CAN CHARITABLE CHOICE WORK?
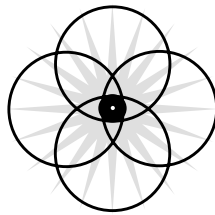
Covering
Religion's Impact
on Urban Affairs
and Social
Services

Edited by Andrew Walsh

Contents

*The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors
and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Pew Charitable Trusts.*

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Introduction

Andrew Walsh

Like a camel easing its nose under a tent, "charitable choice" slipped into the American public arena in 1996. Hardly anyone noticed. The initiative was planted as a small part of the giant welfare reform act by then-U.S. Sen. John Ashcroft, a paladin of the Religious Right who believed that 70 years of anti-religious public policy had unfairly excluded religious groups from competition for public funding. As a remedy, his legislative brainchild authorized government agencies to accept applications for social service contracts from religious groups without requiring them to suppress many of their distinctive religious characteristics.

Some of the handful of non-specialists who registered the passage of charitable choice immediately called it another gambit by the Religious Right to push things their way. Indeed, many still react this way to the idea of funding "faith-based" social services at the expense of conventional "secular" programs. But over the long haul, the reaction to charitable choice has turned out to be far more complex.

For one thing, some of the most prominent figures on the Religious Right—charitable choice's putative chief beneficiaries—have been cool to hostile. Serving the general public with social service programs isn't a high priority for many of the nation's conservative Protestants, who emphasize soul winning above all else. And while those on the left worry about the potential damage of putting public funds and services under the control of sectarians, it turns out that far more people worry about the potential damage religious groups could suffer as a result of taking Caesar's coin. There is, in other words, opposition to charitable choice for a host of reasons all across the spectrum.

But, perhaps more remarkably, it is now clear that there is also broad support for increasing the role of religious organizations in the provision of social services. There is lively and partisan disagreement about how far to go, what limits to impose, and what protections to require. But in an age when government services are widely considered to be either illegitimate or ineffectual, there's very widespread hope that religious people and organizations can bring positive transformation to services like drug and alcohol rehabilitation, violence prevention, and care for the dependent young, elderly, and disabled.

It's been a revelation to many, but the kind of drastic separation of church and state that had been imposed in the twentieth century in realms like public

education, has never taken place in the arena of social services. Publicly fund-
ed, religiously tied social service organizations have always played a big role in
American society. A long history of collaboration between government and
religious institutions in areas like care for dependent children, the retarded,
and the mentally ill is still going strong. Rooted in the nineteenth century,
when cities and states routinely funded Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish
orphanages and other welfare organizations, this collaboration—which flour-
ishes largely outside the public eye—has even intensified since the 1960s.
"Faith-based organizations" also play a large role in administering govern-
ment-funded humanitarian assistance programs abroad.

Human services organizations like Catholic Charities USA, Lutheran
Services in America, and Jewish Family Services hold large government con-
tracts to provide services all over the United States. The key factor here—
especially for conservatives like Ashcroft—is that these organizations,
although imbued with strong religious motivations, are for the most part sep-
arately incorporated non-profit organizations that follow the same norms and
procedures, including non-discrimination in hiring, as "secular" social service
organizations.

Ashcroft and other conservatives wanted to "unfetter" religious organiza-
tions, to allow them to operate as frankly religious enterprises and to permit
them to hire staff on the basis of religious affiliation. No current proposals per-
mit contractors to force clients to participate in religious activities. Supporters
also often said they wanted to enable very small groups, especially congrega-
tions, to compete for and receive government support for their social service
ministries.

In the climate of the late 1990s, it turned out that there was very broad
support for allowing more access by religious groups to government funding
for social services. This support came from both Republicans and
Democrats—the Clinton administration, in fact, was far more eager to encour-
age government-religious group partnerships than any previous administra-
tion. In the mid and late-1990s, scholars like John DiIulio of the University of
Pennsylvania argued vigorously for charitable choice from a position he
described as both Democratic and Catholic. As welfare reform initiatives took
hold, experiments in charitable choice took place in many states, including
California. A measure of the warm, although rather vague, reception that has
greeted charitable choice was that both George W. Bush and Al Gore
embraced it early and strongly in their presidential campaigns.

As president, Bush pushed his "faith-based" initiative with remarkable
vigor and persistence. In the second week of his administration, he made the
expansion of charitable choice legislation his theme of the week, a banner
example of compassionate conservatism, and opened a White House Office of
Faith-Based and Community Initiatives headed by DiIulio.

For much of the spring, however, Bush's faith-based initiative drifted into

ever-sharper partisan conflict. Conservatives in Congress gave little support to the White House's version of charitable choice and offered their own instead. Controversy erupted frequently over whether faith-based organizations that received government funding could be exempted from local and state anti-discrimination laws. In July, leaked correspondence between the White House and Salvation Army surfaced in which the Army agreed to support charitable choice in exchange for an exemption against local and state laws banning discrimination in hiring against homosexuals.

At several points it looked as though the White House had completely lost control of the initiative—and that many of President Bush's advisors outside the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives wanted to cut it loose. But, repeatedly, in the late spring and summer, President Bush himself went to bat for charitable choice of a moderately pluralist sort. In a commencement speech at Notre Dame, in an appearance at a Catholic feeding center in Cleveland, and in other places, the president proclaimed his deep philosophical and policy commitment to charitable choice.

And, in the meantime, many large religious bodies have been swinging in line to support some version of the expansion of charitable choice. Over the summer, both the United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)—mainline Protestant denominations with the size, administrative capacity, and theological commitment needed to expand their social service activities—adopted qualified statements in favor of the initiative. So did the nation's Roman Catholic bishops.

As this book goes to press, legislation authorizing the expansion of charitable choice has passed the House of Representatives and awaits action in the U.S. Senate. The major issues at play have to do with the degree to which religious groups will be exempted from human rights and institutional regulations when they serve as government contractors and whether funding levels for human services will be increased or new faith-based organizations will compete with existing contractors for existing allocations.

The political situation is extremely complex. In August John DiIulio resigned his position in the White House, thus depriving the administration of its most powerful advocate. And the terrorist attacks of September 11 radically altered all legislative priorities. In October the president signaled his willingness for the initiative to go forward without exempting religious groups from workplace discrimination laws, as Democrats wish. For their part, Democrats will likely frame any expansion of charitable choice as an experiment to be funded by larger welfare budgets. Given a weak economy and renewed federal budget deficits, the politics of funding will probably be combative and partisan.

And yet, there may be a number of powerful incentives for moderates and liberals to continue the experiment with public funding of faith-based organizations. The time limits on welfare eligibility imposed by the welfare reforms

on the mid-1990s are kicking in just as the economy slows. The only attainable vehicle that could provide more support to the very poor and dependent may well turn out to be charitable choice.

In any case, what's now being debated is the *expansion* of charitable choice. As noted above, it's been on the books since 1996. Given the widespread uncertainty surrounding the legislation, government agencies and many religiously tied service providers moved slowly over the past few years. So, in many parts of the country, charitable choice projects are just emerging from planning and funding pipelines. As a result, very little litigation over constitutional claims and counterclaims has taken place yet. But, without doubt, that litigation is on the way. No matter how long congressional discussion of funding the faith-based initiative goes on, or what final form the faith-based initiative takes, the legislative, judicial and executive branch processes will be complex and fascinating.

Because of the sprawling and diverse universe of American social service programs, there will also be significant regional variations to take into account. (The devolution of policy-making authority since the 1970s has relocated many of the critical decisions about welfare programs and policy to the local level). The debate over the structure and implementation of charitable choice is, therefore, a consequential and long-term story that will present notable professional challenges to journalists.

The purpose of this volume is primarily to assist American journalists in their coverage of the debate over charitable choice and help them to assess the impact of the charitable choice projects that are already working their way through state and local governmental processes.

Journalists, who began to cover the charitable choice debate actively in the late 1990s, have been frustrated by how little reliable research has been conducted so far, by how little experts can say about what works and what doesn't. This book aims, therefore, to pool the work of a group of eight leading scholars to provide historical and contextual information about the role of religious groups in American public life and reliable data about what American religious groups are doing now in the realm of social services.

No project has the resources to pursue every important angle or question. One critical choice in this project was to frame the question largely in terms of American urban life. The vast majority of the nation's population and religious organizations function in the context of metropolitan regions. We asked our scholars the simple question: How will charitable choice work? What factors will shape its success or failure?

Each of our eight contributors is a leading figure in his or her area of expertise; together they reflect disciplinary approaches ranging from sociology and political science to history and law. The group convened in Hartford in the fall of 2000 for a planning session, and the following February presented initial drafts at a conference attended by some two dozen print and broadcast journalists from around the country. What follows has benefited from the lively

discussion at that conference.

We did not assemble a group that we thought likely to produce a unanimous response of any sort. But, in fact, most of these essays find ample reason for caution. One distinctive aspect of the contemporary debate over the efficacy of faith-based social services has been the assertion that congregations are the major untapped source of new skill and energy for social services. Most of our authors are skeptical about that. They agree that congregations often provide highly significant programs, but doubt that America's congregations—most of which are small—have the organizational capacity, the financial resources, or even the theological commitment to compete for and administer complex long-term government contracts.

Analyzing the religious contours of American metropolitan life, Jan Shipps, Mark Chaves, and Nancy Ammerman offer unusually detailed pictures of what American religious groups, and especially congregations, are doing now to offer social service ministries. Timothy Matovina, Fredrick Harris, and Gerald Gamm offer analyses of the history and public policy approaches taken by particularly significant urban religious groups. Peter Dobkin Hall and Fredrick Harris suggest that the potential for corruption in government contracts and the disillusionment that could accompany scandal are major potential drawbacks. And Marc Stern offers a powerful legal analysis of the issues and decisions that will shape this important new stage of church-state relations in the United States.

An Appendix includes three articles by members of the Greenberg Center staff, originally published in the *Nation*, the *Washington Post*, and the Center's magazine, *Religion in the News*.

This is the third and final volume in a series underwritten by the Pew Charitable Trusts through a grant to the Greenberg Center. The first two volumes, *Religion and American Politics: The 2000 Election in Context* and *Religion on the International News Agenda* proved useful not only to working journalists but to a wider public of teachers and interested citizens as well. Given the timeliness of this volume, we hope that it will contribute to better coverage and improved public discussion of the place of faith-based organizations in American public life.

Still Gathering After All These Years: Congregations in U.S. Cities

Nancy T. Ammerman

It is hard to look at a city and not notice that religion has played some role in its life. Buildings built by congregations dot the urban landscape—sometimes dominating the terrain with towering steeples or sprawling mega-complexes, sometimes hiding in theatres or funeral homes or church basements, only appearing as the time for worship approaches. There are at least 300,000 congregations within the United States—no one knows for sure how many. No complete list exists because the array of congregations includes everything from the most tightly-organized Methodists to the most entrepreneurial storefronts. Congregations are more pervasive than schools and libraries, more numerous than voting precincts, and claim more members than any other single voluntary organization. If for no other reason, sheer numbers should make urban congregations worthy of our attention.

Congregations in a Shifting Urban Landscape

But are those congregations still thriving? Are the steeples and graveyards simply a reminder of a bygone day? Some of the most striking buildings may, in fact, be overgrown and nearly empty of worshipers. Still others may be housing boutiques, theatres, and social service agencies. In older cities, there are, by definition, many older churches and synagogues, not all of which have survived the vicissitudes of changing urban communities. Lutheran churches built a century ago for Swedish and Norwegian immigrants may have merged and moved to the suburbs. Even Catholic parishes and schools have closed their doors. What was once a "church-friendly" neighborhood may today be re-zoned as industrial and commercial space, with busy thoroughfares re-routed away from a congregation's old doorstep. Cities constantly re-use and re-arrange their space, shuffling populations and buildings from one place to another over the years and challenging even the most adept congregation to maintain itself.

In our 1992 survey of nine urban communities that were especially stressed by changes both good and bad, we discovered several common patterns of congregational response (Ammerman 1997). Many congregations simply attempt to hold their own, doing what they have always done, with a slowly dwindling membership. Some of these will eventually close their doors or merge with another congregation. A few will stare death in the face and resurrect them-

selves, often under the leadership of a pastor who helps them start all over again in developing new ministries and new styles of worship. Some will move. They will assess the possibilities for ministry in their current location and opt for friendlier territory. A brave and tenacious few will face the challenges, fight through the thicket of transition, and develop ways to welcome new populations into their midst.

