iconography, and near-100% Catholic faculty and students. Our researchers also noted that the students in all four schools were expected to perform some form of service to the poor – a reflection of a Catholic emphasis that goes back centuries, if not millennia. In other ways, too, the organizations' religious character continues to surface: both Georgetown Prep and one of the parish grade schools had regular spiritual retreats for both students and faculty. At Georgetown Prep, there is also a program to train the students in the spirituality of St. Ignatius. Finally, most of the interviewees emphatically stated that they did not de-emphasize their organization's religious identity in the community at large. The exceptions were Our Daily Bread (whose administrator admitted, however, that the organization's very name advertised its religious roots) and The Women's Connection in Cincinnati, and St. Ambrose Housing in Baltimore, which are becoming more secular as their founders pass from the scene.

### **Stewardship in Catholic Organizations**

Stewardship refers to the faith community's efforts to maintain its practical theology of justice and charity in the activities of its affiliated nonprofits. Catholic educational, health care, and social service organizations are typically connected to their sponsoring denomination via one of two routes: they are either directly owned and supervised by a diocese or parish, or else they are owned and/or sponsored by a religious order. The two parish elementary schools we studied fell into the first category; so does Catholic Charities. Each Catholic Charities is officially subordinated to the local diocese; the two parish grade schools are subject to the pastor of the church to which they are attached. Both high schools, one of the social service agencies, and the hospital fell in the latter category. Caroline Center, Georgetown Prep, and Seton High School are officially subject to the religious orders that founded them, but all three of these organizations have become separately incorporated in recent decades, while retaining some sort of "sponsorship" relationship to the founding order. The hospital is part of a national Catholic health care system, and is no longer subject either to the founding religious order or to the diocese – although a few members of the founding order do sit on both the hospital and the system board. Instead, the Catholic health care system is in the process of obtaining Vatican recognition as a "Public Juridic Person," the Catholic Canon Law equivalent of incorporation. Once this status is established, the system itself will be the official link that insures the "Catholicity" of its component hospitals. How well this will insure the maintenance of the hospitals' religious identity remains to be seen.

A few organizations (St. Ambrose Center, The Women's Connection, and Our Daily Bread) are completely separate, and retain few, if any, formal ties to their original sponsors. This disconnection may happen to more of the religious order-sponsored organizations in the future.

Our Daily Bread, St. Ambrose Center, and The Women's Connection are completely separated from official ties to any religious entity, Catholic or otherwise. However, some local parishes and religious orders, as well as students and alumni from the orders' schools do provide volunteers and some donations.

The only thing that can be said about the Catholic organizations we studied is that nothing in general can be said about them. The Catholic Charities branch we studied and the two parish grade schools are the most closely tied to diocesan structures, but even here, one school has an elected school board that mediates this tie and the other doesn't. Pastors and diocesan school superintendents vary in how closely they supervise local school policies and activities; the Midwestern parish school seems to use the diocesan school office more as a resource and a network of contacts than as a superior to which the principal felt he had to report. One of the interviewees at Catholic Charities noted that the bishops of the various dioceses also vary "enormously" in how closely they monitor the direction of Catholic Charities there.

The religious orders differ as well. The Jesuits who sponsor Georgetown Prep had a much clearer hierarchy and chain of command than two of the three women's religious orders, none of whose members would *ever* have said something like "I report to the Provincial Superior in Baltimore and he reports to the Vatican." The relationship of the third religious order to their hospitals adds an additional complication. Most Catholic hospitals are now folded into Ascension Health, Catholic Health Initiatives, Bon Secours, or another large, multistate health care system and are no longer owned or managed by their original orders. A sticky situation is that, while U.S. civil law recognizes the systems as owning and running their hospitals, Catholic Canon Law has, until now, considered the sisters' orders to be the "Public Juridic Person" that is officially in charge. So the sisters retain a presence on the hospitals' and the systems' boards, and final authority over a few "reserved decisions" like selling or closing a site. Currently, the largest systems are negotiating to be declared "Public Juridic Persons" in their own right. When this happens, the last official tie to the founding orders will be dissolved.

The orders have established various "sponsorship" relationships with their organizations, some of which are quite well-thought-out and detailed. The School Sisters of Notre Dame have recently (2007) established a "Sponsorship Review Process" to ensure that their overall mission and vision are consistent with how each of their sponsored organizations fulfills its separate organizational mission. To assist administrators and boards in preparing for their Sponsorship Review, a Sponsorship Coordinator has been appointed for all of the sisters' North American provinces. She has developed a series of workshops for the administrators of the order's schools and other institutions. Caroline Center is currently engaging in this process – the first non-school among SSND organizations to do so. Similarly, the Sisters of Charity (Seton High School) and the Jesuits have well-specified programs to help their organizations retain their founding religious identity and ethos. The health care system's sponsorship program is perhaps the most elaborate of all. It is a year-long program for the top- and now the mid-level administrators of all system hospitals:

We launched in 2004 our first group. It has a long name. It is called *Formation for Catholic Healthcare Ministry Leadership*. We abbreviate it to "our 2-year program"... The way it works is they basically take six courses over the two years. They come for eight retreats. The first is a week long. The subsequent ones are from Monday through Wednesday. One part of the retreat is a face-to-face with the teacher who has them on-line at that time so they get that face-to-face interaction. We do a lot of exposure to spiritual practices that will support them as leaders... They do a project for six months in their local health ministry. Those projects are tremendously variable, but very, very creative application of what they have learned. I will tell you real quickly, too, the courses

they take. They take an introduction to theology. There are some basic concepts of Catholic theology like sacramentality and Trinity, and paschal ministry but what they really are getting is the concept of thinking theologically. Really looking at where the action of God is in their life.

Finally, the umbrella organization for all religious orders (the “Leadership Conference of Women Religious”) provides training and mentoring for sisters on how to set up and maintain sponsorship relationships with their organizations. An online listserv can connect a newly-elected superior of a member order to a mentor upon her request.

Another way in which the orders, Catholic Charities, and some of the parishes relate to their sponsored organizations is through membership on their boards of directors. Again, the patterns vary. Georgetown Prep’s board is largely composed of alumni, with a few Jesuits. The grade school’s board is all Catholic, and elected by parishioners. The Board of Trustees of Caroline Center includes 25 individuals, of whom 4 are sisters from the sponsoring order. The original board of St. Ambrose Center was an extremely informal group of the founder’s friends. The board of Our Daily Bread in Cincinnati includes persons from the local community who have a history of volunteering there. The Catholic Charities branch we studied has a two-tier board: a lower tier (for which being Catholic is not a requirement), and an upper tier composed primarily of diocesan officials. The former directs the day-to-day operations of Catholic Charities; the latter has a few reserved powers such as approving the slate of board candidates, approving the choice of CEO, and approving the final closing or sale of an organization. Another aspect of the stewardship relationship is whether the agencies have separate 501(c)(3) status. The grade schools and the subordinate units of Catholic Charities like Parish Partners do *not* have this status; most of the others do.

### *Maintaining Relationships*

The differing structures of sponsorship influence how the various organizations address key issues. The orders have perhaps the most extensive and well-thought-out process of maintaining their relationship with their schools, social agencies, and hospitals – including regular retreats, periodic evaluation processes, and (for the health care system), a fully-fledged, year-long education program. Catholic Charities and the parish schools rely more on their integral links with the parish/diocese. Most of the organizations we studied operate on the same site as their religious sponsor, and there are certain doctrinal “lines in the sand” that are strictly enforced. Whether this is sufficient to keep the outlying agencies of Catholic Charities sufficiently “Catholic” remains to be seen. In completely separated agencies such as Our Daily Bread, The Women’s Connection, and St. Ambrose Center, whatever relationship to Catholicism remains is completely dependent on the continued presence of the (Catholic) founders – all of whom are older. All three organizations seem willing to let any residual Catholic identity lapse when the founder leaves. But they seem not to have completely realized the impact this might have on the informal support Catholics provide to them – the parish volunteer network at Our Daily Bread and The Women’s Connection, the financial investments of various religious orders in St. Ambrose Housing instead of in stocks or bonds, the free labor of the two sisters currently working at The Women’s Connection.

### *Organizational Transitions*

The major organizational transition facing all of the organizations originally sponsored by the religious orders is the imminent absence of these orders. In some organizations (the two parish schools, most departments of the hospital), this has already occurred. In others (the two high

schools, Caroline Center, The Women's Connection) it is likely to happen within the next five or ten years. The second transition is the bureaucratization of all the organizations, as noted above. This is the reason for the orders' extensive programs to train and educate their replacements in their practical theology (the official term is "charism"). It is also the reason for the umbrella organization of sisters (The Leadership Conference of Women Religious) having such an extensive mentoring process for its component orders as they shed their former sponsored institutions.

