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## **Family and Community Ministries: Empowering Through Faith**

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## Organizing Faith-based Service

*This article explores the ways that different religious groups organize social support systems for their members and others. Catholics, Jews, and Muslims utilize an institutional model in which social supports are considered the responsibility of the entire community, organized through community-wide structures like Jewish Federations and archdiocese. Parishes, temples, and synagogues rarely are directly involved in social supports, but work through Federations or archdiocese to support organizations. In contrast, Protestants and Peace Churches see the congregation as central for organizations. In these congregational models, volunteers, funding, and other resources come from direct appeals to congregations and calls for service are based on individual faith. Analysis of these two models has practical implications for ministry,*

**F**aith communities have always been integral to social support systems in the United States (Cnaan, 2002; Cnaan, Wineburg & Boddie, 1999; Hall, 1990). However, not all religious groups organize social service and health systems in the same way. Catholics and Jews developed social support systems through community-wide institutionalized systems, with congregations playing a limited role in providing services. On the other hand, denominations stemming from the Protestant Reformation center social supports through their congregations, which continue to play a role even after nonprofit agencies have been created to provide specific services. This article outlines the differences between two models: the congregational and institutional models of faith-based service provision. These differences suggest ways that congregations and organizations can work together within each model.



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**DATA AND METHODS**

This article draws primarily on research conducted in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and Philadelphia between 2004 and 2005 for the pilot study of the Faith and Organizations project, a national research/practice project examining the relationship between faith communities and the nonprofits they create.<sup>1</sup> I also will draw on my study of Jewish, Catholic, Lutheran, and Mainline Protestant social service agencies and their constituent communities in Philadelphia during the 1980s (Schneider, 1988), dissertation research that included several of the agencies in the Philadelphia Faith and Organizations project sample.<sup>2</sup>

The Faith and Organizations pilot project compared organizations created by several religious groups: Catholics, Mainline Protestants, Jews, Peace Churches (Quakers, Mennonite, Brethren), Evangelical Christians, and Muslims. It also contrasted ministries founded by African American, Asian, and White communities. Study questions focused on the relationship between faith communities and their nonprofit organizations, the impact of religious structure and theology on organization form and activities, the impact of type of service and outside funders on organizations, and interactions with program participants.<sup>3</sup> The project compared organizations providing services in three sectors with different funding mechanisms and systems: social services; health and senior services; and community-based and -developed services evolving from faith community organizing efforts. The project used comparative multi-methods ethnography, which combines a series of qualitative methods (participant observation, interviews, focus groups, content analysis of secondary source material) with analysis of administrative databases, and appropriate regional statistics. In this article, discussion is limited to analysis of the two models within broad religious groups, while exploration of ministries founded by various ethnic groups will be the focus of a separate article.

**FAITH COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT  
IN U.S. SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

Although the picture of social welfare in the United States shows a prominent role for faith communities, all religious groups do not organize social supports in the same way. Both community representatives and researchers recognize differences among various religions and Christian denominations, yet most persist in attempting to develop one model for faith-based involvement in social supports. The Sider and Unruh model (Sider, Olson, & Unruh, 2002; Sider & Unruh, 2004), which presents a range of forms from what they call “faith saturated” to secular organizations, is one currently popular example of this trend.

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This model uses outwardly visible behaviors and symbols of religious identity to categorize various organizations and programs. In contrast, this study’s findings support Jeavons’ (2004) observation that the Sider and Unruh typology is profoundly influenced by the theology and cultural expectations of Protestant faith, particularly Evangelical forms of Christianity. Organizations that appear secular on the surface often reflect embedded religious values and structures. This is particularly true for Jews and Mainline Protestants, who often consider open displays of religion a violation of deeply held values supporting religious freedom and equal rights (Schneider, Day, & Anderson, 2006). Project findings challenge assumptions that faith-based service should necessarily grow out of the activities of individual congregations. The various religious groups in the pilot study not only expressed their faith in different ways, they also created different models to provide for the health and social welfare of their members and for society.

If one uses only the congregational model to assess social support, it may seem at first glance that there is an apparent lack of involvement from individual congregations among Catholics and Jews. However, it is clear that the Catholic and Jewish organizations we studied through the Faith and Organizations project had significant ties to their founding religions through institutional systems

(Hehir, 2002). These organizations were connected to their faith communities through community-wide structures such as the Catholic archdiocese and Jewish Federations.