But more common than any of these responses is simply the founding of new congregations suited to the needs of newcomers. In our early nineties study, we discovered that 21 percent of the congregations in those rapidly changing neighborhoods had been founded since 1980 (Ammerman 1997). A larger survey five years later, covering five large urban regions, found 14 percent of the congregations having been founded since 1985 (Ammerman 2000). In both instances, these new congregations are far more likely to be in conservative or pentecostal traditions than in more liberal Protestant ones. The bottom line is that there may be as many as 50,000 new congregations being founded every decade, and it is conservative entrepreneurs who are most actively involved in that process. Not all of these efforts survive, but there are probably ample new groups being formed to replace those that decline and die.

Far from being fixtures in the urban landscape, the population of congregations is a constantly shifting array—some coming, some going, others moving, and still others reinventing themselves.

One of the major shifts that rearranged the urban religious landscape was the mid-twentieth-century movement of middle-class whites out of city neighborhoods to the suburbs. In the years after the Civil War, "in town" neighborhoods had housed the workers and managers of a growing urban economy and were connected to the city's economic and political landmarks by trolley and subway lines. Within these neighborhoods, venerable mid-sized Protestant and Jewish places of worship multiplied in the years between the Civil War and World War II, with a major building boom in the 1920s. These distinctive religious buildings, each reflecting its own tradition, housed lively religious education programs for children, along with men's and women's organizations, serving the religious needs of the families who occupied the modest bungalows and apartments that surrounded them.

When those families began to move to the suburbs in the 1950s, many of them looked for new congregations there (and fueled another religious building boom, further from the city's center). While some members returned each week to congregations that perhaps held long family memories, even that connection was put in jeopardy by the changing racial housing patterns of the 1960s and 70s. The result was that many sold their old buildings to new congregations, while others reestablished themselves in a variety of ways.

One way some congregations reinvented themselves, especially in these downtown and inner fringe areas was to become an "activist" congregation that engages in a variety of social, economic, and political efforts toward alleviating

suffering and injustice. The "Church and Community" project, for instance, identified more activist congregations in "inner fringe" neighborhoods than in any other part of the city (Mock 1992). Similarly, Guest and Lee (1987) found that proximity to central business districts was positively related to a community service orientation. They also found that congregations with a service orientation toward the surrounding neighborhood are those that have been in the community longer, but who do not necessarily have a localized membership. This echoes recent findings by Chaves from the National Congregations Study (Chaves 1999). The most likely congregations to have active social service programs are those located in poor neighborhoods, but whose members are more affluent and commute to participate in those congregations. Kanagy, working with a much smaller sample of congregations, reached similar conclusions. Social activism is related to poverty and ethnic diversity in the congregation's neighborhood (Kanagy 1992).

But not all congregations located in poor inner fringe neighborhoods adopt an activist stance. The strongest predictor of which ones do, in virtually every study, is the theological tradition of the congregation. Activist congregations most likely belong to liberal denominations (Davidson, Mock, and Johnson 1997; Guest and Lee 1987). They have pastors and lay leaders who have liberal beliefs and try to link faith to social action (Davidson, Mock, and Johnson 1997). In other words, these are congregations that have deliberately developed an identity as places to work for change in this world. For some, that identity emerged out of the crucible of the civil rights struggle, as old-line white congregations faced the moral imperatives of justice and integration. Many of their old members may have left, but those who remained—and those who have been attracted since—define themselves by a faith that seeks active engagement with the difficulties of this world. The result is often a congregation whose visibility in the city far outstrips its modest size.

Another set of venerable players on the urban religious scene are African-American churches. Included among them are historic congregations in traditionally-black neighborhoods, as well as churches that took over the buildings of fleeing white congregations in newly black middle class neighborhoods (Pattillo-McCoy 1999), and new congregations (including some prominent megachurches) built in affluent black suburbs (Gilkes 1998). These congregations have historically played key roles for their members, providing opportunities for participation, leadership, and cultural expression in a society where few other such opportunities were available. While many things have changed over the last half century, black churches and black preachers remain central in the social, economic, and political life of African-American communities and the city as a whole (a subject Fred Harris explores in more detail in his essay). Black churches are more likely than white churches to be politically active and to take on economic development issues, and many cities have prominent black clergy who act as a moral voice for the city as a whole.

Because these churches are so politically visible, it is easy to forget that they are still, first of all, spiritual institutions. A generation ago, scholars argued that the otherworldly bent of much African-American worship was a hindrance to this-worldly activism. Since that time, however, many other scholars have tried to understand the link between the ecstatic, spirit-filled experiences of Sunday morning and the way these worshipers encounter the world on Monday. Calhoun-Brown, for instance, demonstrates that organizational involvement in religious activities is strongly related to political mobilization. People who are active in church are there to get the information and encouragement they need to participate. She also shows that those who want churches to emphasize personal salvation are not therefore less inclined toward this-worldly activism (Calhoun-Brown 1998). They are, in fact, more inclined toward a kind of separatist version of black empowerment. McRoberts argues that the religious experiences of the poor Boston churches he studied provided, in many instances, a sense of personal empowerment that enabled participants to pursue justice and success in their lives (McRoberts 2000). At the very least, observers should not discount the religious activities of black congregations as irrelevant to their role in the larger urban community.

Every city contains, then, a large store of congregations in the central and immediately-surrounding areas, often occupying buildings built between about 1875 and 1945, that have many stories to tell. Those that have continuously occupied their buildings over the decades undoubtedly have undergone dramatic changes. But other buildings can tell tales of diverse occupants, one group replacing another over time. Take a peek inside that striking old building, and you may glimpse a thriving new congregation, the latest in a succession of occupants, whose Spanish songs of praise perhaps echo off walls that have heard a dozen languages and as many different ways of worshiping God. Synagogues have become Black Pentecostal churches. Presbyterian churches now house Buddhists or Muslims. And congregations of all stripes have created and housed programs to meet the needs of each population wave that has passed through the neighborhood—from the hygiene, domestic science, and language classes taught to earlier immigrants to the gang intervention, welfare-to-work, and refugee resettlement services offered today.

While these inner fringe urban neighborhoods often contain the most active, historic, and colorful congregations, in the years after World War II, the religious center of gravity, like everything else in American cities, shifted outward. As new suburbs were built, new congregations were built along with them. Fueled by the Baby Boom, church attendance reached new highs, and family-centered congregations grew alongside the family-centered schools and parks and neighborhoods of the new suburbs (Hudnut-Beumler 1994). Our 1997 survey of congregations in five urban regions found that nearly one third of today's congregations were founded in the 25 years following World War II (Ammerman 2000). Like the suburbs themselves, these churches are dispropor-

tionately white and middle class. And they remain today the most organiza-
tionally healthy congregations, with higher average attendance and fatter year-
ly budgets than congregations founded either earlier or later.

The cultural ties linking suburban home owning with child rearing and
religious attendance remain strong. While overall membership in "mainline"
Protestant groups has declined, their "market share" of the "families with young
children" population has remained constant (Marler 1995). Unfortunately, that
population segment has declined from about half of U.S. households in the
1950s to less than a quarter today. While families are still looking for places to
take their children, there are not enough such families to support all the con-
gregations that once thrived in this population niche. At least some of those
suburban congregations will be looking for new programs and new members in
the years ahead.

Religious Frontiers in Today's Cities

Americans did not quit forming congregations when the Baby Boom
ended, however. Look more closely at that seemingly abandoned religious
building—or around the corner or down the block—and you may discover that
in its shadow stand perhaps a dozen new sacred spaces, home to new gatherings
of worshipers. Look in the most distressed downtown neighborhoods and in the
most affluent exurban byways, and you will find new religious communities
gathering for worship and for mutual support. The recent story of religion in
American cities is a story of significant innovation.

In part that innovation emerges from the continuing sprawl of urban areas.
In the 1980s and 90s, developers turned their sights ever further outward, plac-
ing businesses along urban perimeter highways and housing in what used to be
rural pastures. People in remote small towns suddenly found themselves part of
an urban region—"exurbs." Neither they nor their suburban neighbors neces-
sarily thought they ever had to go into the city's center. With office parks and
shopping malls on the edge of the city, the urban region had been decentralized,
transformed from a hub-and-spokes to a pepperoni pizza.

These new exurbs brought a transformation of the religious ecology, as
well. Nancy Eiesland documents the way new populations in a southern small
town prompted new kinds of congregations to be formed, new lines of compe-
tition and cooperation to emerge, as well as transformations within existing
congregations (Eiesland 2000). No congregation was left untouched. A country
Methodist church struggled through years of conflict as newcomers arrived.
Old southern assumptions about where pentecostals belong in the status hier-
archy of the community (on the other side of the tracks) were challenged by
middle-class charismatics appearing, both in a new congregation and within
existing ones. And everyone had to devise responses to the megachurch down
the road. While that 3000-member church was a story in itself, the ripples it
sent through the rest of the religious community were no less significant.

Undoubtedly "megachurches" are the most visible recent trend in

American cities. While Catholic parishes have long claimed thousands of communicants, Protestants have only recently created this distinctive new church form, of which there are at least 350 in the U.S. (Thumma 2000). Indeed, megachurches now exist throughout the world, often linked in loose networks to U.S. congregations. Generally defined as a congregation that has at least 2000 weekly worshipers, megachurches are home to huge staffs and long lists of programs. Sometimes they look like churches, and sometimes they don't. Sometimes they are "seeker" oriented (like Willow Creek), but not always. They usually have a strong and popular pastor, but the attraction is also the experience of being part of something so big. But even in the midst of the crowds, most megachurches also provide ample opportunities for members to be involved with small fellowship groups, mission activities of all sorts, as well as volunteering for the hundreds of tasks that are necessary to keep such places going.

Megachurches are most often found in the Sunbelt of the south and the southwest and are almost always in suburban locations. Thumma notes, "These suburban areas offer expansive, less expensive plots of land suitable for acres of parking lots and the multiple buildings that are needed to support a congregation of several thousand. Zoning regulations are often less restrictive than in established urban communities. Most importantly, the suburbs provide a continuous influx of exactly the type of person attracted to megachurches—consumer oriented, highly mobile, well-educated, middle class families." Both Thumma and Vaughan (Vaughan 1993) report that sprawl cities, such as Houston, Orlando, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Phoenix, and Oklahoma City, have the highest number of megachurches.

Megachurches are, by definition, regional churches. They draw their members from every corner of the city. But they are not the only congregations that draw members from a wide area. In an earlier day, congregations were often closely tied to a particular geographic place. They were parish churches or orthodox synagogues, literally identified with a neighborhood. Or they were town churches, representing their religious tradition—Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran—for the citizens of that locale. Later a similar principle operated in many new suburbs. As developers created communities out of cornfields, church hierarchies rushed to make sure that there would be a way for their adherents to worship close to home. When a person joined Pleasantville Methodist, she identified herself both with a place and with a religious tradition.

Increasingly, however, those "parish" identities have eroded. While we may live in Pleasantville, we shop at the regional mall, belong to the downtown Rotary, work at an exurban industrial park or office complex, and enroll our children in a charter school for the arts (Eiesland 2000). The fact that we choose the Episcopal church across town has less to do with where we live than with the particular programs, ministries, and people we find when we go there. Congregations increasingly occupy a "niche" that is identified by programming

and membership more than denomination or location. People still want to belong, but our sense of belonging is more complicated than the towns and families that used to anchor us. As a result, fewer and fewer congregations are primarily related only to an immediate geographic community (Ammerman 1997).

Many may be located in what McRoberts calls "religious districts." Looking at the history of Boston's African-American congregations, he documents the way racial barriers, economic shifts, and zoning combine to crowd multiple congregations into small geographic spaces (McRoberts 2000). Depressed commercial zones, with cheap rents, attract more than their fair share of congregational tenants. Each draws members mostly from outside the neighborhood in which it is located, catering to many different segments of the African-American ethnic and religious community. Like stores selling distinctive styles of pants, he argues, the presence of diverse congregations in close proximity encourages "customers" to "shop" in the neighborhood. Similarly, one can find busy intersections or highway interchanges with large congregations on every corner. Far from competing for neighborhood residents, each is drawing a distinct membership from as large a region as they can afford parking space.