### *Current Economic Situation*

The current financial situation affects the organizations and the religious sponsors in two ways: by affecting their clientele and by affecting their own resources. Agencies such as Our Daily Bread, The Women's Connection, and especially St. Ambrose Housing have seen demands for their services increase significantly. So far, none of the three have indicated that they are unable to meet them, but they may face difficulties in the future. Several religious orders, as well as the diocese, have seen their own investments decline, which limits the amount of assistance they can provide. The four schools are largely dependent on tuition, so their enrollments have decreased as parents lose their jobs. Several schools have had to cut faculty because of this. Catholic Charities, the Caroline Center, and the hospital are heavily dependent on government grants and contracts, which are rising under the current administration. The hospital, of course, is feeling the strain which all health care organizations experience. None of the organizations we studied appear to be in imminent danger of closing, however.

To conclude, Catholicism lives up to its name in its relationship with its organizations. It is truly "universal" – spanning the gamut between tight control by the diocese or parish (and even here, the extent of this control varies across the country), to varying degrees of oversight by religious orders (some of whom are comfortable with "reporting to Rome" or to the bishop, others of whom would resist such reporting as an intrusion), to bureaucratic oversight by a distant health care system (with varying degrees and types of programs to educate and inspire administrators and lower level employees), to complete – and valued – independence from all formal religious control (while appreciating and benefiting from a variety of informal ties and assistance). While a common stereotype of Catholicism is that it is hierarchically controlled and centrally administered, in reality, there is much more variation in its relationship to its sponsored organizations than exists in any other denomination.

### *Implications for Practice*

- ❖ **Catholic organizations which have not yet adjusted to the impending absence of the religious orders from their staff and administration – and even from their boards of directors – will soon have to do so.** For some of the order-sponsored organizations, especially the health care systems, this will mean arranging a new canonical status to codify their relationship to the larger Church. Some private schools – such as Georgetown Prep in our study – may face a similar need to codify their "Jesuit" status, once no Jesuits are present.
- ❖ **Independent organizations dependent on their founder's vision – such as Our Daily Bread, St. Ambrose Housing, and The Women's Connection in our study – will face significant changes in their Catholic identity once the founder dies or retires.**



- ❖ **The prevailing assumption even among Catholics that all Catholic organizations are funded by the local Catholic diocese causes fund-raising problems for those which are not.** Even Catholic funders – to say nothing of non-Catholic funders – typically overestimate the centralization of the Catholic Church.
- ❖ **As with other denominations, all Catholic organizations face pressures to become like secular organizations from government regulations, professional standards, and client and stakeholder expectations.** This makes it difficult for them to maintain a distinct and obvious Catholic identity – especially if their primary clientele are not Catholic.

## Jewish Communities and their Organizations

*All Jews are responsible for one another. So that's our basic concept. We believe that a strong Jewish community is a positive influence spiritually on the whole world. So by building strong Jewish communities we're helping to contribute to the betterment of the whole world (interview with Jewish organization leader)*

Jewish communities and their organizations present a strong contrast to mainline Protestant and Evangelical strategies to maintain relationships with their nonprofits because education and social supports are seen as the responsibility of the entire community, with a heavy emphasis on community wide planning and collaboration across agencies. As discussed in more detail below, this expectation of community responsibility fostered community wide funding and planning systems by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which gradually evolved into Federations that now aim to serve as comprehensive fundraising, planning and centralized support structures for many local communities.

In addition to the Federation system, U.S. Jews have created a network of umbrella organizations for the Federations (Jewish Federations of North America <http://www.jewishfederations.org>) and various types of nonprofits. For example, there are national professional organizations for the Jewish Community Centers (JCC), Jewish family or social service organizations, and Jewish vocational organizations. The synagogue based school in the study belongs to the network of other Solomon Schechter day schools in the U.S. These professional associations provide places to learn best practices, share strategies, and network for new employees. For instance, the director of one of the JCCs in the study commented that the national JCC umbrella helps identify candidates for open executive positions.

In addition, in contrast with almost all other religions in this study, Jews tend to see professionalism as an important aspect of providing faith based service. Nationally, the U.S. Jewish community has created a variety of graduate level professional degree programs for Jewish communal workers to help ensure highly trained professionals that understand the faith base for their work. These efforts to create uniquely Jewish professionals combine with both national and local education programs to educate lay leaders.

Judaism differs from other religions in that it is both a religion and an ethnic group, with Jewish communities striving to include "the unaffiliated," or Jews that do not belong to a synagogue or participate in Jewish communal life. Jewish identity has traditionally been established by birth; in the more traditional denominations, the child of a Jewish mother is considered part of the Jewish community. In the liberal denominations, a child may be considered Jewish if their father is Jewish, provided that the family pledges to raise that child within the Jewish community. There is an increase in conversions, resulting in more "Jews-by-choice" looking for involvement in Jewish community organizations. Indeed, it has been pointed out that in the pluralistic, democratic environment of the United States, where studies have shown that people often consider changing the religion of their birth, ALL Jews can be considered Jews-by-choice.

Membership in a synagogue or Temple is voluntary, and many Jews consider themselves "cultural" Jews with little religious affiliation. Since the 1950s, several Jewish planning studies have expressed concern over intermarriage rates and low percentages of synagogue membership. As a generally well educated and affluent community that has largely assimilated

into U.S. society, most of the Jewish community both maintains the separate structures of the ethnic group and participates fully in U.S. socio-economic and political systems. Fostering community has increasingly become a goal for Federations.

The Jewish support system also differs from that of other religions because the community wide system to support Jewish nonprofits was not formed by synagogues or Temples, and indeed is considered a neutral entity where Jews from various branches of Judaism and secular Jews can work together. While most Federations today have some form of outreach to synagogues/Temples, the worship communities remain separate from the Federations. While Jews who emigrated to the U.S. before the late 19<sup>th</sup> century mostly came from traditional Orthodox religious backgrounds, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> century, the religion in both Europe and U.S. has evolved and splintered into several movements that define and practice the religion differently.

The major divisions in the U.S. include the modern Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and ultra Orthodox/Hasidic movements. Each differs in its interpretation of Jewish law and tradition, including dietary rules, appropriate activities for the Sabbath, and the role of women. With the exception of some types of Orthodox movements, Jews have no hierarchical or higher level adjudicatory bodies. Congregations are constituted locally with affiliations through conferences associated with various branches of Judaism such as the Reform and Conservative movements. Rabbis and other key staff are hired by their members. Studies are revealing new trends in how young adults view membership in communities, organizations, and denominations. One study called *Synagogues That Get It: How Jewish Congregations are Engaging Young Adults* (Tobin Belzer and Donald Miller, S3K Synagogue Studies Institute, 2007 p.7) points out that:

Many [young adults] make a point of avoiding denominational labels, which, they explained, obscure rather than clarifies their identities. These young adults have come of age in an increasingly pluralistic and global society. They have little patience for anyone who tries to lionize one path above others. They are put off by inter- and intra-religious judgment and competition. Many see denominational distinctions as a source of divisiveness.

As such, synagogues and temples often compete with each other for members, donations or visibility. Yet most share a sense of wider Jewish community and responsibility to provide support and education for their members. Federations are often seen as the neutral meeting point where Jews from diverse religious backgrounds come together to support the community as a whole.

### **History of Jewish Federation, Social Service, Health, and Education Nonprofits in the U.S.**

Jews migrated to the U.S. in several waves. While a small number of Jews have lived in the United States since the early colonies, the first large migration consisted of German Jews in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. This population quickly assimilated with a significant number becoming wealthy, developing both strong Orthodox populations and following their German cousins in developing the Reform movement. A large influx of Eastern European Jews arrived between 1880 and 1920, with their descendants forming the core of most U.S. Jewish communities today. While class variation existed within this newer migration, many of the Eastern European Jews were craftsmen or small businessmen from small villages, lacking the sophistication of the German population.

This Jewish migration mingled with the even larger Eastern and Southern European migration drawn to the U.S. by the industrial revolution, and experiencing the poverty and poor work conditions of many U.S. cities at the turn of the century. Although German Jews had earlier founded educational and social welfare support organizations, this new migration fostered a strong concern to provide supports and Americanize this large Eastern European population. Many of the settlement houses and precursors to other Jewish recreational and welfare institutions were founded at this time. Simultaneously, the Eastern European population developed fraternal groups and a network of their own institutions to support their own.

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jewish communities grew concerned over the multiple competing fundraising efforts and duplication of services. The Federation movement started in Boston and Cincinnati, quickly spreading to most of the Jewish communities in the U.S. with sufficient population base (Bernstein 1984:3). At the local level, Federations are member organizations designed as the fundraising and planning arm for Jewish social service, Jewish education, and Jewish communal life in constituent communities. Although Federations and their constituent agencies are separate from congregations, the religious and social welfare institutions maintain strong social capital ties, each recognizing the importance of the other.