### **INSTITUTIONAL MODELS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT: CATHOLIC, JEWISH, AND MUSLIM EXAMPLES**

#### *The institutional model in Catholic organizations*

Catholic organizations providing social welfare echoed the hierarchical structure of their parent church and reflected the church's traditional teachings on charity and social justice. Hehir (2002) describes Catholic social welfare as institutionalized because most social welfare service provision is managed through organizations such as Catholic Charities or Catholic Social Services rather than local parishes. Local affiliates are connected to the diocese, and a national Catholic Charities office generates public policy positions and offers other supports to local agencies (Hehir, 2000).

The Catholic social service system in the United States reflects the concept of subsidiarity, or local control over services. This idea acknowledges a partnership between the state and organizations of civil society like Catholic social service agencies. However, subsidiarity suggests that private organizations first try to help those in need themselves, only turning to government when their resources fail (Hehir, 2000). In the United States, subsidiarity often meant creating separate Catholic institutions initially designed to provide religiously appropriate services to the Catholic population.

In both the Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia examples we observed, umbrella organizations served as the central structures for planning, governance, and organization of social supports in these institutionalized models. Catholic Charities or Catholic Social Services organizations were directly under the archdiocese, which provided overall governance to the various social service components. Parishes were encouraged to send parishioners in need to these formal service structures.

None of the Catholic agencies in the Faith and Organizations project or my earlier research had strong direct connections to parishes. For example, in Washington, D.C., St. Mary's Housing organization<sup>4</sup> – a program for people recovering from substance abuse and their families – had no visible

connections to parishes. The family center that housed the GED program encouraged parishes to use archdiocese-wide referral networks rather than provide supports through parish resources.

This organizational system, with the archdiocese as the center for social welfare support, may help explain why many Catholic parishes may appear on the surface to be less active in social welfare provision than Protestant churches. If the archdiocese is considered the appropriate venue for seeking aid, volunteering, and donating funds for these kinds of activities, then individual parish initiatives would be contrary to the established system. Catholic churches may support parish activity in addition to contributions through archdiocese-sponsored activities, but the Church at large is considered the culturally appropriate entity to support members or others in need.

#### *The institutional model in Jewish organizations*

Jewish Federations serve as planning organizations for all Jewish agencies within its membership. In the examples we studied, Federation agencies often worked together to provide social supports, bringing together national and local organizations. In the United States, most Federations evolved around the turn of the twentieth century as a way to organize social supports in each community. Local Federations created a national organization, renamed United Jewish Communities (UJC) in 1999 when the earlier Council of Jewish Federations merged with the two major fundraising organizations for Jewish causes, United Israel Fund and United Jewish Appeal (Roseman, 1974; Solomon & Wachstock, 2002).

The UJC and other Jewish national organizations differ from the Catholic structures in two important ways. First, Jewish institutions are created from the bottom up – they are professional associations for their constituent members rather than hierarchical organizations that provide guidance to lower level organizations. Although umbrella organizations and rabbinical training colleges exist for the various forms of Judaism in the United States, Jews lack the hierarchical religious structures of the Catholic Church and some Protestant denominations. Authority comes from the constituent members and their local leaders for both the congregations and the various nonprofit organizations. Like the local Federations, synagogues

and temples are voluntary organizations formed by their members.

The second important difference we observed between Jewish and Catholic institutional social service structures was that Jewish religious organizations were separate from philanthropic, cultural, educational, and social service agencies. This disconnection between the religious institutions and social welfare systems influenced the relationship among individual members, the congregations, and the Jewish nonprofits in the study. For example, the Jewish social service organization we studied in Philadelphia maintained an ambivalent relationship with its Federation and had no relationship or outreach with any of the synagogues or temples in the area prior to our study. In addition, refugee services in Philadelphia during the 1980s involved four separate agencies working together closely: HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) was responsible for initial resettlement activities, Jewish Family Service provided social services, Jewish Employment and Vocational Service offered employment assistance, and a large Jewish community center offered recreation and programs for the elderly. Jewish refugees also had access to a number of other programs through the Federation. Following the institutional pattern, synagogues and temples were considered separate from the Federation, and these social service agencies had tenuous and sometimes conflicting relationships with worship communities. The Federation and its constituent agencies could only informally encourage congregations to reach out to Jewish émigrés or provide low-cost synagogue and temple memberships to refugees.