The innovation reshaping urban religion is not simply geographic, however. It is also shaped by the presence of significant new participants. Mosques, temples, and other shrines now mark U.S. cities as home to the full range of the world's religions (Eck 1997). With the reform of U.S. immigration law in the mid-1960s, the flow of newcomers has included a far bigger and more diverse mix. The Protestants, Catholics, and Jews who had come here from Europe a century ago are joined now by Hindus and Sikhs, Buddhists and spiritual practitioners from all over the world. Muslims may soon overtake Jews as the second most numerous religious tradition in the U.S.

And as they do, the U.S. is providing the setting in which new understandings of old religions get worked out. Dislodged from traditional cultures, and thrown together with co-religionists from around the world, each tradition must sort out what is religiously essential and what is not. It is not just that they are being confronted with external challenges from modern ideas. They are also being confronted with internal challenges as the religions themselves are remade in this new setting.

As these newcomers make their way into the American religious mix, they are also beginning to absorb some of the religious habits of this country (Warner and Wittner 1998). Even new immigrants from traditions that do not form "congregations" in other parts of the world find themselves establishing congregation-like groups in this country. Never really *identical* to the Christian and Jewish patterns, they nevertheless legally incorporate, build buildings, designate someone as their "clergy," establish membership rolls and organize boards, hold services during the weekend, and create programs of education and

community service. Immigrant groups have not yet, we found, fully moved into the networks of religious and community organizations in their local communities (Ammerman 2001). But there is every reason to believe that they will.

Most immigrants, of course, do not initially have the resources to build ornate shrines or to spin off multiple specialized gatherings. In their early years, houses and storefronts are more common homes for immigrant groups. They may be in well-defined ethnic enclaves, but they are just as likely to draw their members from throughout a metropolitan region. In their survey of immigrant congregations in the Houston metropolitan area, Ebaugh and her associates found both Hispanic Catholic parishes where members commute on average less than 3 miles and a Hindu Temple where a 20-mile commute is the average (Ebaugh, O'Brien, and Chafetz 2000). Both ethnic housing patterns and religious expectations combine to keep Hispanic Catholics tied to nearby churches. Neither of those factors is at work among Houston's prosperous Indian community. Although there are other Temples in Houston, one is clearly the most highly regarded. Its members are scattered throughout the region, but are recruited into Temple membership through strong ethnic networks. The dozens of other immigrant congregations they studied fall somewhere between these extremes, relating to members and neighborhoods based on factors ranging from the available religious competition to the nature of particular immigrant needs and networks.

Not all the new immigrants, of course, are bringing in new religious traditions. Those who leave India or Korea, for instance, are disproportionately more likely to be Christian than are those who stay behind (Warner and Wittner 1998). Down an urban sidestreet, one is likely to find a group of Indian or Chinese Christians, for instance. Many Latin American immigrants are forming evangelical and pentecostal churches, in addition to swelling the rolls of local Catholic parishes. Minus Koreans, both Presbyterians and Methodists would be experiencing more net loss in membership than they are. But the numbers are a mixed blessing. Whether it is Filipino Catholics or Korean Presbyterians, these newcomers are often much more conservative than their native-born hosts. They are less likely to welcome the leadership of women, for instance, and more likely to insist on older ways of worshiping. Immigration is bringing tension and change even within America's old established religious bodies.

The Opportunities and Challenges of Diversity

What can account for this continuing profusion of religious gathering? In part we can chalk it up to the tradition of religious liberty that took root in American soil with the first European immigrants. By leaving the field open to the ebb and flow of religious needs and energies, by refusing to create a state-regulated religious system, our forebears left us this legacy of spiritual variety and constant change. Every group is on its own to gather itself, to establish its own way of worshiping, to offer its adherents a way to live. So long as its mem-

bers support it, any religious group can succeed. No group can grow lazy on a government subsidy, losing connection with the needs and energies of its members. As new populations have arrived and old ones have moved or changed, the religious scene has been free to change in response.

As people in U.S. cities seek out places to worship, then, they have a dizzying variety to choose from. The congregations that fill those cities are as varied as the cultures and lifestyles of the population. While there may be several dozen Methodist churches, for instances, no two will be exactly alike, each giving expression to different ways that people identify themselves, their values, and their cultures. Each congregation creates and preserves distinctive styles of worship—from multi-media spectacles to Taizé—and offers specialized ministry for particular populations—from deaf people to working moms to immigrants who have not yet learned English. Congregations are places to call home, places to be with those who value the same customs and stories, indeed places in which those stories and customs are developed and sustained.

Whether the customs in question come from a distant culture or from a regional or occupational subculture within the U.S., congregations are spaces in which groups engage in "cultural reproduction"—passing valued traditions on to the next generation. Even old-line Protestants are discovering what immigrants, Jews, and African-Americans have long known: the larger culture cannot be expected to teach (or even value) the particularities of distinct religious communities. As Warner has observed, we are all sojourners and need gathering spaces in which to tell our founding myths and practice our distinctive ways (Warner 1999). These religious differences, he argues, need not require antagonism. Civility "can advance along with religious particularism." (p. 236). Rather than exacerbating differences, congregations may mediate them. Congregations need the space to tell their own stories, but the distance between groups can be lessened when the larger public overhears those stories on occasion.

Congregations, in all their dizzying variety, then, continue to thrive in U.S. cities. While we often see individual groups who shut their doors in defeat—either after a long and fruitful life or after a brief and futile effort at success—we are just as likely to see new groups opening their doors. In an increasingly mobile, fragmented, and presumably secular society, this venerable form of community retains its vitality. Indeed *because* we are so mobile and fragmented, it may be all the more essential that we find places to belong, places that provide identity and caring, but places which still allow us to move in and out with relative ease. Commentators such as Robert Putnam have made clear the need for places in which "social capital" is generated (Putnam 2000). In order for a society to survive, its members need arenas in which they learn to trust each other, to communicate with each other and work together on common projects. Congregations are clearly among the most important of the institutions that fill this role. When urban nomads look for places to put down

at least temporary roots, when people look for familiar faces and a recognizable language in a new land, congregations and their affiliated gatherings are often the home people adopt.

What Congregations Do

Congregations are about more than culture and belonging, of course. While congregational leaders (and their members) tell us that "fellowship" is among the congregation's most important functions, the single highest priority for congregations is religious rather than social. The vast majority of congregations are very clear that their primary task is a spiritual one—to provide opportunities for their members to worship, to help those members deepen their individual spiritual lives, and to provide religious education for their children (Ammerman 2000). That is, we fail to understand the fundamental nature of these organizations if we do not take seriously the religious character of their work. Understanding urban congregations means paying attention to what congregations believe, how they worship, even the religious architecture and adornment with which they surround themselves.

The internal and religious work of congregations is often taken to have no public interest or value. However, we have recently realized that even the most private and "otherworldly" activities can have effects beyond the congregation's four walls. David Martin, for instance, studied Latin American pentecostals and argued that the very notion that every believer can speak in heavenly tongues is central to the many ways in which these churches are instilling democratic and entrepreneurial skills, opportunities, and aspirations in their members (Martin 1990). More recently, McRoberts reports on his close reading of worship in the many pentecostal storefront churches that populate the Four Corners neighborhood in Boston (McRoberts 2000). He calls their worship "socializing" because the experience itself convinces participants that they have the ability to engage the problems of their worlds. As Peter Berger pointed out more than three decades ago, the root of the word "ecstacy" is "ex-stasis" or literally "standing out of place" (Berger 1969). The liminal space provided by ecstatic worship can often provide both critical perspective and a sense of possibility that have real effects in how people then engage the world outside.

There are other indirect effects, as well. In joining a congregation, people learn how to be good citizens and contribute their collective resources to the well being of the community. By providing places in which people can debate and organize, moderate and lead, learning to express themselves and to disagree, congregations provide one of the essential building blocks of democracy. Certainly they are not the only places where people practice such "civic skills," but not everyone has access to the civic and social clubs or the high status schools and jobs where many citizens learn to be leaders (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Congregational participants of all social statuses, however, get opportunities to lead. Every congregation that needs to organize a picnic or debates its next building project or organizes a parish council provides its mem-

bers an essential lesson in governing. The story of urban congregations is often a story of underground schools in democracy and participation.

Congregations are most often noticed when they organize large programs of service to the community or mobilize their members for political action. But much of what congregations do for their communities is much less visible. It encompasses the social and civic capital they generate, but it also includes the informal care they provide for their own distressed members, as well as the ad hoc food and shelter they arrange for those who come to their doors. Even the poorest congregations step into the breach when no other services are available. Congregations are places where people take care of each other. They are a "first response" social service agency for their own members and for dozens of urban wanderers. They supply food and child care and job assistance and in-home visits to the elderly. We should not ignore the degree to which these "extended family" or "village" style services sustain people in ways that might otherwise require external agency assistance.

Some congregations, of course, do more than this informal aid. They organize vast programs of housing rehabilitation, job training, shelter for abused women and children, education and health care, and on and on. The largest of these enterprises may get spun off into major non-profit organizations. In fact, many urban service agencies got their start through the energy and compassion of the religious community. Congregations remind people of what needs to be done and sometimes inspire innovative efforts to address the city's problems. The networks of communication that come together in a congregation can often begin to bring together the human and financial resources to make new ventures possible (Milofsky and Hunter 1995; Wuthnow 1991). Congregations know that they cannot care for their communities alone, but they often provide a necessary organizing base, a channel for a variety of concerns and volunteer energies.

What has also become clear, however, is that a great deal of what congregations do in the community is not done through the mechanism of beginning their own congregationally-run programs. Far more common are patterns of service provision that involve a complex network of organizational partnerships. Congregations have learned to widen their usual resource base to draw on partnerships with other groups that share their goals. Sometimes those groups are other agencies within their own religious tradition, but just as often, they are neighboring congregations, groups of community volunteers, local social service agencies, even business and government.

Across the 549 congregations we surveyed in 1997 and 1998, there are, on average, seven inter-organizational connections through which outreach work is done. This is over and above whatever connections a congregation may have through its own denomination. All kinds of Christian congregations are involved in these extra-denominational partnerships, as are Jews, but mainline Protestants are far more involved than anyone else. It is virtually a universal for

mainline congregations to have at least one organization with which they do outreach work, and the average is more than ten. That norm of at least some community involvement through outside organizations is nearly as strong in the other Christian and Jewish traditions, as well, even if overall levels of activity are lower. Only among the most sectarian groups (Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, for instance) and the groups newest to American soil (Hindus and Muslims, for example) is it common to find congregations that have no connections outside their own religious world. Partnerships between congregations and other community organizations have simply been institutionalized as an expected pattern in most of American religion.

Just what kinds of commitment do such outreach partnerships entail? Rarely does a partnership involve a whole congregation on an on-going and intense basis. But rarely is it something about which they know or care little. We attempted to find out as much as we could about these connections, and discovered that nearly two thirds of all congregations have at least one outside organization that uses space in their buildings (either donated outright or made available at minimal cost). If nothing else, congregations are valuable to their communities because they provide meeting space and other facilities to support the work of organizations beyond their own membership.

But it's not just empty space; it is also personpower. Each congregation contributes, on average, volunteers to three organizations, and 80 percent report that they send volunteers to help in at least one group. For the groups to which they send volunteers, the median number of members who are involved is five, with a few reporting literally dozens of routine volunteers. That, of course, does not begin to count the number of groups in which individual members work, not as official representatives of their congregations, but at least in part because their congregation encourages such activity. Sixty percent of the individual members we surveyed claim that they participate in community service organizations at least a few times a year, and 75 percent claim that they at least occasionally provide informal service to people in need.

We're also not just talking about mobilizing volunteers. On average three organizations receive monetary contributions from each congregation, for an average of nearly $2000 per organization per year. And most congregations supplement their monetary contributions to at least one organization with other material goods—food, clothing, furniture, Christmas gifts, and the like—collected by the members.

While this pattern of multi-faceted participation with outside organizations is present in other traditions, the level of activity in mainline Protestant congregations is roughly double that in conservative, African-American, and Catholic churches. Mainline churches send volunteers to, provide space for, and give money and goods to roughly twice as many organizations (Wuthnow 1999). While mainline groups are distinct for their level of activity, the basic pattern is not unique to them. Providing space and sending volunteers are pat-

terns that are nearly as prevalent — if not as numerous — across Christian traditions, and the total funds contributed in Catholic and conservative Protestant churches is about the same as in mainline ones.