Federations initially consisted of separate fundraising and planning arms. These combined campaigns initially included separate appeals for Palestine/Israel and local communities, most of which had evolved into combined United Jewish Appeal campaigns by the 1950s. These combined fundraising efforts provided models for Community Chest and later United Way fundraising systems. Bernstein (1984: 6) comments: "The combined campaigns raised more than the total of the previous fundraising by the original agencies...The agencies found that they were becoming stronger, more effective organizations within the Federation."

The research and planning arms also evolved and grew over the years. U.S. Jewish communities have a strong history of research and planning that grew more sophisticated over the 20<sup>th</sup> century as its members became more educated and as planning evolved as a profession. Many local communities began population studies combined with needs' assessments every ten years by the 1950s. Planning for specific purposes had developed before that. For example, the current Jewish Community Center system in Baltimore conducted recreation planning studies in 1936 and 1947. The logic behind planning for the Jewish community is documented in the 1947 study (National Welfare Board 1947: 46): "...the Jewish Community of Baltimore has the opportunity to provide sound, long range planning program which can make possible savings for the community, both financially and programmatically..."

Planning efforts sought to ensure that community needs were met and duplication of services avoided. Before institution of the Federation system, Jews had developed a plethora of nonprofits and member benefit organizations to serve various purposes. Much of the Jewish social welfare system developed as an alternative to state and private social welfare systems that were fundamentally Christian in origin. In addition to a felt need to provide for Jews to protect their well being and so that they would not become a burden on the state, Jewish institutions also developed to provide culturally and religiously appropriate services to members of the community. Most mid-sized to large Jewish communities had old-age homes, organizations to provide for the poor or those with special needs, some form of child welfare, hospitals, and numerous recreational, educational and member-benefit associations. Synagogues and Temples formed their own after school religious education programs and day schools, some of which evolved into community schools for particular branches of the religion.

These independent organizations decided whether or not to join the local Federation. Usually, most of the social welfare organizations joined the Federation and the JCCs, as they were created, became key beneficiaries of the local Federation. Federation membership varied more for senior services and health organizations. For example, Charles E. Smith Life Communities, including the Hebrew Home and its affiliates, is an elderly housing organization that is still the largest Jewish institution in Washington DC area, yet it has never joined the Federation. Agencies joining the Federation often were given slots on the Federation board in exchange for agreeing to limit independent fundraising while encouraging cooperation among agencies, discouraging duplication of services, and following other Federation community wide policies. These often include determining holiday or Sabbath closing policy and sometimes levels of Kashrut, or dietary laws. In the two communities in this study, community development organizations, newer social support institutions and consolidated agencies emerged from Federation planning initiatives although they may not be Federation members/beneficiaries. In addition, Jews continue to form organizations for many purposes independent of the Federation. Many, perhaps most, Jewish organizations are not beneficiaries of a Jewish Federation yet Jewish organizations, whether affiliated with Federation or not, tend to be continually aware of their Federation status. The exceptions are the schools, many of which continue to be under synagogue or temple auspices. However, Federations increasingly provide support for educational programs as well.

Despite a focus on serving one's own, sensitivity to being outsiders and real or perceived anti-Semitism, the spiritual conviction to do good and heal the world has led many Jewish social welfare, health and community development institutions to offer services to the wider society in a manner consistent with Jewish values but without stressing religion. Even the JCCs, considered core institutions in developing Jewish identity, report non-Jewish members. The percentage of Jews served varies widely depending on agency policy and individual programs. Many Jewish organizations receive significant government funding, Carp (2002: 193) reports that in 1994, 55 percent of the funding for Jewish hospitals, 76 percent for Jewish nursing homes, 61 percent for Jewish family services, 77 percent for Jewish vocational services, and 5 percent for Jewish community centers came from government. Such funding generally requires service to people from diverse backgrounds.

Federations' stance regarding whether Jewish agencies should focus primarily on Jews or provide a Jewish presence varies widely. Increasingly, Federations are seen as the neutral center where Jews of all religious backgrounds and non-religious "cultural" Jews can come together to support the community. This unity in diversity role for Federations was highlighted over and over in our research. Perhaps the best examples come out of controversies. The following quote comes from a statement released by the Baltimore JCC in 1978 through the Baltimore Jewish Times in the midst of an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to open the JCC serving the less Orthodox community on Saturdays:

Those who are concerned about Jewish survival do not speak of one particular group surviving while others are allowed to assimilate or disappear. "We are one" does not mean "we are the same." It means we have an unbreakable bond that makes us responsible for each other. This might translate into a liberal Jew helping fund an Orthodox day school he will never use and that educates children to a form of Judaism that he doesn't believe, or insisting that meals served in Jewish institutions be Kosher so that no segment of our people is prevented from participating. Within this context non-orthodox Jews who desire Sabbath opening are requesting that they not be prevented from participating. To do otherwise is once again to prevent a segment from participating and in essence to weaken, rather than strengthen the Jewish people. (Underlining in the

original, from unpublished documents presented to the Associated, the Baltimore Federation, in April 1978, courtesy of the archives of the Baltimore Jewish Museum).

Regardless, over time Federations have increasingly played a role in creating Jewish leadership, fostering Jewish identity, managing relationships with the surrounding non-Jewish community. Leadership development programs started early, with young leadership programs beginning in the 1930s (Bernstein 1984: 7). These have become more sophisticated over time. They draw young adults into formal education and mentoring programs designed to provide formal training in the practical theology of Jewish social welfare and develop effective board members and other volunteers. Both communities studied also place young leaders first as observers on Jewish boards then help place them in initial board appointments. The result is a network of lay leaders trained in board governance, fundraising and the faith base for their service – leaders likely to evolve into the next generation of community leaders.

The same is true for professional staff. Starting in the 1960s, Federations encouraged development of executive leadership certificate programs and graduate degrees in Jewish communal service (Bernstein 1984: 266-269). Like the lay leader programs, these professional programs develop highly trained professionals, with solid understanding of Jewish history and values and strong social networks among themselves. Professional organizations combine with active involvement in umbrella groups to foster shared practices and employment networks. Faith based professionalism began early in the Jewish system. For example, the 1947 recreation study (National Jewish Welfare Board 1947: 46) commented that:

The outstanding failure has been the lack of professionally trained staff who would have geared the programs more closely to the needs of the individual, would closely evaluate the program in the light of new trends, would aim to intensify the Jewish content of the program and constantly reach out for new areas and new levels of operation.

Jewish emphasis on education as a mechanism to enhance religiosity stems from several centuries of Jewish tradition. Traditionally, Jewish communities have expected that Jewish men understand the Torah and participate actively in worship, with religious leaders called Rabbis, which translates as teachers. The historic priesthood in existence before the fall of the second Temple is still recognized, but Cohenim - as descendants of the priesthood are called, have a symbolic role that varies depending on the kind of Judaism. Education for boys continued throughout the Diaspora, and both formal and informal discussion sessions on the Torah and Talmud - the commentary on the Torah -- became culturally approved activities for adult men that continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Orthodox communities, these continue today with other forms of Judaism developing alternative Jewish education programs for both children and adults. Reform Jews have included women in education from its start, with the Conservative movement including women in increasing roles by the 1950s. This focus on education, particularly active reinterpretation of theory through education, extended to secular training by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Although Federations initially had little to do with education programs because they were seen as the province of the synagogues and temples, recent studies highlighting lack of Jewish affiliation and intermarriage have gradually led them take an increased role in encouraging Jewish education and identity. Activities including sponsoring institutes for Jewish education, various programs to promote Jewish identity like youth programs and trips to Israel, and support for day and afternoon schools. The Washington DC Federation, which formed in 1976, included day schools as members. By 1989, the Baltimore Federation had created a Board of Education. Baltimore's Associated now provides some funding to day schools as well as managing a major

Jewish foundation grant to provide scholarships to Jewish day schools. Allocations for Jewish education in Baltimore increased from roughly 4 percent in 1989 to 8 percent today. Washington DC uses nearly 10 percent of its non-designated gifts for Jewish education and outreach.

In addition to these formal education initiatives, Federations have recently developed outreach initiatives to newcomers and the unaffiliated as well as encouraging Jewish identity formation through the JCCs. JCC is seen as a core Jewish institution, but one that attempts to serve Jews with a wide range of beliefs. JCCs carefully negotiate their relationship to synagogues and are viewed differently by various community members. Consider, for example, these two statements describing the JCC from a JCC lay leader and a prominent local rabbi:

This is a Jewish center where anyone can go and believe in whatever faith they want to believe in and get whatever out of it that they can, but it is just this center of core values that does everything from aging adults to infants and everything in between (interview, lay leader).