Similar patterns appeared among Jewish organizations in Washington, D.C. Families in need were encouraged to contact directly the hot lines for the Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA), the Federation social service agency, or the aging agency for supports, while congregations had limited direct connections to the agency.

The importance of community-wide structures for Jewish and Catholic social welfare provision did not necessarily mean that constituent agencies, worship communities, and Federations were always comfortable with the community-wide system. Both of the Jewish agencies in the Faith and Organizations project experienced tensions with their Federations when the agency mission clashed

with Federation goals. In both cases, disagreements centered on alternative interpretations of Jewish theology for social support.<sup>5</sup> One of the Catholic agencies expressed concern that funds raised by their program would instead be used for archdiocese-wide priorities. Jewish agencies expressed frustration that congregations seemed disinterested in outreach, while Catholic agencies wanted parishes to use their centralized systems more often.

#### *Institutional models for Muslims*

Research on Muslims conducted for the Faith and Organizations project and Religion and the New Immigrant Study<sup>6</sup> remains preliminary given the limited sample, but this community also exhibited the institutional model, similar to that of Jews (see Schneider, Day, & Anderson, 2006; Schneider & Foley, 2002). Both Muslim organizations we studied relied on community-wide contributions for *Zakat* – a religious requirement for Muslims to donate a percentage of their income to provide for the poor or others in need (Weiss, 2002). These organizations drew on most of the Muslim community through e-mail systems, informal communications, and Mosque newsletters to share information and find staff and volunteers. Muslims in need found their way to the organizations through similar mechanisms. Although formal structures like a Federation or archdiocese did not exist, the Muslim community did show a sense of group ownership for these organizations and their activities more similar to institutional systems than congregational social service provision.

#### **CONGREGATIONAL MODELS**

In contrast to the Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim institutional models, Mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, and Peace churches (Quakers, Mennonites) considered congregations central to the development and maintenance of social support systems. The differences between institutional and congregational models for social welfare service provision stemmed from religious culture. Although each of these denominations has larger judicatory bodies that sometimes provide support to nonprofits under religious auspices, social welfare activities were generally founded either by particular congregations or several congregations working together. For example, one Mennonite congregation founded *Jubilee*, a Mennonite group home

system for developmentally disabled adults. The current executive director is a member of that congregation who was asked to take on this ministry. A significant percentage of the board comes from that congregation. Likewise, a Quaker retirement community retains close ties to the Friends meeting that founded it, even though it is also a member of a national umbrella organization for Quaker retirement communities. Similar connections between individual congregations and organizations existed for all of the congregational organizations in the study.

*A middle ground:  
the Lutheran example*

As Thiemann and Perabo (2005) point out, while Lutherans are a Protestant denomination, they and the Episcopal Church both maintain closer relationships to Catholicism in terms of denominational structure and some cultural aspects of the denomination. Lutheran Charities, a Philadelphia agency providing a wide array of services to children, the elderly, immigrants, and refugees, was founded by the Pennsylvania ministerium in 1922 and incorporated as a separate entity from the Lutheran synod in 1965. However, it consistently reaches out to individual congregations to support activities such as refugee resettlement and elder care and recently has reinvigorated its relationship with local congregations. This organization represents a middle ground for congregational and institutional forms of social welfare service provision. It benefits from the strengths of both systems – drawing on the critical mass and hierarchical systems of the parent ministerium, while also developing relationships with local congregations. The Lutheran Rehabilitation and Shelter Center, the other Lutheran organization in the study, was founded by one congregation, but those ties became less central to the organization as it developed an interfaith constituency that moved it away from reliance on its founding congregation.

#### COMPARING THE TWO MODELS

These two models for organizing social welfare supports for faith community members and others

in need represent equally valid, but fundamentally different, approaches. The institutional systems created by Catholics, Jews, and Muslims assumed that social support should be the responsibility of the faith community as a whole, through the structures of the archdiocese or Federation. For Jews and Catholics, social supports are considered communal. Carp (2002) 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” (182).