What sorts of things do these connections and partnerships allow congregations to do for their communities? Almost three quarters of the congregations we surveyed have at least one connection to a community organization that provides immediate relief to people in need (Hodgkinson and Weitzman 1993). Indeed the average congregation has two such connections. Through the work of these coalitions and partner organizations, runaway teens are housed; battered women and children find a safe place; people who are homeless find temporary shelter; and thousands and thousands of hot meals are served to people who are hungry. While many of these organizations also do advocacy and work on long-term solutions, their primary task is simply to relieve immediate suffering.

Some congregations do seek out partners to work on various kinds of longer-term economic development projects. The idea of church-based "community development corporations" is getting a good deal of attention these days, but it is the rare church (about 3 percent overall, but 22 percent of African-American churches) that has taken on this sort of economic partnership (Day 1995). The single most common effort to provide long-term intervention is Habitat for Humanity. Forty-one percent of all the mainline Protestant churches in which we interviewed have some connection to Habitat, with Catholic parishes not far behind (at 33 percent), and conservative and African-American churches involved, as well, but at much lower levels (11 and 8 percent, respectively).

What about politics? We found that congregations almost never have partnerships with voter education and registration groups, although they may engage in these activities on their own. Even when we prompted for connections to groups like Christian Coalition, we simply did not find any congregations admitting to using their voter guides, for instance. The only congregations that talked about such explicit political activity were African-American ones, not conservative white Protestants (Pattillo-McCoy 1998; Wood 1999). Connections with issue-based advocacy groups (from the NAACP to Gay Pride parades to Amnesty International) are present, but not extremely common (only about 1 in 6 has any such connection).

The typical congregation also provides support for two organizations whose job it is to enhance the educational, cultural, and personal well-being of community participants. These are the scout troops and nursery schools, senior centers and sports leagues—all existing independently of any single congregation, but often housed and supported by congregations, along with others in the community. In addition, there are arts organizations that use religious buildings for rehearsals, performances and lessons. Congregations support formal and informal programs of tutoring, after-school care, and literacy

classes. They contribute to programs of education and service provision that surround issues as diverse as AIDS, unwanted pregnancies, handicapped persons, adoption, and the like. They support and refer parishioners to counseling centers of all sorts. And they cooperate with others in delivering spiritual care to people in hospitals, nursing homes, on college campuses, and even in police and fire departments.

A closely related set of activities are those that fall into the "self-help" category. Here persons with a given concern gather to help themselves and each other to deal with the problem. By far the best known and most widespread, of course, are the Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-step groups for narcotics addicts, overeaters, and even "sex and love addicts." Congregations across the religious spectrum provide support for these groups, but mainline Protestant churches are especially likely to be involved.

The picture, then, is a busy one. Congregations provide critical resources of money, space, personpower, and other support to a wide array of organizations engaged in providing for the well-being of communities. They are also often the locations where needs, ideas, and resources come together to precipitate the birth of new service organizations. The work being supported is most often first-line assistance to people with critical physical and economic needs. But nearly as often, the work being supported is aimed at the enrichment of the community's educational, recreational, and cultural life. Politics, economic development, and issue advocacy are certainly present in the range of things congregations support, but they are not the primary ways in which most congregations seek to contribute to the well-being of their communities.

The strongest congregations, however, never forget that they are more than a social service agency and a gathering place. As much as cities may need congregations to be sources of belonging and compassion, they also need the spiritual and moral resources they provide. Congregations are among the few places in our society that dare to teach virtues and morality, to remind us of our imperfections and call us to better lives. They are where people gather to encounter a presence beyond themselves—a Torah that calls them into observant living, a rhythm of daily prayer and zakat that establishes obligations to Allah and to the community, the presence of ancestors and the stories of gods whose examples remind them of who they are, the ecstasy of rituals, the singing of hymns, the reading of sacred texts. All these religious practices invite a spiritual strength that can permeate and transform lives. They also introduce a potential source of critical perspective, a way of looking at the world that is not subject to the "spin" of political and market analysts. People who have tapped into this spiritual strength see their own lives differently, and they can see the world differently, as well. In the midst of looking for the political and economic impact of congregations, observers of cities would do well to pay attention to these more elusive spiritual effects, as well.

Issues to Keep an Eye on

Shifting Religious Ecologies. As populations shift across different sections of the city, congregations are likely to undergo shifts, as well. In the most distant areas, small town churches may be transformed by new suburbanites, while in more proximal suburbs aging congregations may be struggling to survive. Meanwhile, new congregations are probably being built alongside the old.

Immigrant Congregations. Both immigrant gatherings from non-traditional religions and immigrant Christians are becoming too numerous to ignore. They are likely to be creating space for the preservation of old cultures, while also negotiating with the new. This new cohort of immigrants is maintaining close "transnational" ties to their countries of origin, from which they may receive help in building their religious shrines. These congregations are often economic and social hubs, as well as religious ones, and there are indications that the second generation may be retaining ethnic-religious ties, even after they have the language and other skills to navigate U.S. culture.

Megachurches. While these giant congregations are not likely to eliminate other religious forms, they are likely to continue to multiply. They are especially well-suited to a mobile, consumer-oriented culture, and their non-traditional styles appeal to the Boomer and X-er generations. Many megachurches, however, face leadership crises in the coming years as the generation of founding pastors nears retirement. Despite their apparent success, most of these congregations have enormous debt and could face financial crises, as well.

Street-level Ecumenism. Not many people are interested in traditional forms of ecumenism (doctrinal statements, official councils, and the like), but when there are problems to be solved, surprising coalitions often form. We found that much of the cooperative work being done among congregations is done through informal partnerships. Since these often cross religious and ethnic boundaries, they may accomplish more than simply getting the job done.

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Religion and Regional Culture
in Modern America

Jan Shipps

Cityscapes have become so familiar to the viewing public that a few frames showing masses of towering structures against the sky is enough to establish an urban setting for a movie or television show. Perspective, along with glimpses of a city's well-known distinguishing features, provides specificity. The New York skyline nearly always has water in the foreground, for instance, and Central Park is often visible. San Francisco has buildings perched on the edges of streets that tilt precipitously up or down, and usually there is a glimpse of the Golden Gate Bridge. Dallas has glass and steel skyscrapers rising out of apparently endless open space. And so on. If the place being signaled is one of the nation's midsize municipalities, virtually interchangeable images of a dense accumulation of tall buildings generally suffices.

Whether specific or generic, and whether of cities of huge or middling size, most modern American cityscapes don't include identifiable places of worship. Despite their spires, steeples, Romanesque battlements, bell towers, and minarets, in today's photographic renderings of cities, urban churches, cathedrals, synagogues, and mosques are more often than not overwhelmed by the buildings in which a city's business (commerce, finance, trade, et cetera) gets done. This absence of architectural cues linking earth to heaven supports the conventional notion that cities are secular places. In the days when cameras were a rarity, depictions of cityscapes were novelties. But Americans loved them and in city after city photographers made determined efforts to locate high places from which they could portray significant portions of urban landscapes. Found in a profusion of late nineteenth and early twentieth century souvenir booklets and illustrated hardback volumes, these visual representations of urban America often included so many structural ensigns of the faith they leave the impression that, in olden days, city lives were enmeshed in religion.

The reasons are obvious. Whether they were trying to appeal to tourists or were simply a part of the urban "boosterism" of the period, the publishers of such works typically settled on impressing readers with eye-catching shots of imposing buildings. Because religious structures were often more majestic or beautiful or interesting than the utilitarian structures in which commerce and industry were carried out, they received lots of attention. As a result, when

we look over these illustrations we often conclude that religion was far more significant in U.S. cities a hundred years ago than it is as the twenty-first century opens.

But this sort of comparison based on the "bricks and mortar" of urban religion can be misleading. The structures in which worship takes place in a given community are certainly important because they are physical evidence of engagement, commitment, devotion, and, in most cases, sacrifice, of congregations of religious people. They are indispensable signifiers of the place of religion in the culture of any place, be it urban or rural. Much more than palpable evidence of the religious belief and acceptance of particular creeds—things that are, finally, more metaphysical than material—religious structures are often the places where it is easiest to see faith becoming tangible through the creation of community. What takes place inside and around religious structures is what really matters.

Chapels, churches, tabernacles, synagogues, temples, and mosques all provide environments in which, to use popular terminology, social capital takes root and flourishes. In a nation where being part of a religious community is truly a voluntary condition, religious structures are places where a miscellaneous assemblage of individuals and families can become a people of God. Safe, because culture (even in cities) permits them to be safe, they are places where leadership rests on common consent and where risks can be taken as service is rendered, both to members of the faith communities that inhabit them and to those who stand outside.

But just as cityscapes can be misleading about the extent of religious presence in urban places, so depending on surveys of the physical plants in which religious activities (worship and otherwise) happen can produce an unreliable measure of urban religiosity. One obvious reason for this is the changed housing and traffic patterns that have undercut the vitality of many downtown areas, leaving handsome religious structures that house small and aging congregations in nearly every metropolitan area. In many instances, members of the fragile faith communities inhabiting these giant architectural artifacts make strenuous efforts to provide services to needy people who dwell nearby. Despite their efforts to make service a priority, however, such congregations are often forced to expend most of their religious energies in what seems a never ending struggle to maintain their places of meeting.

Most cities also have a variety of churches that do not look like churches. Resembling warehouses covered with aluminum siding more than religious edifices, some such structures are home to huge congregations but are only identified as houses of worship by signs announcing the times of services. Abandoned commercial buildings are sometimes turned into churches, and vice versa. And appearances are deceptive in other ways. Take the case of the chapels that house wards of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In many (perhaps most) cases in urban and suburban areas, these quite modest

structures are home to two or three—or sometimes even four—congregations who meet sequentially in three-hour blocks of time on Sundays.

Then there is the matter of how to interpret the significance of the roles churches play in urban neighborhoods. These neighborhood churches may well be urban counterparts to the fabled "churches in the wildwood," faith-based institutions that brought communities of rural folks together. But despite the general perception that seems particularly evident among those who support the forging of strong partnerships between government and faith-based organizations, not all of these institutions are firmly imbedded in their surroundings. Many neighborhood churches do serve as anchors of urban neighborhoods. But a significant finding is emerging from a multifaceted multi-year study of religion in Indianapolis, the 13th largest city in the nation: in this city where presidential advisor Stephen Goldsmith served two terms as mayor, a considerable percentage of the well-kept "neighborhood" churches— and some not so well kept—are actually gathering places for members who commute from outside the neighborhood to worship in a familiar place.

Exploring Regional Religious Variety

Keeping the warning that "you can't always tell by looking" in mind, I set out to find a manageable way to address the topic of urban religion that would allow me to move beyond conducting what amounted to surveys of the religious landscape. To summarize what was neither a simple or straightforward way of concocting a study of religion and culture in urban America, I selected five cities to treat as case studies. They are Providence (RI), Lynchburg (VA), Indianapolis, Salt Lake City, and Seattle, in part because they represent very different sorts of urban histories. Two of them, Providence and Salt Lake City, were founded for religious reasons. Two others, Lynchburg and Seattle, came into existence for economic reasons, while Indianapolis was created, literally *ex nihilo*, to be an administrative center. Reflecting very different economic and political situations as well as population characteristics, their individual developmental trajectories reveal diverse patterns of municipal growth and change. Yet all became significant urban places with distinctive urban cultures. In studying them closely, I came to the conclusion that they are reasonably representative of urban cultures across the nation.

For example, these five cities vary in population size. At the end of the twentieth century, two of the five (Indianapolis and Seattle) had populations that put them in the list of the nation"s 100 largest cities, and all except Lynchburg were listed as anchoring Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) with populations of more than 600,000. Providence, Indianapolis, and Salt Lake City are more or less standard "mid-size" cities.

Despite its small size—the estimated population for Lynchburg proper in 1998 was only 66,000—this mountain metropolis in western Virginia is as important to my study as the other four cities. A multitude of small cities is spread all across the national landscape and to get a representative picture of

religion and culture in urban America, I needed to include one of them. Lynchburg, which was classified as a city virtually from the time it was established in 1786 and which is now the center of a standard Metropolitan Statistical Area with a population that exceeds 100,000, seemed an appropriate choice.

In addition to size, location in the various regions of the nation was also a key criterion of selection for four of these cities. Location, however, was not my reason for including Salt Lake City. The Utah capital is included because, at least *de facto* if not *de jure*, it has always had an established church. Placing this metropolis in my urban array permits me to describe what city lives might have been like in the U.S. if the separation of church and state had not been made part of the nation's constitutional system.