...if you are talking about a Baltimore Jewish community, what you might assess is secular institutions: Associated - JCC, you know, institutions that are ruled by consensus, open to everyone and are governed by "Jewish values" but have to be non-denominational because religious expression is seen as divisive (interview, rabbi).

Regardless of the internal discussions within the Jewish community, they also regularly create organizations as an interface with non-Jews. Community relations councils initially formed for two reasons: 1) to combat anti-Semitism, and 2) to facilitate relationships with the wider community. This second role can take several forms. In Washington DC, the Jewish Community Council, now Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), plays a significant role in local, national and international policy-making as well as interactions with government. For example, JCRC was instrumental in securing funding for a new building for one agency participating in the study and has provided similar support over time. In Baltimore, the Baltimore Jewish Council has increasingly developed intergroup relations programs since the 1968 Baltimore race riots destroyed numerous Jewish businesses. Both community relations councils are Federation members.

In the last two decades, Federations consolidated their planning and fundraising arms into one agency with a broad community support and planning mandate. In addition to fundraising, planning, educational and outreach initiatives, the Federations increasingly provide centralized supports for their member agencies. These supports take several forms. Federations manage endowments and small family foundations in both cities participating in this study. They also provide centralized volunteer and employment banks and Jewish education materials or programs for agency staff and lay leaders. In Baltimore, the Federation owns the property for all its member organizations except one, providing facilities maintenance and playing a significant role in most capital campaigns. They also provide insurance for agencies and offer back office supports like payroll for smaller organizations. Several newer organizations are run in-house as divisions of the Federation. While Washington DC does not offer this extensive array of services, it does offer some and is currently contemplating offering more centralized back office supports in an effort to economize for agencies.

Today, there are a wide range of Jewish agencies serving various purposes. Those associated with the Federations have tended to consolidate into larger units and increasingly develop funding sources through fees and grants external to the Federation. For example, Washington DC's Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA) has included the Jewish Educational and Vocational

Service (JEVS) along with other social welfare supports. In Baltimore, the Federation collapsed the Jewish Family Service, child welfare, Boys and Girls clubs and JEVS into one Jewish Community Services in the last two years. Jews continue to create and support organizations independent of the Federation, some that maintain a Jewish identity. For example, one Washington DC agency that provides similar services to Habitat for Humanity formed outside of the Federation but receives broad support from synagogues, Jewish developers and other groups in the Jewish community. In Baltimore, several young Jews recently formed a “Jewish Ronald McDonald” house independent of the Federation.

These two examples highlight the fact that while the Federation, its member organizations, and the synagogues/temples loom large in understanding the Jewish community and its institutions, the community is wider than these organizational forms. Clubs and nonprofits form outside of these easily identifiable institutions, including national institutions like B’nai Brith with local chapters that have existed for over a century. Understanding the Jewish community’s connections to its institutions involves noting both activities associated with Federations and religious institutions as well as the involvement of individuals independent of these institutions.

### **Organizations and Communities in the Study**

This study involved two Jewish communities: two organizations in the greater Washington DC metropolitan area and four in Baltimore, with six organizations participating in the intensive first phase of the study. We added two more Washington DC area nonprofits for the second phase and one in Baltimore. Washington and Baltimore fall at different ends of the continuum of Jewish communities with very different Federation/agency relationships as a result. While Washington DC had a small insular Jewish population since its founding in the 1820s, most area Jews arrived after 1940 for government and related employment or higher education. Widely geographically dispersed, it considered itself too transient to form a formal Federation until 1976. While the Jewish population has grown and become more settled, it still includes significant numbers of Jews living in the Washington metropolitan area for a short time. Most of its participating agencies existed before the Federation and it has a less prominent role for all of them in fundraising, planning and coordination. With approximately half of its estimated Jewish population affiliated with the Federation or core institutions in 2008, it has a significant current focus on outreach, particularly to teens and young adults.

Although the Washington DC Federation participated in the Faith and Organizations pilot study in 2004-2006, it chose not to participate in this study. To provide a balanced community perspective, we relied on earlier research with the Federation from the pilot and interviews with older community leaders for the Federation that had diverse views of our participating agencies. Agencies include an organization for the elderly and one of the JCCs that are Federation members and a community development organization that is not. We also included a synagogue interfaith initiative.

Baltimore remained a small, insular, multi-generational community until recently with Federation and JCC staff both reporting that community studies ten years ago revealed that the newcomer population now is larger than the older community. Outreach to newcomers is a significant initiative, but connecting them to the established population remains a problem. Although some geographic dispersion exists today, for most of its history it has a compact geographic footprint and identifiable community population centers. While comparatively small, Baltimore’s Jewish community has been a strong, well-off, nationally prominent community funding numerous large synagogues and one of the strongest Federations in the country, the Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore. It also has one of the largest and most geographically



concentrated Orthodox communities in the country, which means that community practices often respond to the expectations of this visible and vocal Orthodox community.

Our study included the Associated and two of its member organizations in phase one of the study: the JCC and its community development organization. We also included a synagogue based day school, which is a program of the synagogue with a separate advisory committee consisting primarily of synagogue members. Later in the study, we added the hospital system that is still a Federation member although the system board, which includes a non-Jewish hospital, operates largely independent of the Federation.

### **Practical Theology**

Jewish theology of support for those in need, charity and justice comes from a combination of the Torah and the Talmud, and is reinterpreted regularly in Jewish communities and their institutions. As the quote from the beginning states, it starts with a responsibility for the community and each other. Carp (2002: 182) comments that "the responsibility for those in need is a Jewish requirement that is rooted at the very foundation of our communal processes... Jewish people have always understood that caring for the poor and sick was too important to be a matter of individual conscience alone."

Three key concepts embody Jewish philosophy on social welfare tikkun olam (to heal the world) chesed (loving kindness) and tzedakah. While the Hebrew tzedakah roughly translates as charity, the concept more accurately combines charity, justice, and righteous duty. Two thousand years of Diaspora living, often in environments that isolated and endangered Jewish communities, has led to a heightened feeling of mutual responsibility within Jewish society. There is a theological notion that the Jewish mission is to be partners with God in creation, and that everyone must help find the sacred in everyday life in order to repair a broken world. This is at the heart of the tradition that "All Jews are responsible for one another," and that leadership may rebuke individuals who are seen as impediments to accomplishing this mission. But both of these ideas only correspond to one part of an ethical equation posed by the great 1st century sage Hillel. He said "If I am not for myself- who will be for me; and if I am ONLY for myself- what am I; and if not now, when?" As Jewish communities have found freedom, acceptance, and a respite from anti-Semitism, Jewish organizations and younger generations of Jews are looking for a new balance in carrying out Hillel's dictum. Many interpret the statement as a continued theme of the Biblical prophets, whose ethical teachings were and are still taken as universal in scope. Growing numbers of Jewish organizations are including non-Jewish causes and clients within a "civic duty" part of their mission.

Well before the formal Jewish education and leadership programs described above, most Jewish professionals and lay leaders learn these precepts as children through family teaching and by example. Stories from the Talmud or later Jewish writers, similar to the parables of the New Testament, often teach these precepts. But modeling is seen as equally important. For example, one young lay leader opened a speech on fundraising for his Federation by commenting that he was serving on this board as an example to his children. Many leaders interviewed described philanthropic activities at home, by their parents and in religious school. The day school that participated in this study has children make tzedakah contributions weekly, and then jointly decide where to give the money each Friday, the eve of the Sabbath. To quote one lay leader:

Although I have friends - Jewish friends - I don't know if they give a nickel to anybody - so I think this is more familial - I think you can generalize about Jews. Some of us grew interchangeably where no matter what you have you give something.

English translations cannot get at the full theological or cultural meanings of these words. Tzedakah, chesed and tikkun olam are all mitzvot, which literally means commandments but often is translated as good deeds. Jewish law obliges community members to provide for others, whether through regular financial donations, volunteering or professional work. To quote one organization staff person: "I feel that in a way I'm doing God's work through this organization and there is some scripture that says, *Working for the Jewish community or working for the good of humanity is equivalent to being in prayer.*"

This is not charity in the sense of providing basic meals and shelter, used clothing, or needs based payments as used by some Christian denominations. Talmudic teachings explain that "the highest mitzvah is to help someone to a lucrative position" and anonymous support is considered a higher level mitzvah than an in-person gift because it preserves the dignity of the person receiving aid. This idea that providing for the community involves offering the highest quality services in professionally run organizations in order to gain the best results runs through all of the Jewish organizations in this study. Agency missions that encourage those served to live up to their highest potential also reflects these teachings.