In contrast, congregational systems came out of the individual calls to service from a particular congregation or a key member, such as a pastor or influential member. Denominations arising from the Protestant Reformation envision all members of a congregation, not just ordained clergy, as actively involved in all aspects of religious experience, including developing ministries to provide for those in need. For instance, both the Quaker retirement community and the Lutheran Rehabilitation and Shelter Center came out of a felt need among congregation members to provide support to populations of concern to congregation members. The founding Quaker meeting expressed concerns about caring for its rapidly aging population, while the Lutheran congregation found itself in the midst of a homelessness crisis that led it to create a formal social service organization. The Mennonite group home initially came out of the leading of one member, which was supported by others in that congregation.

#### ASPECTS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

As we have seen, these two models profoundly affect the ways that organizations interact with their faith communities. Each model uses different mechanisms to attract financial support and volunteers. Each relates to individual congregations in different ways. In this section, I will introduce the concepts of civic engagement and social capital,



and outline how institutional and congregational systems draw support, with particular emphasis on volunteers and financial support.

Organizations rely on resources from their constituent communities in order to carry out their work. Supports come through a combination of networks and community-wide supports related to generalized trust in an organization as a representative of that community (Putnam, 2000). Civic engagement and social capital are different, but sometimes linked phenomenon (Schneider, 2007). Civic engagement means *citizens working together for the common good*, while social capital refers to *relationships based in patterns of reciprocal, enforceable trust that enable people and institutions to gain access to resources like social services, volunteers, or funding*.<sup>7</sup> Civic engagement relies on generalized trust in an organization while social capital depends on specific social networks. For example, a nonprofit may rely on civic engagement of donors by putting out a general appeal for supports through their Web site, newsletters, and appeal letters. The same nonprofit may use social capital to garner support by appealing to long-established networks of individuals or organizations. Often the two types of support are linked; for example an organization may use social capital links to congregations in its denomination, through an archdiocese or Federation, in order to get access to mailing lists to generate a generalized funding appeal. In both cases, social capital and civic engagement refer to avenues to access resources, not the resources themselves.

#### **DIFFERENT MODELS; DIFFERENT AVENUES FOR BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

Both civic engagement and social capital worked differently for faith-based organizations coming out of congregational versus institutionalized social support systems. As anticipated, organizations in congregational systems developed connections directly to congregations for support. For example, Lutheran Charities involved Lutheran and other Protestant congregations in its refugee program as sponsors and used a similar system to provide supports for the elderly. A boy's choir from a local Lutheran church held a fundraiser for the agency. The other Lutheran organization in the study relied primarily on social capital through its founding congregation, various religious volunteer corps, and

the faith communities that participated in developing the transitional housing project for supports. The Quaker and Mennonite organizations both had strong ties to their founding congregations and also received supports through the community of agency program participants and their families. Both organizations drew on their wider judicatory systems to dispense information to other congregations as they located program participants and other resources.

In contrast, faith-based organizations in institutionalized models drew supports through their community-wide umbrella institutions (archdiocese, Federations, and independent associations of members of that religion or denomination) rather than contact congregations directly. For example, Catholic organizations seldom connected to parishes directly, relying on resources through archdiocese-wide mechanisms such as the Bishop's appeal, a fundraising appeal from the spiritual leader of a particular archdiocese or the St. Vincent DePaul system, an international layperson's service orga-



nization that coordinated service opportunities such as food pantries. Catholic lay institutions provided a range of resources; for example one program received a donation of books collected by the John Carroll Society, a Washington, D.C., Catholic lay association. Catholic organizations collaborated with other Catholic institutions and with other social service agencies offering similar services. Although individual organizations using this institutional model might rely on their board members or program participants for supports, they did not reach out directly to parishes. Board members came from a variety of connections in wider Catholic networks.

Likewise, Jewish agencies sought support and developed collaborations through their Federations, other Jewish agencies, non-Jewish agencies

offering similar services, and through the personal networks of staff. For example, the Cohen Center, an adult day care center, worked with several Jewish schools to do arts and crafts projects and other kinds of programming with elderly participants. Their parent agency drew many of its board members from its Federation and its networks. Both Jewish organizations in our sample worked closely with other Jewish agencies and community-wide membership organizations like B'nai Brith, an international Jewish human rights, community action, and humanitarian organization founded in 1843, to share information about the agency and their programs.