With regard to the cities I selected as representative of their regions, it was necessary to find a way to make sure that they were not likewise "outliers," cities dramatically different from the other cities in their regions. In order to test that, I created a set of four urban cohorts, each composed of 18 mid-sized cities in the regions where the case study cities are situated.[1] These regional cohorts permit statistical comparison of the institutional configuration of religious bodies in Providence, Lynchburg, Indianapolis, and Seattle with the institutional configurations of cities in the New England/Mid-Atlantic region, the South, the Midwest, and the Far West.

The Challenges of Counting

Having selected five cities to treat as case studies, I followed a research agenda that combined research on the ground and in the library. Borrowing techniques familiar to journalists, I visited each city several times, attending worship services and essentially becoming a participant observer in various religious activities. In addition, I conducted interviews with clerical and lay leaders of religious organizations, political figures, religion reporters for local newspapers, and a considerable variety of unsystematically selected people on the streets and in the pews. Besides that, I visited local libraries, examining materials in their specialized local collections (which, among much else, is how I learned about the contents of souvenir booklets, collections of picture postcards, and locally published hard-back volumes about these cities).

Since people who are active in religious bodies organize themselves into congregations, I prepared for my visits to each city by examining the local telephone company's yellow pages and constructing crude congregational landscapes. Once there I did lots of driving around and about, surveying the religious landscape and taking pictures. But remembering that warning about not always being able "to tell by looking," I also made an effort to determine how many people were involved in the various denominational bodies in the cities I had selected for study.

For this information, I turned to *Churches and Church Membership in the*

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1 Not included in these cohorts are any of the nation's megacities, i.e., New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Dallas-Fort Worth. Note also that these are cities, not Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

United States, 1990: An Enumeration by Region State and County Based on Data Reported for 133 Church Groupings.[2] Sponsored by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies and published by the Glenmary Research Center, this work is the third in a series of volumes of statistical reports that are issued once each decade.[3] To a considerable degree, these Glenmary volumes resemble volumes containing denominational data published by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1896, 1906, 1916, 1926, and 1936. Unfortunately, whereas the volumes published by the Census Bureau contain information that is organized by incorporated cities as well as by state and county, the Glenmary data (as they are called) are organized only by denominations, states, and counties.

Concern for the separation of church and state, plus the restrictions on the spending of public moneys during the Great Depression, stopped the Census Bureau's practice of publishing decennial volumes containing more complete place-based information about religion than the Glenmary statistical reports. Aside from compilations of statistical information provided by the official judicatories of denominational bodies, there is another way to get reasonably close estimates of the institutional configuration of the nation and its 50 states. This is information issuing from analyses of data yielded by survey research in which individuals provide answers to queries.

As unquestionably valuable as they are, both of these measures furnish statistical pictures of the institutional configuration of religion in cities that are, to put it plainly, quite crude. In the case of survey research, information is provided to researchers by individuals, which means that, no matter however carefully drawn, samples may include too few respondents from particular geographic areas to allow the construction of local institutional profiles. In addition, since respondents tend to provide the answers they think researchers want or answers that picture their ideal rather than real selves, responses to questions about religious activity and religious affiliation sometimes indicate what the respondent wishes he or she had done rather than what they actually did. From the perspective of comparison, making survey research results congruent with the statistical information provided by denominational bureaucrats rather than individual members is sometimes difficult because respondents are not always sure about the official names of the religious bodies to which they belong. This calls for a certain amount of translation—even guesswork—on the part of those who analyze the data.

Besides having to present county results, providing at the same time information about what percentage of the county population are city dwellers, two

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2   Supported by Lilly Endowment, Inc., this volume contains the responses to a survey instrument that was distributed by the Church of the Nazarene International Headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri. The data were collected in their offices. Martin B. Bradley, Norman M.Green, Jr., Dale E. Jones, Mac Lynn, and Lou McNeil were the volume's editors. The year of publication was 1992.

3   Because the Census Bureau published these volumes, many people seem to think that the information in these volumes came from the tabulations of results of information contained on census forms. This is not the case. The data were collected from institutions rather than individuals.

more serious problems arise in working with the statistical results reported by denominational judicatories. One is that not all denominational bodies supply information to those who gather the data. The other, of growing importance, is the fact that information is only collected for Judeo-Christian bodies.
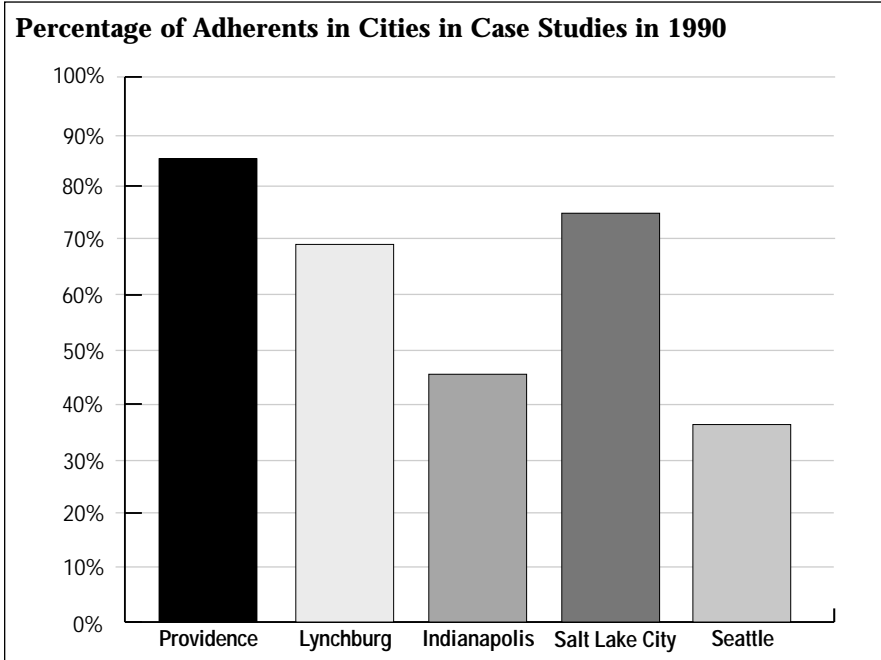
A final difficulty is reconciling the two types of information about the institutional configuration of religion in various places. As they have gone about their work, researchers analyzing survey data (particularly that yielded from the General Social Survey conducted annually by the staff of the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago) and analysts working with the Glenmary data have been using incompatible denominational taxonomies. As a result, they have come up with dissimilar institutional configurations of American religion.

The Religion and Urban Culture Project staff at the Polis Center at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis recently developed a new denominational taxonomy. It takes into account existing classification schemes that have been in the forefront of sociological analysis, as well as those currently in use in analysis of the Glenmary data. Consequently, this new scheme mediates, as it were, between taxonomies designed for the analysis of information provided by individuals and those used to categorize information about denominations provided by the religious bodies themselves.

This taxonomy may be conveniently accessed through the Religion and Urban Culture section of the IUPUI Polis Center website. The address that takes on directly to the site is http://www.polis.iupui.edu/RUC/Research/ Glenmary_by_Polis_Types_as_table.htm. For the purposes of describing religion in my five case study cities here, however, it is sufficient to note that in my analysis the denominational groupings are clustered into the following six categories:

• Mainstream Protestantism
• Evangelicals (including Holiness, Pentecostal, and Fundamentalists as well as Evangelical groups)
• Black Protestants
• Catholics
• Other Christians (including Confessional and Orthodox bodies)
• Non-Christian bodies

The mainstream Protestant category only includes the so-called "seven sister" denominations, i.e., United Methodists, American Baptists, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Episcopalians, Lutherans, United Church of Christ (Congregationalists), and the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ. When the Glenmary data are used as the basis of analysis, Jews are the only body in the Non-Christian category. As the numbers of adherents in such other Non-Christian bodies as Muslims, Buddhist, and Hindus increases, the necessity of finding some means of assessing the size of those bodies will grow increasingly acute. As yet, however, no agreed-upon consistent way exists to determining

Percentage of Adherents in Cities in Case Studies in 1990

[Bar chart showing percentages for: Providence ~85%, Lynchburg ~69%, Indianapolis ~45%, Salt Lake City ~75%, Seattle ~36%. Y-axis ranges from 0% to 100% in increments of 10%.]

statistical measures of the numbers of adherents of such bodies.

Examination of breakdowns of the religious groupings in the cities in my regional cohorts as well in my five case study cities reveals that high levels of church adherence are often a function of the numbers of Roman Catholics in a city. Notwithstanding this anomaly, such a wide disparity exists when levels of church adherence in Providence, Lynchburg, Indianapolis, Salt Lake City and Seattle are compared it is obvious that the place of institutionalized reli-

Providence, Rhode Island
1990 City Population: 160,728
1990 Providence County Populations: 596,270
Proportion of Church Adherents in Populations: 84.7%

[Pie chart with segments: Non-Christian 2.0%, Other Christian 2.7%, Mainline 8.1%, Evangelical Protestant 1.7%, Black Protestant 1.6%, Catholic 83.9%]
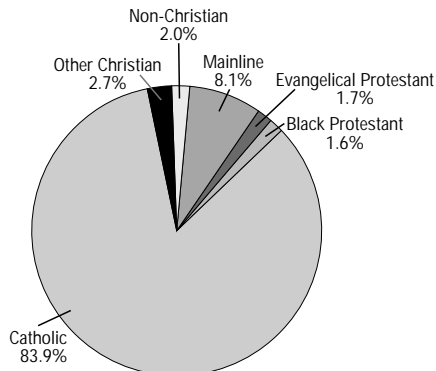
gion in these five cities is significantly different.

Ever since I developed this strategy for configuring the denominational arrays in cities in the United States, the general reaction whenever I have presented all five of them to an audience has been one that might be summarized as "Gee whiz! That's *very* interesting!" With this I am in complete agreement. But the fact that it is interesting does not begin to answer critical questions that good professors always ask their graduate students who have gathered up and organized a great deal of information. These questions are "So what?" and "How does knowing this help us to know other things?"

From the perspective of creating profiles of specific cities, the "so what" question generates a further set of questions. Is a single religious body paramount, larger by far in terms of numbers than any other religious body in the city? Has it been that way from the beginning? If not, when did the balance shift from one to another religious body? How does religious dominance play out in particular urban cultures? How much formal and informal authority does a dominant religious body's leadership cadre exercise in the social, political, and economic arenas of the various cities?

In brief compass, here are some "so what" answers with regard to my five city array. At the present time, three of these five cities—Providence, Lynchburg, and Salt Lake City—have dominant religious bodies. But their dominance manifests itself in disparate ways. The denominational clusters in Indianapolis and Seattle are reasonably balanced. But religion outside the Judeo-Christian framework is remarkably different in these two cities.

Catholicism is pre-eminent in Providence; it reigns supreme in numerical terms. But it has not always been so. The city, home to the "First Baptist Church in America," was founded in 1636 explicitly as "a refuge for distressed consciences." For over two hundred years, consciences in Providence—distressed or otherwise—were nearly all Protestant. Not until 1836 was a Catholic parish organized. But by 1865, there was an incredible rise in the number of immigrants in the city and most of them were either Catholics or Jews. The religious landscape was rapidly altered; by 1900, the numbers of Catholics not only overwhelmed all other denominational groups singly but all the others added together.

Despite their numerical dominance, their arrival after the Civil War put Catholics into the "Johnny-come-lately" category. The presence of their parochial schools made them influential enough in the educational realm (especially the K-12 part of it) to generate what amounted to an anti-Catholic backlash that they found it difficult to overcome. Because they were primarily working class people, Catholics exercised any economic muscle they had mainly through labor unions. Partially for that reason, their awesome numbers only belatedly pushed Catholics into the higher reaches of political power. Moreover, a very fine study of the city's middle class from 1820 through 1940 indicates that a direct correlation existed between being middle class and being Protestant.[4]

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4 John S. Gilkeson, Jr., *Middle-Class Providence, 1820-1940* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

Nativist sentiments and anti-Catholic actions played a big role in the city's history. Yet the history of the shift from Protestant to Catholic dominance seems now to be playing out in such an irenic manner that where once it was unwelcome, pluralism today is a valued part of modern Providence. Certainly the Church Federation continues to be a force whose actions have great influence, likely because its chief executive seems to have become *the* Protestant voice. When he speaks, the Catholic bishop hears what he says, and—at least on the surface—religious cooperation rather than conflict is the watchword.