Justice and charity are also merged in Jewish thinking. Supporting and improving the community is meant to heal the world, tikkun olam. As such, Jewish organizations participated in policy change initiatives early in U.S. history and continue a tradition of best practices and involvement in policy. Justice and charity are often used interchangeably to describe activities. For example, an interview with a rabbi associated with the day school commented: "We have a full department of what we call a gemilut hasadim (social justice) work. We send about 700 volunteers a year out into the field and soup kitchens, habitat builds, any variety of local efforts that we partner with." However, school recruitment literature describes similar activities as gemilut hasadim - acts of loving kindness. Hasadim is a different transliteration of the plural for chesed (loving kindness). These two translations are two sides of the same concept -- through acts of loving kindness one improves the world, thus promoting social justice.

These concepts were often explicitly stated in mission statements, and organization literature targeted primarily at the Jewish community. Some organizations used these concepts in their materials regardless of the audience. However, they were just as likely to be embedded in the governance and service practices of the agency. For example, at a fundraiser, the chairs talked about the agency "touching 30,000 lives a year, not just Jewish. The agency provides tikkun olam for everyone." A development director, trying to create an outreach letter that she could send beyond the Jewish community commented: "So I would say that the letter itself does not have an overt Jewish appeal. It has an underlying [one] -- improve the world for individuals and the community."

These concepts have varying interpretations and can lead to debate within the Jewish community about whether or not the agency is living up to Jewish values. In both the pilot study and this study, debate most often centered on tikkun olam. Consider these two definitions of tikkun olam from leaders of two Jewish agencies that serve both Jews and non-Jews:

All Jews are responsible for one another. If you ask me what drove me or what drove the organization, it was that, if there weren't a strong Jewish community here, then the institutions in the neighborhood would suffer and that the Jewish community would once

more leave the area. That wouldn't be good for them and it wouldn't be good for the city. But that's a...that's easier to get your arms around the Jewish community than the whole world.

Repairing the world...Our board has defined it very broadly. And one of the things I like to say is that we are the Jewish Council for the Aging – not the Council for the Jewish Aging. That was part of the explicit discussion between the founders of this organization who were all Jewish and that has continued to this day.

While both organizations serve both Jews and non-Jews, the first interprets tikkun olam as focusing on the Jewish community and the second on a Jewish responsibility to provide for the entire community. These different interpretations impact on target audience, branding, and other aspects of organization practice. The Jewish focused organization sees its primary target audience as Jews, although some of its programs serve more non-Jews than Jewish community members. The second organization has several programs that primarily serve Jews, but its target audience is clearly defined as the entire community. The first has a clearly Jewish name, and uses Jewish precepts in all its literature. It is located in Jewish community owned real estate. The second has gradually rebranded to de-emphasize its Jewish associations especially to the non-Jewish community so that non-Jews will feel more welcome and it moved out of Federation-owned real estate many years ago. Both organizations practice Jewish values, easily articulate the relationship between practical theology and their work, and have almost exclusively Jewish boards. Yet their interpretation of this one key Jewish theological concept shapes each organization differently.

Jewish concepts of afterlife also promote particular forms of giving to organizations as well as donations in general. While ideas of heaven and hell (gehenna) appear in Jewish thinking around the time of the development of Christianity, these are later day additions, not core religious concepts. Jewish traditions stress that everyone will be resurrected when the messiah comes. However, in the mean time, people live in the memories of others and the good deeds they perform in life. Financial donations by an individual or their loved ones, particularly “naming gifts,” significant donations that lead an organization to name a facility, room, community program, award or even piece of furniture in an individual's honor, reflect these beliefs. Sometimes, places will be named for an active volunteer in honor of their good deeds regardless of financial contributions. Smaller naming gifts, like leaves on a tree of life provide similar naming opportunities for less affluent or less generous donors. In addition, the tradition of creating family foundations, often the source of grants to Jewish organizations, come from the same belief system.

Beyond these primary concepts, Jewish practical theology reveals a diverse range of religious practices defined by a combination of boards, sponsoring synagogues and Federations. Both Federations have policies requiring member agency board members to contribute to Federation annual campaigns, often through volunteerism and monetary contributions in a form of tzedakah. With the exception of hospitals and other organizations providing critical life preserving services like the Baltimore hospital, Jewish agencies affiliated with Federations in both communities closed on Jewish holidays, but not the federal religious holiday of Christmas. Until spring 2009, the Baltimore Federation required all member agencies except the hospital system and one retreat center to close on Friday evening through Saturday in honor of Sabbath. As discussed below, the suburban JCC has now been allowed to open on Saturday afternoons. Kashrut policy varies with Baltimore agencies providing strict kosher meals in facilities for the Orthodox while agencies in Washington DC define policies depending on their audience.

Baltimore's Associated has encouraged agencies to start board meetings with D'Var Torah, or a lesson from the scriptures related to the main goals of meeting, which we witnessed at two organizations. While Washington DC agencies recognize this practice, it was not used at board meetings. One annual meeting began with a Jewish song by a Cantor. Ironically, while Baltimore's Associated uses more traditional religious practices, it clearly states that each of its agencies is open to everyone regardless of religion. Washington DC Federation, on the other hand, seems more concerned that its agencies focus on the Jewish community.

### **Stewardship and Maintaining Connections in the Jewish Community**

The introduction, history and discussion of practical theology describe the primary Jewish strategies for maintaining connections between nonprofits and the Jewish community. Federation member organizations and synagogue sponsored schools respond to policies set by the Federation or synagogue. In Washington DC, these were formalized through contracts as well as requirements that agencies participate in joint agency planning and collaboration meetings. For instance, JCA participates in the Federation-sponsored Interagency Forum on Aging. Baltimore has a number of mechanisms to maintain connections, including formal relationships like owning the property and providing insurance. But connections are maintained primarily by regular ongoing conversations among board, staff, and other lay leaders from agency and Federation. Federations encouraged collaborations and programs that involved multiple agencies working together to provide community wide initiatives. As such, Jewish communities offered more holistic initiatives than regularly occur in both secular and other faith based organizations.

The rich social networks and strong bonding social capital within the Jewish community is its most effective way that the community supports and guides Jewish organizations. Although none of the boards in this study except the school board formally stipulated that members must be Jewish, all were either 100% Jewish or had but one or two non-Jewish members. This was true of organizations that actively sought non-Jews, with agency leadership commenting that non-Jews often stated that they were uncomfortable given the overwhelming Jewish culture of board meetings or attempting to be "more Jewish than actual Jews." Agencies tended to develop boards that reflected their mission and philosophy of Judaism, but most boards included people from several branches of Judaism as well as secular Jews.

As with board members, none of these organizations stipulated Jewish leadership, but boards regularly chose Jews to run organizations and openly discussed Jewish values in interviews. In Baltimore, the Associated also participates in leadership selection. Key staff persons were often drawn through social networks, either from the Jewish communal service community nationwide or the local community. Below the level of executive director, the percentage of Jewish staff varied widely depending on staff function, with even the day school hiring non-Jewish teachers. Fundraising and community staff often targeted Jews because leaders wanted someone who knew the local community and Jewish culture.

Community networks and the theology of financial obligation contributed to strong financial support for these organizations from the Jewish community. Federation contributions have declined across the board over time as a percentage of budget, with none of the agencies in this study receiving more than 25 percent of its funds from its Federation. Jewish community funding and connections to Jewish foundations and individual Jewish philanthropists played a significant role in shaping Jewish and innovative programming. None of the agencies in this study was dominated by government funds, with all also receiving a mix of funding from individual donations and program fees like memberships, adult day care fees, and other

program service fees. The percentage of program fees from Jews varied depending on the agency and program. However, agency leaders and development directors stated across the board that most private foundation grants and individual donations came from Jews.

Community media, in the form of the Washington Jewish Week and Baltimore Jewish Times, also provided a forum for agencies to share their activities and for the wider community to comment on many aspects of the organization. Other media like Baltimore's large signs outside almost every religious and secular Jewish institution stating "(Organization name) is Associated are You?" promoted both the annual fundraising campaign and community cohesion. Organizations and Federations also regularly used websites, list serves, outreach activities in secular institutions like libraries or universities and a variety of other mechanisms to reach the Jewish community and promote Jewish institutions.

While both Federations had volunteer banks, the role of volunteers varied depending on agency focus. Direct service volunteers were far less central to Jewish organizations than in some other religions given the value placed on professionals. All organizations drew volunteers from both the Jewish community and elsewhere.

The various community and leadership education initiatives described above enhanced already strong community cultural values to support and maintain connections to organizations. Ongoing planning activities spearheaded by either organizations or Federations generally included significant community needs assessments and involved conversations with multiple Jewish stakeholders, further increasing connections between organization and founding community. None of the organizations in this study complained that the Jewish community did not pay enough attention to them or that they had trouble finding board members. Instead, many commented that the Jewish community could be too involved. Community members would regularly contact agency or Federation staff and lay leaders to make suggestions, give praise or complain about agency services. As discussed next, community conflicts could quickly escalate because of dense communications in these Jewish communities.