Both the Catholic and Jewish agencies relied on community-wide systems to identify program participants. For example, the various Catholic programs encouraged parishes to refer people in need to the centralized intake system in order to ensure that they receive the full range of services available. The agency hoped that parishes would use the archdiocese-wide system rather than use parish resources for benevolences.

The Jewish community in Washington, D.C., had a referral system through JSSA, the umbrella social service agency, in addition to the aging agency's hotline. The two hotlines became a disputed issue between the Federation and agencies as the Federation wanted the hotlines to privilege Federation member agencies in making referrals in order to keep social supports in-house. Jews needing services for their elderly relatives sought supports through these community-wide professional systems rather than congregational networks.

This lack of connection between congregations and the social service agencies was clearest in the Jewish community. Catholic organizations occasionally created connections with nearby parishes, but Jews saw no direct connection between congregations and agencies. Two examples illustrate this pattern. In one instance, our field researcher attended an informational interview with a family active in the same congregation as a key staff person. Although the families knew each other well, it had not occurred to the woman seeking services to ask the staff person directly about the agency. Likewise, the staff person had not been aware that the elderly relative needed adult day care. Instead, the family heard about the organization through the formal referral network and followed the professionalized

procedure to gather information about care.

In another example, the agency decided to reach out to congregations to advertise their services. Our fieldworker helped with the outreach effort by contacting synagogues and temples. She found that congregation staff members were mostly non-plussed with requests to do presentations to the congregation or put information about agency services in the newsletter because direct contact between agencies and congregations was outside of the cultural norms for the Jewish community. If the agency had placed an advertisement in the Federation newsletter, the response would have been more positive.

This pattern of congregation members seeking support through wider religious community structures was characteristic of institutionalized systems. Catholic parish members turned to the priest and wider church systems when in need, rather than congregation members. Jewish social welfare systems are highly professionalized, and the various agencies under the Federation umbrella offer services primarily through professional staff. Members of the Jewish community expect this level of service, and prefer to use the formal community-wide systems than informal mechanisms.

This finding does not suggest that Jews and Catholics are less involved in social welfare. However, their fundraising, volunteering, and other support systems involved a three-way connection. Parishes and congregations provided resources for community-wide social service systems primarily through the Federation and archdiocese, or contributed to other community-wide organizations that, in turn, contributed to the centralized system. That centralized system provided support to the various faith-based organizations under its umbrella. Community members seeking assistance also turned to the centralized structure for aid rather than connecting to social service organizations through a congregation.

## FUNDING EFFORTS

Fundraising success is considered an important indicator of community support for organizations. The amount of financial support faith-based organizations received from their founding religious communities varied greatly and depended primarily on the type of service provided rather than direct connections to congregations. Agencies involved

in emergency services and youth development received the most funding from private sources, including faith communities. Agencies offering health and senior services received most of their income through fees and government transfer programs. Social service agencies had a mix of funding sources, but received significant funding from government and foundations, with less money coming directly from faith communities.

In general, donations from religious organizations and umbrella groups formed a small part of these agencies' budgets. Most agencies received less than 5% of their budgets from their faith community, although the Federation for Jewish Aging Services received 11% from its faith community. However, these small percentages mask the individual donations that some organizations received through requests to their faith communities. Smaller, congregation-based organizations and Muslim organizations received the bulk of these individual donations. For example, Muslim Charities received 52% of its income from *Zakat* donations, as Muslims fulfilled their religious obligation to support people in need.

Even though financial contributions from faith communities were small, they remained important, symbolic elements in agency budgets, signifying social capital links between organization and community. As with other aspects of social welfare provision through faith communities, institutionalized and congregational model systems sought funds differently. Institutional model agencies used community-wide mechanisms to raise funds: Federation, archdiocese-wide fundraising campaigns, and *Zakat*. Although *Zakat* donations are considered individual donations by the agency, in fact Mosques collected *Zakat* envelopes from faithful members and distributed funds to agencies named by the donor, much like a United Way donor-advised fund. Congregational model agencies solicited donations directly through congregations. For instance, the fieldworker assigned to Lutheran Charities commented that most parishes she visited had a poster for her agency on their bulletin board, and she recalled a donations envelope attached to that poster.