Lynchburg, Virginia
1990 City Population: 60,049
1990 Campbell County Populations: 113,621
Proportion of Church Adherents in Populations: 68.6%
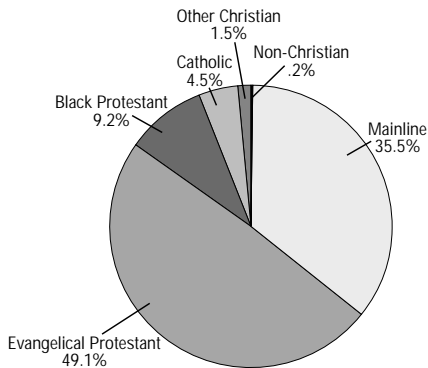
The history of the religious community in Lynchburg is very different. Although it is known as a Baptist city, not all the Baptists in the city are of the same stripe. The rise to prominence of the Reverend Jerry Falwell and the post–World War II development of the Thomas Road Baptist Church into a genuinely powerful force within conservative Evangelicalism separated Lynchburg's Baptists into what amounts to quite separate groups. The American Baptists are represented in the mainline slice of the pie in the chart that describes the denominational configuration of the city. But the Baptist division is not simply American Baptists standing over and against all the rest. Despite the classification of all other Baptist groups as Evangelicals, my conversations with various Baptist ministers and Baptist lay people in the city made it clear that it is not only American Baptists who are not anxious to be labeled "Falwell-followers."

Visiting Lynchburg convinced me that despite its assertion that it is a local church, a probable majority of the Thomas Road Baptist Church's members are not Lynchburg residents. To some extent this is explained by the fact that most of the students attending Liberty University, an educational institution that Pastor Falwell established and over which he presides, become members of the congregation, or at least attend services there during their stay in the

city. But that does not entirely explain the presence of people who are not from Lynchburg in worship in the Thomas Road sanctuary on Sundays. Many people drive into the city from the surrounding rural countryside to go to Sunday School and church. In addition, the church maintains a fleet of busses that transport people from all over the western part of Virginia to attend Sunday services.

Due to the church's electronic ministry, an overwhelming proportion of its financial support comes from outside the city. In keeping with that reality, Pastor Falwell's prominence on the national scene may very well make him more a more forceful figure outside than inside Lynchburg. Yet the church is there, as is Liberty University with which it is directly connected.

Perhaps it is Falwell's very visibility, or perhaps the situation is more complicated. But it became obvious to me when I visited Lynchburg that the presence of this megachurch in this small city divides the community—and not just the religious community—as surely between "them and us" as Catholicism's presence in Providence once divided that city. No Lynchburg Church Federation exists to unite those standing apart from the Thomas Road/Liberty University complex with its parochial school, summer day camp, and other human service programs that parallel human service programs existing elsewhere in the city. For all that, Lynchburg is one of the core cities of the nation's Christian Right. The local response to this reality is that among Protestant groups who are not as conservative as Falwell and his fellows (and among Protestants and Catholics) there is a much more dynamic ecumenical ambience than I found in any of the other cities I have studied.

In both Providence and Lynchburg, the dominance of a single religious group came about long after the city assumed its shape as a metropolitan area.

Salt Lake City, Utah
1990 City Population: 159,936
1990 Salt Lake County Populations: 725,956
Proportion of Church Adherents in Populations: 74.7%

Evangelical Protestant 2.4%
Mainline 3.1%
Black Protestant .3%
Non-Christian .4%
Catholic 7.1%
Other Christian Non-LDS 1.5%
Latter-Day Saints 86%
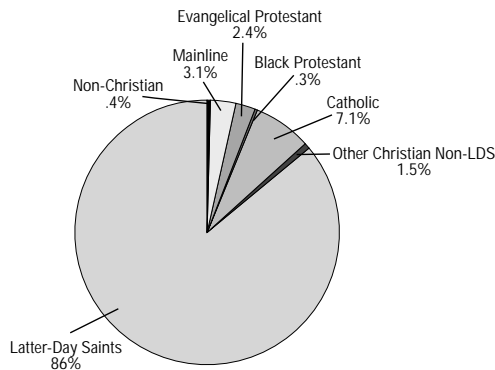
This is not true of Salt Lake City, a municipality founded in 1847 by Latter-day Saints that was once the principal city of the Mormon "Kingdom of God." In the past century, this city has undergone a transformation that has not reduced Latter-day Saint dominance so much as it has relocated it. Now, rather than being the center of the Kingdom of God, Salt Lake City is the headquarters city of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

This was a significant internal shift, but it was no small realignment consisting mainly of a change in nomenclature. Whereas the LDS General Authorities (the leadership cadre of the church) once had direct control of the whole culture, including its politics and economics as well as its social and religious life, the church was forced to relinquish that control (along with its peculiar marital practice that allowed men to have more wives than one) in the 1880s and 1890s. Church leaders gradually retreated back toward the ecclesiastical domain, moving toward a platform not unlike ecclesiastical platforms from which other religious leaders exercise authority in America. But that retreat proceeded so gradually that LDS General Authorities continued to preside over entire segments of the economy for several generations after 1900 while Latter-day Saints with aboveboard connections to the church leadership held critically important political posts. Since Saints holding exalted church positions are expected to earn their own livings, even today so many highly placed Latter-day Saints serve in positions of secular power that in point of fact, the separation of church and state often seems to be a legal fiction.

Church leaders regularly advise the Saints that non-members should not be referred to as Gentiles nor treated as outsiders. But the distinction between them and us is still so tangible in Salt Lake City that people who are not members of the LDS Church or connected through kinship to LDS families refer

Indianapolis, Indiana
1990 City Population: 731,327
1990 Marion County Populations: 797,159
Proportion of Church Adherents in Populations: 45.3%
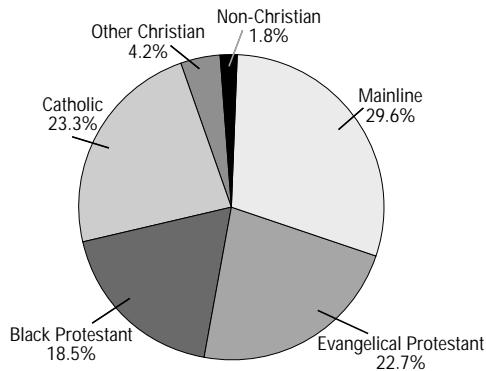
to themselves as Gentiles. What this indicates is that it may be positive or negative vis-à-vis Mormonism, but everyone in the city has a religious identity.

With regard to Indianapolis, the mainline slice of the denominational pie is certainly thinner than it once was. But in the 1990 configuration of religious groups in the Hoosier capital, the mainline remains the largest denominational cluster. The balance of power within the mainline has shifted somewhat, as the Disciples of Christ (once one of the largest religious groupings in the city), the Presbyterians, and Episcopalians have lost more members than the Methodists, Baptists, and Lutherans. But the power that comes with the control of financial resources helps to maintain the place of Episcopalians (who have three parishes that were endowed by pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly) and Presbyterians (who possess the status benefit of having members who sit on the Board of Directors of Lilly Endowment, Incorporated).

The status and authority once held in mainline hands has nevertheless been drastically diminished in the past half-century. There are two main reasons. In losing members, the mainline churches experienced what I have heard described as a failure of nerve. Mainline Protestant laymen and laywomen in the city held onto the balance of power on practically every important Indianapolis board of directors, board of trustees, and so on. But no longer comfortable exercising authority unilaterally, they welcomed Catholics, Jews, Black Protestants and others into the city's "establishment," thereby severing what had once been a virtually direct connection between religious and secular authority. At the same time, mainline Protestantism was less and less in the public square as churches turned inward, focusing on their own congregations and as the members of those congregations seemed to want from their clergy a therapeutic presence more than public leadership.

Unlike many other Midwestern cities, Indianapolis has never had a large Catholic majority. Yet Nativist, anti-Catholic, and anti-Semitic sentiment was expressed during the 1920s in strong Ku Klux Klan activity in the city as well as the state (which for a brief interval was actually controlled by the Klan). Many Protestant ministers in Indianapolis were at least members, if not leaders of the Klan. Still, other than during this decade, Catholicism has not been enough of a threat to rouse virulent opposition in the city and more than a few Catholic business and professional men have become leading figures in the city. To a lesser extent, the same pattern has held true for Jews.

In the past two or three decades, the rise of the Christian Right has been an incipient threat to the mainline. Overall, however, not much heat has been generated by religious controversy. The Church Federation, once a powerful force within the city, has fallen on hard times, and the Interchurch Center, once the jewel of the city's Protestant core, is having trouble filling its office space and making its public spaces central to the life of the religious community.
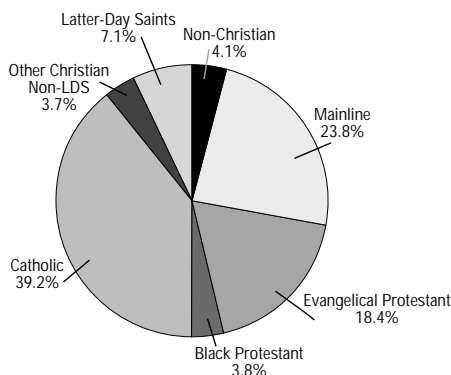
For all that, the Indianapolis religious community could well become reasonably newsworthy since Stephen Goldsmith is an important advisor to President George Bush on faith-based partnerships with government. The city's high profile "Front Porch Alliance," a city agency that works with value-shaping organizations, particularly faith-based organizations, might not become the stone at the head of the corner of the organizational structure of a new socio-political gospel for the 21st century, but it set a pattern that is likely to be followed in many other cities in the months and years to come.

Seattle, Washington
1990 City Population: 516,259
1990 King County Populations: 1,507,319
Proportion of Church Adherents in Populations: 35.8%

Latter-Day Saints 7.1%
Non-Christian 4.1%
Other Christian Non-LDS 3.7%
Mainline 23.8%
Catholic 39.2%
Evangelical Protestant 18.4%
Black Protestant 3.8%

Finally, what is there to say about religion in Seattle? Surely not much with regard to how the government and religious community might be forging partnerships. When I was there in early 2001, I spoke with the deputy mayor responsible for human services. "How," I asked, "is Seattle taking advantage of the faith-based partnerships made possible under 'Charitable Choice' legislation?" "What," she responded, "is Charitable Choice?"

This is not as surprising as it might sound since religion does not play a particularly visible role in the Northwest generally and in this city in particular. The appointment of an openly gay clergyman to the deanship of the Episcopal cathedral, the most visible clergy post in the city, made news. But even on Saturdays, in both of the city's main newspapers religious news sometimes merits less than half a page. One explanation for this may be that conflict and scandal make news, and since cooperation is more likely than rivalry to be present on Seattle's denominational landscape, there is not much religion in the news.

It is much more likely that the real story of religion in Seattle is not entirely contained in the religious bodies represented on the denominational configuration pie chart. Stopping there suggests, as many people believe, that

Starbucks is Seattle's communion cup, that this city is the ultimate secular urban space. But if the Judeo-Christian blinders are removed, it quickly becomes apparent that religion in this northwestern terminus of the U.S. is quite literally "all over the map." Asian religions are present, as is Islam, Ba'hai, and so on. But of greater moment, spirituality, rather than religious practice, is the hallmark of Seattle religiosity. And spirituality is connected to nature, to the human body, to animals, even to free trade. Altars exist in gorgeous religious structures, but are as often found as stopping points on hiking trails or mountainside overhangs. What is revealed when the pie chart's confines are removed is that the apparent secularity is a veneer. Hence Seattle may well be a harbinger of urban religion in the future.

Considered at the macro rather than micro level, one thing the stories of religion in these five cities reveal is that a dominant religion in a city lends vitality to religious life generally. Not only is a religious identity mandated for people who live in Salt Lake City. If to a lesser degree, the same is true in Providence.

This reality emerged in an interview with the senior minister of a large Protestant church in downtown Providence. He said that in the nearly 20 years he had been serving in that capacity, he had never conducted a marriage ceremony in which one of the principals was not Catholic. " Therefore," he said, "I see it as our responsibility to make sure our parishioners know what we believe. Only then will they be able to make informed decisions about how to conduct their religious lives within an interfaith marriage." In Lynchburg, religion is on the surface, very much in the public square. As a result, few Lynchburg residents can take their faith for granted. They need to know where they stand. In such a situation, religious identity becomes as much a part of a person's identity as race, gender, and class. The outcome of this is that congregations are healthier and worship is as much a part of life as working or going to school.