## **Addressing Opportunities and Concerns**

### *Organizational Transitions*

Transitions in Jewish organizations usually came from two sources, planning initiatives and leadership changes. As discussed above, both Federations and agencies engaged in regular planning. This led to the creating new agencies, agency consolidations, new programs, and refocusing on various aspects of community practice. Planning also built on regular communications with the wider Jewish community and media commentary. For example, Baltimore organizations gradually transitioned from Kosher style to strict Kosher observance as the Orthodox community grew and became a more active participant in community wide and Federation activities.

As with organizations in other religions, leadership transitions also provided an opportunity to refocus organizations. Although several of the organizations participating in the study reported having had less effective organization executive directors in the past, all of the participating organizations had long standing executive directors that drew high marks from their staff, board and often Federation as well. Description of leadership hiring suggests carefully vetting of leaders for compatible religious philosophy and view of the target community as the current board. In Baltimore, the Associated actively participated in leadership vetting though this did not appear to occur in Washington DC. In addition, while none of these boards participated in daily

organization operations, all included active members who had a hands-on approach to their governance and fundraising obligations. As such, they paid attention to leadership decisions and organization operations in ways that could easily check decisions that did not meet board approval.

### *Community Conflicts and Concerns*

Both in the pilot and this study, concerns over organization change or activities focused not on program operations but whether or not the organization was Jewish enough, as defined by segments of the population. This focused on two issues: definitions of tikkun olam and religious practice. Agencies became lightning rods for discussion within the diverse Jewish community. Organizations that targeted both Jews and non-Jews equally often drew criticism that they were “not Jewish” or “not Jewish enough” from certain segments of the community. Agencies responded with statements that they were clearly practicing Jewish values as they defined them or targeting certain programs or facilities for Jews or the more religious. For example, Sinai Hospital’s central administration building central hallway features walls studded with Judaic art and a prominent wall of key donors. The hospital also has a Kosher café, special elevators for Shabbat and a code of service practices for their Orthodox clientele that reflect Orthodox precepts and traditions. However, the emergency wing, outpatient clinics and especially the new neurological and spine center across the street from the main campus have only oblique references to Lifebridge Health and no visible Jewish identity.

Levels of religious observance also lead to community conflicts that center on agencies. As mentioned above, opening the suburban branch of the JCC on Saturdays in Baltimore has drawn the most sustained and long running conflict. As discussed in the organization history, the Baltimore JCC maintains two facilities, a branch in the core of the Orthodox and older Jewish community in Park Heights, Northwest Baltimore and a newer suburban branch in Owings Mills. Practices at the two facilities differ dramatically with the Park Heights facility offering a variety of special programs like special swim periods for men and women to provide culturally appropriate services for the Orthodox. Before the Owings Mills branch opened as a “youth facility,” the community was already debating whether or not to open it on Saturday afternoons. A planning study as early as 1967 suggested that most other JCCs opened on Saturday and that the Owings Mills community strongly preferred a Saturday option. However, the issue was tabled until the late 1970s. In 1997 and 1978, the JCC engaged in an elaborate community research and planning process that led the board to vote to open the JCC in Owings Mills on Saturday afternoons with programming appropriate for the Sabbath. This proposal was presented first to the Associated in January 1978. As word of the proposed change spread, the Orthodox community mobilized with angry protests that included one lay leader challenging that this change “would brutalize the community” and bumper stickers protesting the change appearing on cars throughout Park Heights. Even though the JCC countered with its studies, responses published in the Jewish Times, and observations that every other JCC in the country opened on Saturday, the Associated vetoed the change. Current JCC and Associated leaders commented that the process had been mismanaged in 1978 through too much time between the JCC presentation and the final vote.

At the beginning of the study period, Federation lay leaders and JCC professionals and lay leaders often expressed frustration in hushed tones about Saturday closings for the JCC and cultural institutions like the Jewish Museum. Such comments, however, were quickly countered by other lay leaders saying that schedules simply were not going to change. Staff at both JCC and Federation said they wanted to try again in the future yet gave no indication that a change was being considered. Plans made behind the scenes however, served to advance the notion

of opening the JCC on Saturdays, with Orthodox leaders invited to a Federation meeting to express their concerns shortly before the final decision was made. Although Orthodox arguments were similar to those made in 1978, the discussion was not nearly as heated and the Federation decided to go ahead with the change regardless of Orthodox protests. More important, the short time frame between this conversation and the formal announcement provided little opportunity for the Orthodox community to mount extensive protests. There was a march by the Orthodox in Park Heights shown on the late night news, but complaints were much more civil than in 1978, and quickly died down. Ultimately, the Federation and JCC managed to achieve the goals stated in its 1978 public materials of ensuring that every part of the diverse community's needs were met.

These examples suggest communities that actively engage conflict and, through planning, research, and substantial communication manage to make decisions when portions of the community disagree. After the recent announcement of the JCC's new Saturday policy, Federation leaders commented that there had been many behind the scenes conversations with community leaders from all factions to facilitate this change. Likewise, an organization in Washington DC with long standing conflict with its Federation over its interpretation of *tikkun olam* recently made substantial headway in mending relationships with key Federation leaders through careful and consistent communication.

#### *Current Economic Conditions*

As with all faith communities and organizations in the United States, the fall 2008 economic downturn resulted in increased need and lower donations for the Jewish community and its organizations. Plummeting stock portfolios lowered available funds for Federations, their major donors, and community foundations. Washington DC Federation and its community lost some funds to the Madoff pyramid scheme scandal, but Baltimore's Jewish community remained largely unscathed.

Both Federations and their member organizations responded with specialized programming, planning, some belt tightening and reported increased donations from the local Jewish community and its foundations to meet increased need. As such, these organizations generally remained on solid financial footing and were able to address changing economic conditions for the people they serve. However, one agency reported that its previously hugely successful capital campaign quickly came to a halt as donors responded to decreased portfolios and uncertain economic times. Several agencies reported decisions to cut staff, planning or program activities. Others saw the economic downturn as a call for increased efficiencies through more centralized Federation services for back office activities.

Changes in the economy, paired with continuing changes in how young adults reflect their Jewish identity, are causing Jewish organizations to reflect on their mission and how it attracts donors, members, and leadership. Many have undergone strategic plans and have become more "mission driven" with focused programs and services. Many have used the non-ritually religious emphasis of *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, to attract younger participants. One study, *Young Jewish Adults in the United States Today* (Ukeles and Associates, American Jewish Committee, 2006 p.3) points out that:

Jewish culture, like the culture of young people in the general community, is increasingly bottom-up, self-generated, and decentralized. To a significant extent, young people are creating their own identities and pattern of association, leading to what we could call "quasi-communities"- built around common interests and shared experiences rather than

around institutions and organizations. Quasi-communities have porous boundaries, are fluid and dynamic.

This will pose both challenges and opportunities to how Jewish organizations recruit and retain new participants, donors, and leadership. In Baltimore, we saw the Associated working through the JCC and several other partners to reach out to younger Jews and those new to the area through several mechanisms: programs that were family friendly offered in center city Baltimore and in partnership with the Baltimore city library systems, email outreach and web mechanisms. Washington DC Federation also expressed concern about reaching out to youth, with youth outreach as an initiative that received additional funding.

### **Implications for Practice**

The Jewish community support system has many aspects that organizations from other religions could model:

- ❖ **Centralized planning, leadership development and religious education services for agencies**
- ❖ **Initiatives to encourage collaboration across agencies**
- ❖ **Dense, active social networks that maintain connections between agencies and faith community**
- ❖ **Clear understanding of the religious values underlying agency services by staff and board that play out in agency practice.** Understandings come from a shared community culture and an array of educational programs available to leaders and staff.
- ❖ **Investing in continuing research on trends showing how the next generation sees the role of traditional values, how they translate these values in a universal cultural spirit, and what are the emerging patterns of affiliation for young adults.**
- ❖ **Multiple national umbrella groups that serve as sources for best practices, sources of new professional staff, help with the vetting of new ideas**
- ❖ **A tendency for leadership to come from the religion, as well as reflect the branch of the religion most comfortable to the current board.**

That said, most Mainline Protestant, Evangelical and Peace church initiatives would have limited ability to develop the sustained community support the Jewish agencies in this study enjoy because of the theology of individual religious service that underlies much post-reformation religious activity and limited higher level adjudicatory central structures. Moreover, different concepts of charity may resist efforts for centralized or community wide supports. For example, one United Methodist organization tried to get its diocese to provide centralized grants management, but failed because religious culture dictated that congregations should be the central locus for these activities. The decline of many United Ways as effective community funding sources in recent years attest to the limited ability of the wider community to successfully sustain community-wide fundraising and planning in increasingly diverse communities with ever growing sets of organizations. Although Federation giving remains at a steady percent of community assets despite continued growth in agency budgets, the community culture and religious obligations for community wide support maintain strong giving



patterns in these two Federations. However, Washington DC has started donor advised giving options like United Way and the Combined Federal Campaign and an increasing number of Federations across the country are struggling.