### IN-KIND SUPPORTS

As noted in research on congregational social service (Cnaan, 2002), faith communities also pro-

vide important in-kind supports to the organizations under their care. The most prevalent one was space – almost all of the organizations in this study either relied on their faith community for space or had used space associated with that religious body at one time. Lakeside, the Quaker retirement community, is located on land donated by its founding Friends Meeting, and the adjacent Friends Meeting house provided space for memorial services when residents died – whether Quaker or not. With the exception of Jubilee Association of Maryland and the Lutheran Rehabilitation and Shelter Program – both housing programs that developed with the support of their faith communities – all of the organizations had some programs housed in buildings owned by their founding congregation or the community-wide system such as the archdiocese or Federation.

In addition to space, organizations relied on their faith communities for a wide array of in-kind donations such as food, clothing, holiday baskets, and other resources. For example, the Muslim organizations collected food and clothing for a thrift shop as well as provided directly to families in need. Christian organizations offering emergency services also collected goods from their constituent congregations or through community-wide systems. Other necessary items – such as camp and school supplies for Christian Children's Inner City Program – came from the faith communities.

### VOLUNTEERS

Another key in-kind resource for these agencies was volunteers. Volunteers are considered a key indicator of civic engagement (Uslander, 2002; Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 1995). All of these organizations relied on some form of volunteering, often drawing volunteers both through the faith community and wider local systems.

Organizations within the institutional model were much less likely to rely heavily on volunteers and drew them through different mechanisms. In general, they recruited volunteers either through community-wide systems, sister institutions, or through individual connections among staff, board, and program participants. These organizations very rarely sought volunteers through congregations. For instance, Catholic organizations drew most of their volunteers through archdiocese-wide recruitment systems. Although the GED program claimed that

it had many volunteers from a nearby parish, our researcher found no printed advertisement for volunteers within the parish, though word-of-mouth networking may have taken place.

Of the groups in our study following the institutional model, Muslim organizations relied on the widest range of volunteer supports – regularly seeking help for people in need from professionals in the wider Muslim community. For example, Muslim doctors were asked to provide free services to low income families without insurance. These in-kind donations also represented a form of *Zakat*. In many ways, professional supports from Muslims were similar to mentoring and other donated services within the Jewish community as it resettled Soviet refugees in the 1970s and 1980s. Research in the immigration organization during that time revealed Jewish professionals providing supports to their fellow Jews with similar backgrounds to aid in their resettlement (Schneider, 1988). As such, this type of volunteering represents a clear sense of community responsibility for their own community members, encouraging those in need to have the same resources as the rest of the community and eventually share in the same prosperity as more successful members.

In contrast to these agencies, organizations using the congregational model sought volunteers through constituent congregations. This was true even for larger, established organizations – Lutheran Charities relied on volunteers from congregations for several of its programs. Congregation-based organizations also tended to use more volunteers than those using the institutional model. Like some of the agencies studied by Jeavons (1994), recruiting volunteer aid through congregations was a major form of outreach to the faith community and provided a venue for civic engagement to members of these congregations. As organizations grew and became more professionalized, they relied more on paid staff than religious volunteers, however congregation-based volunteers still remained important to the organization. For instance, Jubilee Association of Maryland began through the efforts of Mennonite

church volunteers, but quickly hired paid staff as the organization stabilized. Yet members of the founding church still volunteered at the organization.

This differences in source of volunteers between the two models partly reflected different cultural and theological aspects of these faith traditions. Those Christian denominations that used the congregational model viewed volunteering to perform direct service with people in need as a tangible way for individuals to express their faith. In contrast, those organizations following the Jewish model valued individual faith commitments, but their support came through board service or participation in the Federation, rather than through calls for individuals to provide direct service such as serving soup or making food for a faith-based soup kitchen.

Catholic congregation members also were encouraged to provide direct service as volunteers. However, as noted by Bane (2005), wider community structures such as the archdiocese-sponsored organizations, rather than individual congregations, were seen as the primary source of care for those in need.