In Indianapolis and Seattle, neither of which has a dominant religion, it is not rare to find individuals who, when asked about their religious identity, respond with an answer that is best translated as "Nothing." Everywhere one finds "miscellaneous Christians," so much so that signals of a lack of affiliation or extended religious inactivity even creep into obituaries. Rather than noting the deceased's denominational affiliation, many obituaries in the newspapers of these two cities read that "he [or she] was of the Christian faith." Or they contain no mention of religion whatsoever. Religion may very well be alive and well where there is no dominant faith community. But it is not out in the open for researchers (and journalists) to see.

Patterns of Charitable Giving

Finally, there is a larger "so what" question emerging as the nation confronts the matter of how the current hot button "faith-based initiatives" might play out. Data emerging from the congregational studies of sociologists, especially those of Mark Chaves and Nancy Ammerman (See Chapters I and VI) will surely be more helpful in this instance than anything that might be gained by examining the so-called "big picture." Nevertheless, some knowledge of how larger giving patterns relate to church adherence could turn out to provide useful background as media representatives develop stories about Charitable Choice and Faith-based Initiative programs in the nation's cities.

To find answers about whether the growth of particular religious bodies (Catholics, Black Protestants, and so on) points to increases in overall charitable giving, I turned for help to turned to the staff of the Center on Non-profits and Philanthropy at the Urban Institute which houses the National Center for Charitable Statistics. Working with staff members Tom Pollock and Marie Gantz, and using the denominational taxonomy that we developed at the Polis Center as a way of categorizing church adherence data, we looked for correlations between church adherence and giving as measured by direct support reported by 501(c)(3) organizations on IRS Form 990 and by the information reported to the IRS by taxpayers who itemize their charitable contributions on their tax forms.

Controlling for population size, median income, and percentage of itemizers and of population over 65 years old since they tend to give more, we found some preliminary indications of directions of giving. The word "preliminary" needs to be emphasized here because (a) church adherence data is only available for 1990, while the available set of giving data is for 1998; and the giving data is itself preliminary since only preliminary statistics were provided by the IRS to the Center for Charitable Statistics.[5] Statistical analysis, which took into account living in all statistical metropolitan areas of the United States, carried out by Marie Gantz revealed the following:

- As the proportion of Mormon adherents in the population increases, there is an increase in itemized contributions, *but* this does not hold true in the metropolitan areas (SMSAs) of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, nor in Western metropolitan areas when Salt Lake City is not included in the analysis. As the proportion of Black Protestant church adherents increases, there is an increase in itemized contributions, *but t*his does not hold true in the metropolitan areas (SMSAs) in the Midwest.
- As the proportion of Evangelical adherents increases, there is an increase in itemized contributions, *but* this holds true only in the metropolitan areas (SMSAs) of the Southern region. However, the difference is so

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5 Both of the problems will be overcome before my book comes out since church adherence numbers for the year 2000 will soon be available and a complete set of IRS data is now in the hands of the Center for Charitable Statistics.

strong in the South that it affects the analysis when the populations of all the metropolitan areas in the U.S. are considered.

- As the proportion of mainline Protestant adherents increases, there is a decrease in itemized contributions, *but* this does not hold true in the metropolitan areas (SMSAs) of the Western United States.
- As the proportion of Catholic adherents increases, there is a decrease in itemized contributions, *but* this does not hold true in the metropolitan areas (SMSAs) of the Northeast. There giving increases with an increase in the proportion of Catholics in the population. In the Midwest, an increase in the proportion of Catholics in the population has no impact on the level of giving.
- As the proportion of adherents to Christian churches other than Mainline Protestants, Catholics, Evangelicals, and Mormons increases, there is a decrease in itemized contributions, *but* this does not hold true in the metropolitan areas (SMSAs) of the Midwest. There an increase of "other Christians" in the population leads to a decrease in the level of giving. In the West, an increase in numbers of "other Christians" leads to an increase in the level of giving.
- Looking at all the metropolitan areas of the U.S. together, as the proportion of Jewish adherents increases, there is no significant change in itemized contributions, *but* this only holds true in the metropolitan areas (SMSAs) of the Northeast. In the metropolitan areas of other regions, as the proportion of Jews increases, the level of giving increases.
- As the proportion of "other" religious adherents and non-adherents increases, there is no significant change in itemized contributions, *but* this does not hold true in the metropolitan areas (SMSAs) of the West where increasing numbers of unchurched people leads to a decrease in levels of giving.
- No evidence of a significant relationship between religious heterogeneity and itemized giving in metropolitan areas was found in this study.
- For Catholics and mainline Protestants, itemized contributions increase as average church size increases.

With regard to all precise statistics and analytic results presented here, it is crucially important to keep in mind that the Glenmary numbers represent 1990 reports. The 2000 data will not be available until 2002. For all this, even though preliminary, this overview begins to describe religion and culture in Urban America.*

The Way Things Used to Be in American Cities: Jews, Protestants, and the Erosion of Catholic Exceptionalism, 1950-2000

Gerald Gamm

Requiem for St. Brigid's: St. Brigid's parishioners still mourn for their church. They gathered in the church's parking lot for a Mass and candle-light vigil on the night of June 30, 1999, exactly five years after their church had been closed. Someone had placed six daisies in a vase in the church door-way, with a single candle and a sign reading, "God is welcome everywhere except Van Ness and Broadway" (Madden 1999). Rev. Cyril O'Sullivan, who had been a priest at St. Brigid's when the closing had been ordered by the arch-bishop of San Francisco, celebrated the Mass. "St. Brigid is my spiritual home," one parishioner explained. "I've never been a good Catholic, but I still feel that St. Brigid is good for my spirit and this is true for countless members who, like me, are feeling a gut-wrenching sense of loss and bereavement" (Madden 1999).

John Quinn, archbishop of San Francisco, had closed nine of the city's 53 Roman Catholic churches in 1994. In closing the churches, Quinn explained that several factors had led him to the decision. These factors included a short-age of priests, the cost of repairs to older church buildings, dwindling numbers of parishioners, and the changing demographics of the city's population—the urban exodus of white Catholics to the suburbs and the influx of Asians, most of whom are non-Catholic.

When the decision was announced, Catholics in the affected parishes had immediately protested. St. Brigid's parishioners met with Archbishop Quinn, offering to raise the millions of dollars necessary for the seismic upgrading of not only their own church but also a church in a poorer parish. But the arch-bishop rejected the proposal. "Money would not be a factor," an archdiocesan spokesperson explained. "Just because a parish might be able to afford to pay for the [seismic] retrofit, that would not be a reason for not closing them. That would be unfair to poorer parishes who could not afford it" (Fernandez 1994a). Parishioners from several of the parishes appealed directly to Rome for assis-tance, but the Vatican ultimately upheld Quinn in his decision to close the

churches and consolidate his parishes.

"We have encountered a medieval authoritarianism," Robert R. Bryan, chairman of the Committee to Save St. Brigid's Church, declared. "The indifference to viewpoints from the pews is out of keeping with what the modern church is preaching—that the laity is the church. We love it and want to keep it alive. But we are rebuffed" (Leary 1995). From the perspective of St. Brigid's parishioners, their archbishop's determination to close their church was arbitrary and unjust. To them, Archbishop Quinn was the embodiment of an institution that had made no accommodation to the modern world and to the principles of American democracy.

Although St. Brigid's parishioners were correct in recognizing the continued strength of hierarchical authority in the Catholic church, they paid less attention to the ways in which the church had changed in recent decades. In the 1950s, Catholic churches in the United States had differed fundamentally from their Protestant and Jewish counterparts. Where Jews and most Protestants had identified with their congregations on a purely voluntary basis in the 1950s, most Catholics had been assigned to their churches according to a system of territorial parish boundaries. Where Jews and Protestants had long regarded their synagogues and churches as portable—as institutions that often closed, either permanently or as part of a process of relocation from one part of a city to another—Catholics in the 1950s had belonged to parishes that were rooted and permanent. And where Protestants and Jews had governed their own institutions, hiring (or not) their own ministers and priests, Catholics had accepted the absolute authority of their priests, who in turn accepted the authority of their bishops without question.

On all three dimensions—*membership, rootedness, and authority*—the differences between Catholic institutions and those of Protestants and Jews had once been stark (Gamm 1999). By the 1990s, however, Catholic exceptionalism had nearly come to an end. The closing of St. Brigid's Church testified to this transformation.

Membership in 1994 was no longer territorial. Challenging the claim that St. Brigid's remained the center of a vital parish, Bill Mitchell, an archdiocesan spokesperson, noted that "almost half of those attending Mass on a given weekend come from outside the parish boundaries" (Fernandez 1994b). He also suggested that parishioners who were willing to raise money to save St. Brigid's could instead "help other parishes even if their own church is closed" (Fernandez 1994a).

Rootedness, of course, was decisively repudiated with the decision to close St. Brigid's and eight other churches—one-sixth of the city's Catholic churches. "This is exceedingly painful for the parishioners, and exceedingly painful for me," Archbishop Quinn had stated in 1992, when he announced the first of the church closings. His announcement, the *San Francisco Chronicle* observed, "marks the first time in anyone's memory that a Catholic parish has been shut

down in San Francisco" (Lattin 1992). Although a Catholic parish can never be portable, like a Protestant church or Jewish synagogue that relocates to a suburban site, neither can it any longer make a claim to permanence.

And *authority* itself was under radical assault in San Francisco. Bishops and priests in the 1950s had exercised their authority without challenge. No more. St. Brigid's parishioners questioned their archbishop in public protests, in a private audience, in San Francisco newspapers, and in their challenge to the Vatican. In protesting their church's closing from the church pulpit in the last weeks of St. Brigid's existence, parishioners defied a direct order from Archbishop Quinn (Fernandez 1994a). Even a priest in St. Brigid's publicly opposed the closing, which led the archbishop to assign him to a parish in Marin County and to rebuke him for actions that were "gravely disruptive and a source of scandal and confusion" (Ludlow 1994). Meanwhile, 42 San Francisco priests supported the parishioners' appeal to Rome, arguing in their petition that "the process had not allowed for adequate input and consultation with the parishioner" (Leary 1995). Although Archbishop Quinn still possessed the authority to close the nine churches, parishioners and even many clergy had called his judgment into question, a situation nearly unprecedented in the annals of modern American Catholicism.

Neighborhood Attachments

Until the 1960s, the Catholic parish had provided bedrock for the nation's urban neighborhoods. Rules of the Catholic church frustrated the suburban exodus of Catholics, even as different institutional rules facilitated the out-migration of Protestants and Jews. Because of membership rules, Catholics identifying with a territorial parish were required to sever ties to their church if they moved beyond the parish boundaries. For a couple active in the parish sodality and St. Vincent de Paul Society, with children in the parish school, suburbanization entailed obvious costs. Baptisms, first communions, weddings, and funerals: the sacraments that marked the progression of a family's life could be celebrated only in the local parish church. In the postwar era—as the automobile, the G.I. Bill, highways, and tracts of new suburban homes all drew Catholics, like other urban residents, to the suburbs, and as redlining and racial integration changed the contours of old neighborhoods—Catholic churches remained firmly anchored in the city, buttressed by rules of rootedness and authority. The parish church, which could not move and whose existence was guaranteed by a diocesan hierarchy, became a bastion of stability in an otherwise-uncertain urban milieu (Gamm 1999).

Among white ethnic groups, Catholics have been especially likely to remain in traditional urban neighborhoods. "While the proportion of whites in the northern cities has been declining, the proportion of Catholics has been increasing," a member of the Philadelphia Catholic Housing Council asserted in 1959 (McDermott 1959, 158, as quoted in McGreevy 1996, 132). Between the early 1950s and the early 1970s, the proportion of Catholics in Brooklyn's

white population rose from 26 to 44 percent. In the same years—even as the total number of Catholics in the Boston neighborhoods of Dorchester and upper Roxbury fell from 137,000 to 95,000—the proportion of Catholics in the area's white population rose from 59 to 73 percent (Gamm 1999).