Both Washington DC and Baltimore are considered strong Federations, although they differ significantly in their strategies due to historic and present day differences in each local community. Baltimore's centralized back office activities may provide a model for other Federations. However, its ability to own all of its member agencies' real estate and the high degree of control over fundraising, leadership selection and other aspects of agency rules may not be transferable to another community. Baltimore enjoys a particularly strong, wealthy and geographically compact local community that remains its core support and enabled its centralized structures. In addition, as a Federation in the original Catholic colony and a traditionally strong Catholic city, Baltimore's Associated benefits from a wider community with a shared sense of community wide supports based on its dominant religious values. The strategy of the Federation owning all the property, playing a role in leadership decisions, and suggesting board members is similar to archdiocese strategies. These similarities might not be as effective in a community where majority practice is dramatically different.

## Comparing Strategies Across Religions

This report provides an outline of our findings from in-depth study of organizations across religious traditions and offering different kinds of services. We found a wide range in styles of maintaining connections within and among religious traditions, but strategies clearly tracked back to the history and theology of the founding faith. Taken together, four factors shaped the nature of the relationship between the founding faith community and the organization:

### 1. Practical theology of that religion:

The goals for service provision and the strategies for organizing faith based activities in each religion came out of the practical theology of a given religious tradition. As a result, Evangelical ministries sought to express the teachings of Scripture and the example of Christ in response to a particular need, while liberal Mainline Protestant strategies involved practicing faith through acts of service based on long-standing principles of charity and the social gospel tradition. African American strategies drew from both theological traditions, but with a strong overlay of moral and social uplift for their community. Quaker organizations reflected the testimonies of seeking that of God in everyone, integrity, equality, peace and seeking God's will in decision processes. Jewish strategies reflected a theology of obligation to support and improve the community and larger world. Catholics also saw social service as a communal obligation of the church. We observed several lessons for practice from this connection between practical theology and strategies to maintain connections to organizations:

- ❖ **Faith communities that used stewardship strategies to convey their practical theology to their organizations successfully over time were more likely to maintain strong relationships with those nonprofits.** Depending on the religion, strategies varied widely from carefully choosing board members and key staff that understood underlying religious values, to providing orientation or ongoing education for board members and key staff about practical theology, to informal communications and ongoing networks between the faith community and the organization that kept the faith tradition ever present.
- ❖ **Organizations that reflected the embedded culture of their founding faith had broader and stronger support from their supporting faith communities.** These embedded practices usually involved the cultural style of the organization, creating an atmosphere that people from the faith felt comfortable with or reflecting values in organizational programming and materials that reflected the dominant values in the faith community at the present time. For instance, Jewish organization leaders spoke of creating "Jewish Oxygen." Catholics, African Americans and Mainline Protestants similarly cited cultural attributes in praise of the organizations they supported. Quakers felt uncomfortable with Quaker based organizations where decision making was hierarchical or not transparent, but were more likely to support nonprofits that embedded Quaker worship practices and decision making in the organizational culture. Evangelicals often incorporated prayer, references to Scripture and other elements of personal spirituality in their organizational practices.
- ❖ **Relationship tensions often reflected concerns that the organization no longer reflected this founding practical theology from parts of the faith community.** However these concerns could reflect two very different situations:

- **Faith community consensus on concerns:** If concerns regarding organization practices were held by a large number of people associated with the faith community, organizations and faith communities struggled regarding how to rectify problems or whether the organization should become independent of the faith community. In several historical cases with positive outcomes, leadership changes among nonprofit key staff and board members were made in order to change organization direction. In less successful situations, faith communities and nonprofits clearly stated that there were problems but often spent years puzzling over the causes of the rift and how to resolve it.
- **Faith based nonprofits as a target for ongoing debates in the faith community.** Just as often, faith community members' concerns regarding the practical theology in an organization reflected ongoing debates within the faith community about doctrine or religious values. In these cases, the organization received support from some parts of the faith community, but not others. In Jewish organizations, defining tikun olam as either healing the entire world or serving just the Jewish community was one major topic of debate. Traditional Orthodox practices (levels of Kashrut, Sabbath closings) also were debated. Various Catholic teachings were debated in discussions regarding schools and hospitals. The controversy surrounding acceptance of government funding for faith-based programs reflects an ongoing dispute in the Mainline community about proper church-state relations. As our earlier examples show, these debates could take years to resolve. New topics of debate could also develop as the practical theology of a faith tradition evolves.

**2. History of that Faith Community in the United States:** Catholics, Jews, and African Americans started out as minority communities that developed independent service and education structures to support people from their own groups. These initial strong ties have evolved into systems with strong internal social capital for all of these groups and, for Jews and Catholics, an ability to build quasi-integrated systems to support agencies affiliated with that religion. But as each has become more integrated into the larger society, they have developed a unique strategy to engage with the wider community. Catholics have transformed the concept of subsidiarity, initially defined as “taking care of one’s own before sending them to government aid,” into using government funds to provide services for all in need, consonant with current Catholic teachings and culture. Likewise, while African American churches primarily provide for people from their racial community, they increasingly use government funds to do so and some churches have developed a wider role in the arena of policy advocacy. Jews also initially served their own community, but increasingly relied on broader definitions of tikun olam as their social welfare and development institutions gradually refocused on serving the broader community.

As the dominant religious culture Mainline Protestants, on the other hand, intentionally mainstreamed their beliefs and organizational strategies to a point that their stewardship strategies of board appointments, fundraising strategies, and organizational structures are largely identical to secular nonprofits. Nevertheless, we found Mainline Protestants maintaining relationships to nonprofits they founded through these similar strategies and increasingly interfaith initiatives.

While evangelical education and service strategies have a long history in the U.S. through such institutions as Salvation Army, the gospel rescue missions, and schools, much of

Evangelical outreach in the last century has focused on saving souls. Recently a segment of this community has been embracing a broader social agenda, and evangelical social welfare strategies have re-emerged in the sophisticated ministries like the crisis pregnancy center and urban ministry project, with these new forms existing beside the old.

Quakers have always played a significant role in developing innovative strategies to address social problems, and we saw this continuing in some of their organizations today. Others rely on the theology of the founding faith to structure organization policy and stewardship, but as with some of the schools and retirement communities services target similar populations as other organizations and largely look similar to facilities run by other religions or secular institutions.

### **3. The quality and nature of social capital between faith community and organization.**

Universally, we found that organizations and faith communities that developed trusting ties between agency and founding community had much more positive and strong relationships than those that did not. Each religion and system relied on different mixes of bridging, bonding, and linking social capital to achieve this goal.

We also found that umbrella institutions of many forms strengthened the relationship of organizations to their founding faith and each other, as well as providing resources to support those organizations. Agencies coming out of religions with fewer traditions of collaboration and less use of umbrella organizations had less support as the recession deepened over the study period.

This finding suggests several strategies to strengthen connections between faith communities and organizations:

- ❖ **Both organizations and faith communities need to pay attention to building social capital alongside developing their stewardship mechanisms**
- ❖ **Both sponsoring faith communities and faith based organizations would benefit from clarifying their practical theology for organizations.**
- ❖ **Developing and strengthening umbrella organizations is another important aspect of both maintaining connections and building healthy organizations.**

### **4. The nature of the service provided.** We found much in common in the organizational forms and service provision of the various schools, social service agencies, retirement communities, health care institutions, community development entities, and emergency services organizations that participated in this study. These similarities come from standards set by government, community wide funding institutions like United Way, private funders, and simply sharing strategies or copying strategies from organizations providing similar services. As such, stewardship strategies necessarily differ depending on organization type. However, we simultaneously found similarities and differences among organizations providing the same service, with those differences often reflecting the founding faith traditions. These dual strategies are best understood not as contradictory forces in opposition, but as two equally important strands of maintaining healthy organizations that provide quality services from a clear mission.

The primary goal of this study was to explore the nature of faith based stewardship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the United States. We found that stewardship meant much more than providing

resources to organizations, in fact funding from the faith community has become a small proportion of the budgets of most of these agencies, ranging from 5 to 20 percent of most faith based organizations in this study (with the exception of smaller evangelical organizations). However, this small percentage of funding had great symbolic weight for the organization for two reasons. First, many government and private foundation funders expected a match from the faith community, either in kind (buildings, volunteer labor, other in-kind donations) or in cash, often as an indicator that the organization had backing from its founding community. Financial and in-kind support from the faith communities provided this match, and with it legitimacy that government and other funders that matching funds represent.