Fundraising and volunteering are both key indicators of social capital and civic engagement. These examples demonstrate two equally strong models that rely on faith community resources to support people in need. Regardless of the model, each of these religious

groups offered assistance to people outside of their faith communities. In fact, the majority of people receiving assistance did not belong to the religious group that founded the organization. As such, both models represent faith communities contributing to the great good.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Given the two models discussed, how should faith communities and organizations shape their social service activities? Two recommendations and several strategies stem from this discussion:

1. *Work within the religious group's primary model to develop connections, support, and volunteers.* Under-

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Both the Catholic and Jewish agencies relied on community-wide systems to identify program participants.

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standing the differences between institutional and congregational models of service delivery implies that organizations and faith communities should follow the strategies for that model when looking for supports and connections. For religious groups organized according to the institutional model, this would involve contacting the archdiocese or Federation for guidance in developing various forms of support. Likewise, Catholic and Jewish congregations looking for ways to become more involved in social welfare will automatically go through those systems. This suggests that recognizing these community-wide systems as important partners is the first step in successfully working with them on faith-based support systems.

This is particularly true for interfaith efforts and organizations seeking support from several religious groups. Rather than looking for congregations to participate in initiatives, the first step should involve contacting the umbrella organizations. Federations and archdiocese should remain partners throughout an initiative. Likewise, in situations where individual Catholic parishes and Jewish congregations join an interfaith activity, organizers must recognize that seeking supports directly from congregations may be a foreign idea for most congregation members. Outreach activities should be framed within the language and style of the communal service tradition in order to garner significant participation.

As demonstrated in the example of the Jewish adult day care's failed attempt to reach out to individual synagogues and temples, organizations within the institutional model may not find it productive to spend energy on outreach to individual congregations. Instead, they should strengthen their ties to their community-wide umbrella organization's system for fundraising, volunteer recruitment, and other supports. In addition, these organizations should not gauge the level of community support or commitment to the organization by counting the number of congregations directly involved.

The opposite is true for organizations using the

congregational model. For these organizations, direct outreach to congregations is expected and is perhaps one of the most fruitful ways to garner supports. Organizations working within this model should plan frequent presentations to congregations and seek out a listing of appropriate congregations for outreach. Higher level judicatories may be a source of information on congregations, but they should be viewed as an important conduit for reaching congregations, rather than the major source of contributions.

2. *Appreciate the theological differences that create different systems.* Although this article has provided

limited information on theological differences among the various religious groups, fundamental theological teachings led to the creation of each model.<sup>8</sup> For religious groups following the institutional model, social justice and social support are understood as the responsibility of the entire community. For Jews and Muslims, references to the injunctions of Jewish law and teachings of the Koran to support those in need are fundamental to both individual and community activities. The bishop and pope's encyclicals are central to Catholic social welfare systems. Initiatives that attempt to draw on faith "from the heart" or other individualized calls to service may be much less successful for people from these religious groups.

Instead, invoking these community-wide teachings may be much more effective. Connecting faith to works also involves recognizing these teachings and community-wide understandings of social justice and service.

On the other hand, religious groups following the congregational model of social service delivery stem from a more individualized form of faith expression, in which involvement in service comes from an individual's calling or vocation. Service is considered an important aspect of personal faith development and efforts to connect faith to works should be highlighted in this theology. Identifying the theological underpinnings of each group's tradition regarding calls to service and the role of service



in the individual faith life of congregation members would be important to these initiatives.

Interfaith initiatives that include people from traditions that use these two different models must incorporate all of the appropriate theological teachings. One important aspect of these initiatives may be helping all participants understand how each religious group understands social welfare and the role of social justice and support initiatives as religious teachings. Expanding the connection between faith and works to explore these theological differences becomes an important part of an interfaith initiative.

### CONCLUSIONS

Recognizing differences in ways various religious groups organize faith-based social welfare and health systems is the first step in strengthening these initiatives and clarifying their faith base. Tailoring programs to consider differences between institutional and congregational models of social service delivery is a necessary strategy for successful initiatives. Identifying and clarifying the theology supporting each of these models becomes an important part of the initiative, building both faith and works at the same time.

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## Among the Shabby Tents

He sits in dust among the shabby tents  
on the other side of the blazing fire  
and bids us "Come."

Our fine and bulging clothes glow in the fire's light;  
overdressed and blinded, we stumble toward the voice  
that bids us, nonetheless, to "Come."