Second, while a small proportion of budgets, faith community donations could add up to anywhere from several thousand to several hundred thousand in operations spending that was not tied to government or secular private funder criteria for its use. This faith community funding was essential to allow organizations to meet their religiously based mission, which usually mandated serving people outside of those targeted by government programs. For example, many of the agencies that received government funds were required only to serve people below a certain income threshold established by government. Faith community and other private donations allowed these programs to serve other populations, often groups affiliated with the agency's faith based mission. For example, JCA's Federation allocations paid for transportation for Jewish elderly regardless of income. Several other organizations noted that faith community funds and in-kind supports allowed them to meet their missions of serving a greater portion of people in need in their community, most coming from other religious backgrounds than the organization. For example, a Quaker organization in an earlier study (Schneider 1999) provided funds to cover energy costs to both people below the federal poverty level through government funds and others earning above that threshold through a special fund provided by their faith community. For Evangelical organizations in our study, private faith-based support represented freedom to share their faith as an integral part of their service.

The various strategies to maintain the practical theology of the founding faith in the organization and build enduring ties between faith community and organization proved essential in continued support from the faith community on an ongoing basis. As discussed in the section on economic downturn in our first report, organizations that exhibited appropriate practical theology received enthusiastic support while those that did not received fewer resources, weak board members, and moved into a downward spiral that eventually led to closure or a break with the faith community. Ability to garner resources from the faith community, in the form of funding, in-kind donations, and volunteers often depended on the ability of organizations to reflect appropriate practical theology or embedded culture. Faith community efforts to maintain social capital connections and ensure the organization followed their practical theology in the form most appropriate for that religion were key to maintaining the religious ethos in their organizations.

We also found that the religions and denominations in our study each used one of three strategies to manage connections to their organizations – congregational systems, network systems and institutionalized systems, each with its own strengths and weaknesses:

**Congregational systems** were used by Mainline Protestants, Quakers and some African American churches. Major features of Congregational systems are:

- Their ministries often formalize as either independent programs of their founding congregation(s) with independent advisory committees and separate accounting

systems, or spin off into independent 501(c)(3) organizations with limited ties to congregations or form as interfaith entities.

- The organizations maintain ties to one or more congregations through board appointments, appeals for resources, volunteers and in-kind supports.
- Most of our congregational organizations saw volunteering as an important component of organizational activity, and created volunteer opportunities for people from their denomination and others.
- Established congregational organizations usually maintained ties to their founding faith by requiring that a percentage of board members be from the founding faith or founding congregations.
- In some cases, the relationship between congregational organizations and their founding faith communities involved the organization serving in such a way that community members were drawn to the congregation.
- Congregational system organizations from Mainline Protestant and Quaker organizations often embedded their faith in more general values, with many specifically stating that they valued theological diversity within a general spiritual or Christian context, and on principle they did not proselytize.
- Congregational system denominations created fewer umbrella organizations like professional associations for their organizations and the organizations tended to belong to fewer umbrella groups.

The strength of congregational systems came from the fact that they are considered the norm in the United States. The expectation that organizations should provide non-sectarian services, but be supported through board members, volunteers, in-kind supports and funding from congregations is pervasive in these organizations. As such, clear understandings exist about appointing boards, fiscal transparency, and strategies to fundraise.

However, these strengths are the primary weakness for these organizations. Both church and faith based organization leaders have turned to secular management and stewardship strategies for guidance rather than create faith based tools appropriate for that denomination or similar religious bodies. The only training for board members in the religion's practical theology, or board stewardship roles in general, came from organizations themselves or their umbrella professional organizations. But the majority of organizations provided little if any orientation. Faith communities often gave little thought to board appointments and seldom provided any guidance to board members once they were appointed.

The other major weakness involved the limited support congregational system organizations received if they were supported by too few congregations or the supporting communities contained primarily lower income or aging members. Several of the organizations that struggled or closed during the study had these weak congregational support systems. On the other hand, visibly successful organizations, particularly interfaiths, continued to expand their network of supporting congregations on a regular basis to avoid this problem.

**Network** systems transcend congregations, drawing together people with a similar faith based vision to carry forward the work based on either social networks of the founders or

institutional/virtual networks of people with a similar vision. Network based nonprofits may be connected with one or multiple congregations, but their decision-making and support systems reside outside the congregational system. Organizations in network systems differ from congregational systems in two important ways 1) the ministry is supported by a network of individuals focused on a specific ministry and 2) the people who staff these organizations either as volunteers or paid staff share the faith approach of the organizations founders, using this faith as a prime motivator in their work. In contrast, congregational organizations draw staff and involved volunteers interested in the service or ministry of the program but do not necessarily share similar approaches to faith or come from the religion of the founding congregation(s). The *Network Based* organizations in this study ranged from small emergency services programs founded by one congregation member to a multi-site pregnancy center working to prevent abortions, and from a young evangelical Christian school to a nearly 200 year old multi-service organization that provided support through well-established ministry centers. Most Network System organizations had evangelical roots. Major features of Network systems are:

- The organizations frequently become a faith community for staff, active volunteers and sometimes program participants.
- These organizations rely on a combination of staff and volunteers, but almost all people involved with the organization share the founding faith or have some other personal connection with the ministry and their involvement is motivated by that faith.
- Resources come through networks of like minded believers, and often organizations highlight their faith or trust in God as a source for resources for the organization.
- Since these organizations are supported through personal networks, they are more likely to end when the pastor or founder moves on. In older, established organizations, ministries can change as the leader's calling or gospel vision changes.
- One main subset of this group is formed by evangelistic organizations, for which sharing their faith is a key element of the ministry.

The network organizations in this study drew on the strong bonding social capital of the networks that supported them as their primary mechanism for support. Sharing a common set of beliefs, volunteers and other supporters maintained a clear and enthusiastic chain of support for the organizations. This enthusiasm and shared theology remained the true strength of the organization.

However, as organizations change or leaders leave, network organizations can face periods of crisis. While several of the network organizations were currently thriving, we wondered what would happen when aging founders retired.

The other weakness for network organizations lies in the informal nature of boards and lack of fiscal transparency. While some of the organizations appear well run, they would not withstand audits necessary for government or private funding unless they revised current practices. We did not see any financial scandals in the network organizations participating in this study, but stories of fiscal irresponsibility among ministries is not uncommon among these communities in the local press. As with the other aspects of network organization, the power of strong, closed networks of true believers can prove both a strength and weakness.

**Institutionalized** systems organize and centralize supports at the community wide level, with expectations that the entire community is responsible for those in need. Jews and Catholics used this system, though they differed in their structure. Catholic systems were integrated into either the archdiocese or order while Jewish systems centralized all social and health services through Federations, with the synagogues remaining independent from the service system. Institutionalized systems evolved from a theology that insists the community/church as a whole is responsible for caring for those in need. This obligation may be conceived as applying only to members of that religion or the whole world. Major features of Institutionalized systems are:

- They centralize fundraising, volunteer recruitment, training and sometimes facilities management.
- They have a strong tradition of planning at a centralized level for the community or its institutions as a whole.
- Centralized bodies occasionally encourage or force mergers or collaborations among organizations in the community for the greater good of the systems as a whole.
- They have the ability to share resources across the system through either Federation allocations or Catholic Order or Archdiocese sponsored agreements to share resources.
- They develop strong networks of religiously based national umbrella organizations in addition to the local centralized systems that provided additional support and networks for organizations for that religion.
- There is a tendency for organizations outside of the centralized umbrella to still develop ties with other organizations either through interfaith entities or independent groups of organizations from the same faith. Schools are connected with the wider faith community and the centralized umbrella (Federation, order, archdiocese), but most Catholic and Jewish schools in some communities are under the direct sponsorship of congregations.

The true strength of institutionalized systems to maintain connections and ensure that organizations continued the practical theology of the founding faith came from the centralized planning, evaluation and leadership development programs. Both religions had thought carefully over time about ways to ensure that people schooled in practical theology and trusted by the local faith community leadership provided connections between nonprofits and the founding community. In both religions, close social networks were as important as formal training in decision making regarding who was placed in leadership positions. Both also had some form of formal training or orientation for people placed in leadership roles. Both also benefited from economies of scale through centralized structures for fundraising, volunteers, and back office supports. The weakness of institutionalized systems involved challenges clarifying the relationship to the centralized structures for organizations outside of it.

Each religion chapter in this report offers suggestions of strategies to strengthen relationships between faith communities and their organizations unique to that religion. The observations here suggest strategies that work and challenges facing faith based nonprofits and their founding communities from a comparative perspective. More specifics on general findings are available in the companion overview report. Short, practitioner or lay person oriented strategies to address specific issues are also available on our website at:

<http://www.faithandorganizations.umd.edu/>.



## Suggested Reading

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