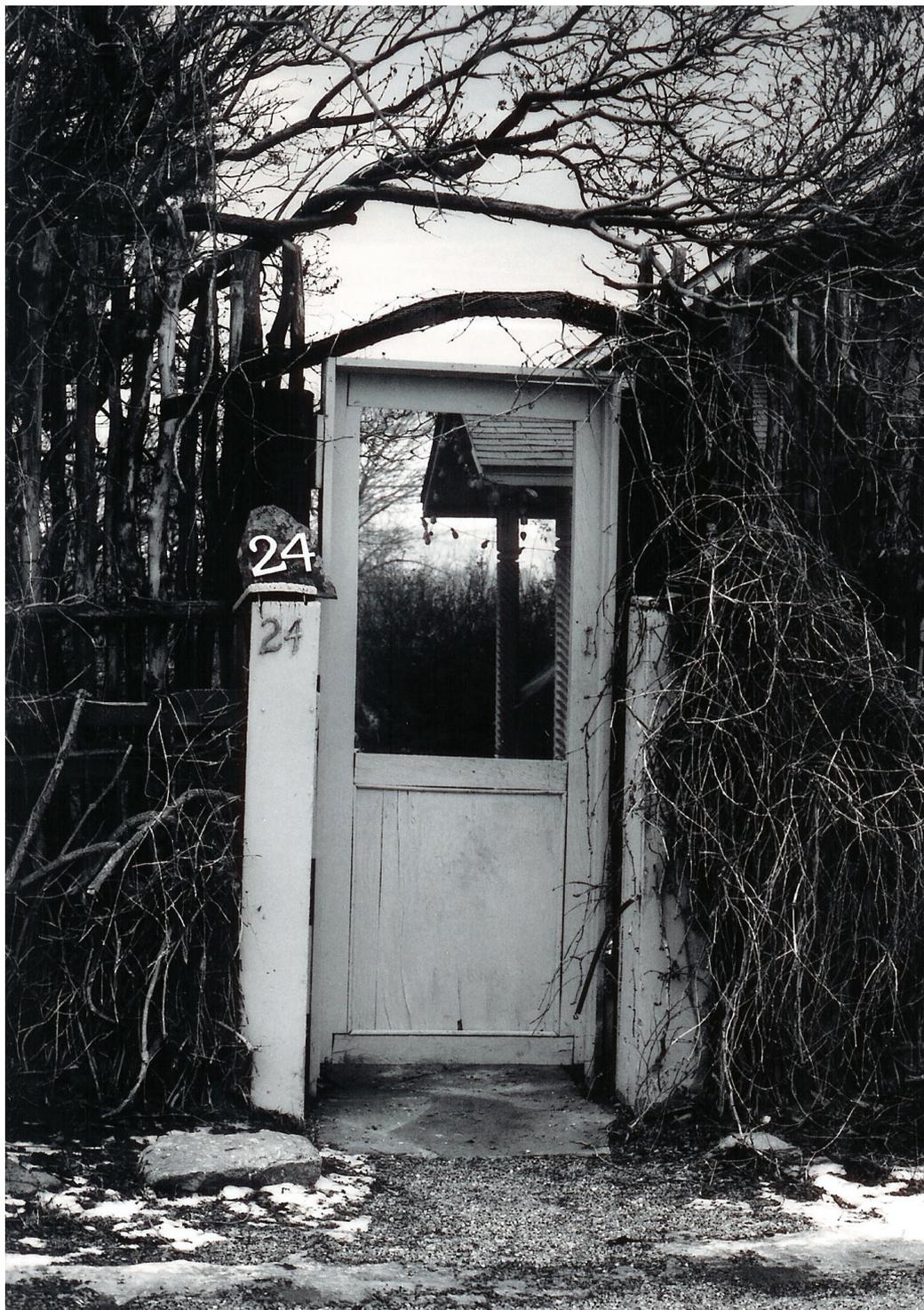
"Sit," and the dust is all we see;  
sweat from the heat  
will turn our dust to mud.

"Eat," and with enthusiasm bread and water  
are held out to us with the joy of a banquet.

"Live," and our being snaps and burns  
like the embers.

"Go," and we reach for clothes  
more suited to the dust.

— Terry W. York



**Turquoise Gate**  
by Val Isenhower

*Which side of the gate are you on?  
Where is God calling you to be?  
What is on the other side of the gate for you?*