The twentieth-century exodus from Jewish neighborhoods occurred earlier, faster, and more thoroughly than the exodus from Catholic neighborhoods—and with much less violence. White Protestants, who had begun suburbanizing earlier in the century than either Jews or Catholics, appeared, like Jews, to put up little resistance. "In the face of the outward march of Hibernian and Jew," two settlement-house workers wrote in the 1910s, describing the recent transformation of a Boston neighborhood, "the Yankees have girt their garments well about them, snatched up their skirts that so much as a hem might not be defiled by contact with 'foreigners,' and have betaken them elsewhere in a spirit little and shallow, if not mean and snobbish" (Booth and Tead 1969, 149).

Catholic resistance to racial change is a constant theme in studies of almost every American city. "No instance has been noted in the literature where a Negro invasion succeeded in displacing the Irish in possession of a community. Yet, frequently, as notably in New York and Chicago, Negroes have pushed forward in the wake of retreating Jews," Ernest W. Burgess wrote in 1928 (Burgess 1928, 112). Douglass, in his 1924 study of St. Louis, documented the flight of middle-class white Protestants westward, as they abandoned a succession of neighborhoods to white ethnics and blacks. According to Douglass (1924, 70), "Parallel westward movements of Negroes and Hebrews have been evicting white Protestant populations from the center of the city for fifty years." Decades later, in Canarsie, Jonathan Rieder wrote, it was "the local wisdom that Jews run while Italians stand fast" (Rieder 1985, 27). Harvey Luskin Molotch, studying racial change in Chicago's South Shore in the 1960s, reported that residents believed "that Catholics (as opposed to Jews) have been more likely to remain" (Molotch 1972, 91 n.11).

If Jews and Protestants tended to leave their neighborhoods more quickly than Catholics, they also tended to greet new African-American neighbors with higher levels of tolerance and with little violence. In Chicago, according to Arnold R. Hirsch, racial change in the large Jewish district of North Lawndale occurred with none of the anti-black violence that routinely characterized the city's working-class Catholic neighborhoods (Hirsch 1983, 84–99, 185–200). Thomas J. Sugrue shows that the same pattern prevailed in Detroit, where African-Americans encountered little resistance in Jewish neighborhoods, but where homeowners' associations, dominated by Catholics, became organized vehicles of rabid, anti-black violence in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s (Sugrue 1995; Sugrue 1996, 241–46). The white battle against busing in Boston was waged overwhelmingly by working-class and lower-middle-class Catholics (Lukas 1985; Formisano 1991). Drawing on evidence from various

cities, John T. McGreevy notes that, for contemporary observers, "compar-
isons between the resistance found in heavily Catholic neighborhoods and
more peaceful racial transitions in other sections of the city were inevitable"
(McGreevy 1996, 103).

Catholics traditionally have had a strong sense of turf, regarding their
neighborhoods as defended geographical communities. This territorial under-
standing of community is evident when Catholics react violently to new
African-American neighbors and when Catholics choose to stay in their neigh-
borhood if it is successfully integrated. But blacks have not been the only tar-
gets of white Catholic resistance. Catholic territoriality is also evident in the
hostility with which Czech Catholics in Cicero, a working-class city near
Chicago, greeted the area's first German Catholics in the 1930s (Hirsch 1983,
79), and in the fierceness with which Dorchester's Irish Catholics defended
their neighborhood boundaries against Jews in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s
(Gamm 1999). Protestants and Jews, in contrast, are much less likely to defend
a neighborhood against outsiders. They offer little resistance, then leave quick-
ly, when newcomers settle in the neighborhood. This behavior, too, is neither
new nor necessarily driven by race. Louis Wirth, writing in 1928, argued that
Jews leaving Chicago's West Side were not "being pressed out by succeeding
immigrant groups and Negroes." Rather, he contended, the Jew was eagerly
moving out to a higher-status district and "fleeing from his fellow-Jews who
remain in the ghetto" (Wirth 1928, 245–46).

Recognizing the extent to which the attachments of Catholic residents
were grounded in their parishes, organizers for the Industrial Areas
Foundation (IAF) typically looked to Catholic parishes as essential building
blocks for their work. When IAF organizers arrived in the South Bronx in the
early 1980s, they understood that they needed "strong Catholic participation
to be viable" (Rooney 1995, 109). South Austin, a Chicago neighborhood
organized by followers of Saul Alinsky, vividly illustrated this institutional real-
ity. "As resegregation occurred, the established Protestant churches usually
disbanded or severely curtailed operations, Bailey (1974, 8) observed. "The
Jewish synagogue closed and sold its building to a black Baptist sect. Only the
Catholic churches survived intact."

Ancient rules binding churches and synagogues shaped the twentieth cen-
tury urban battle of race and housing. Different patterns of neighborhood
change have resulted from fundamental differences between Catholic institu-
tions and Protestant and Jewish institutions. Because of these differences, a
Catholic church could reassure and anchor its surrounding Catholic neighbor-
hood, while a synagogue or Protestant church often undermined and exacer-
bated stresses in its surrounding neighborhood. Both types of institutions were
defined, bound, and ultimately constrained by rules that dictated their own
inexorable logic.

Traditional Rules: Membership

The first class of rules were the rules of *membership*. Jewish and Protestant institutional membership is entirely voluntary. The typical Protestant church or Jewish synagogue recognizes no geographical barriers to membership, while the Catholic territorial parish has historically been defined by strict physical boundaries. (The Catholic national parish, of course, represents a special case, with some resemblance, in this regard, to the Protestant model.) McGreevy, examining Catholic responses to racial change, shows how fully urban Catholics fused religion, parish, and neighborhood. "Catholics used the parish to map out—both physically and culturally—space within all of the northern cities," (McGreevy 1996, 15) he argued. Within its boundaries, the parish church exercises monopoly jurisdiction, receiving the loyalty of all Catholics within the parish who identify with a territorial church. Catholics in Chicago's South Shore district, according to Molotch, "identified themselves and other Catholics in terms of their parishes and seldom in terms of such community areas as 'South Shore' or neighborhoods like 'The Highlands'" (Molotch 1972, 59–60).

Until the 1960s, the Catholic church interpreted its membership rules strictly. One woman wrote to the chancellor of the Boston archdiocese in the spring of 1953 to seek permission to attend St. Gregory's Church. "My husband and I, as our families before us have always been members of St. Gregory's Parish in Dorchester," she wrote. "We both were baptized, received our First Holy Communion and were married in that Church. We were graduated from the Parish School." Recently, she explained, "due to the housing situation we were forced to move two streets beyond the boundary of the Parish into St. Angela's Parish." But she and her husband hoped that their difficulty in finding housing would soon end. "We feel the situation is temporary as we shall move back into St. Gregory's Parish as soon as circumstances permit," she concluded her letter. "May we have your permission to be members of St. Gregory's Parish?" The answer came quickly. "Although you and your family are free to attend whatever Church is more convenient to you, except for the sacraments of record, I regret that it is impossible to transfer you from one parish to another as long as your home remains in the territory of the former parish," the vice chancellor responded. "Canon Law determines that individuals are members of the parish in whose territory their home is located and excludes the possibility of any Bishop making an exception to this law." (Archives of the Archdiocese of Boston, as quoted in Gamm, 1999, 117–18).

Synagogues and Protestant churches, in contrast, tend not to be defined in territorial terms. As a consequence, they often compete for support and for members. "Unlike the Roman Catholic churches, those of Protestant faith do not mass their adherents in geographical areas distinct from one another," H. Paul Douglass found. "The result is a network of geographical ties between church and home of incredible perplexity and incoherence" (Douglass 1926,

282). Robert L. Wilson and James H. Davis described the dilemma of a typical urban, white Methodist church in the 1960s. "Although the majority of the members still live in the community, many of the leaders have moved out. These persons still come back to church," Wilson and Davis (1966, 13) wrote. "The increasing numbers of commuting members has been a matter of concern to the pastor, and he views with some apprehension the possible formation of a new congregation in a subdivision where several of his more active families now reside."

The dispersion of members goes back to the nineteenth century. The filling of Boston's Back Bay, for example, spurred a migration of the city's oldest and wealthiest Protestant families into the new homes that rose along the district's wide, tree-lined streets. From their new homes, they traveled downtown to attend church. Quickly, however, they tired of the long walks and the old church buildings, and members initiated drives to erect new, statelier churches in the Back Bay itself. The Federal Street Church, a venerable Unitarian congregation located downtown, broke ground in 1859 at the corner of Arlington and Boylston streets, for the Arlington Street Church. In the 1860s and 1870s, the Central Congregational Church, as well as five churches of colonial origin (among them the First, Second, and Third Churches) were all pulled by their members into the Back Bay. The Third Congregational Church, which had worshiped in the Old South Church—the historic meetinghouse of the American Revolution—since the early eighteenth century, dedicated its new church in 1875, fittingly christening the structure the New Old South Church. Trinity Church, whose congregants continued commuting from the Back Bay to the South End through the 1860s and into the 1870s, dedicated its new building, masterwork of H. H. Richardson, in Copley Square in 1877 (Whitehill 1959, 164–69).

Throughout the twentieth century, too, Protestant churches and Jewish synagogues have struggled to respond to far-flung memberships. Temple Mishkan Tefila, which moved in the 1950s from Roxbury to the Boston suburb of Chestnut Hill, had supported a large suburban membership for three decades (Gamm 1999, 232). In Los Angeles, Sinai Temple's leaders watched as their members commuted ever-farther distances, finally moving the temple from Fourth and Hampshire to "the fashionable far western end of Wilshire Boulevard" (Vorspan and Gartner 1970, 260). Adath Israel–Brith Sholom, Louisville's leading Reform congregation, relocated in 1980, responding to a membership that was moving away from the old temple's location. Similarly, leaders of the Metropolitan Baptist Church, who announced in the spring of 2000 the church's plans to move from Washington, D.C., to Prince George's County, noted that many members of the church commuted into the city. Rev. H. Beecher Hicks, pastor of the church, stated that "45 percent of the church's congregation lives in Maryland" (Harris 2000).

At mid-century, leaders of Conservative Judaism radically reinterpreted

Jewish law to respond to the scattered memberships of established congregations. In a 1950 document, Conservative rabbis declared that it was permissible for Jews to drive to their synagogue on the Sabbath—traditionally regarded as a blatant violation of Sabbath observance—so long as they were driving to worship in their temple (Waxman 1958, 351–74). Reviewing the decision ten years later, the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards (1960) emphasized that some rabbis regarded travel as permissible only as an "emergency measure," while others justified the decision as "indispensable under modern conditions where people live in widely scattered areas and often at great distances from the synagogue."

Rules of membership allow Jews and Protestants to move to a suburb without severing institutional ties with urban churches and synagogues, easing the transition to a new community. In contrast, at least until the 1960s, a parishioner's loyalty to a non-ethnic Catholic church required a home in the parish. Consequently, in moving from their old neighborhood, Catholics had to leave behind their parish church, their parish grammar school, and their parish social activities. Thus Catholics faced a much higher exit cost than Jews; following the logic of Thomas C. Schelling's model, the territorial parish reduces the likelihood of a "speculative acceleration of tipping" (Schelling 1972, 175). Loyalty, as Albert O. Hirschman suggests, "can serve the socially useful purpose of preventing deterioration from becoming cumulative, as it so often does when there is no barrier to exit" (Hirschman 1970, 79). By conditioning institutional loyalty on neighborhood loyalty, the Catholic parish reinforced neighborhood stability and frustrated out-migration.

Traditional Rules: Rootedness

The rules limiting membership in the church to parish residents are predicated on the rules that keep the church rooted and open. The Catholic church's ability to anchor its parishioners was grounded in the credibility of its continued presence in a neighborhood. The second class of rules, therefore, were the rules of *rootedness*. One aspect of rootedness is structural rootedness. The other aspect is geographical rootedness. The Catholic church was traditionally a permanent structure, consecrated to God and built around a permanent altar, and the territorial parish's relationship to its neighborhood was inalienable (Gamm 1999). "Real-estate agents welcome the coming of a Catholic church into a community," according to a 1934 study, "for it is regarded as an evidence of permanence, and almost invariably it tends to increase the value of the neighboring property" (Silcox and Fisher 1934, 69, as quoted in McGreevy 1996, 21).

Jewish and Protestant congregations, in contrast, move freely from building to building and from one residential district to another. Between 1885 and 1898, Boston's three oldest synagogues each relocated from the tenement district where they had been founded to a new, more refined neighborhood in the upper South End (Gamm 1999, 100–101, 104–5). Two of the three congrega-

tions moved again in the 1900s—Adath Israel to the city's Fenway district, Mishkan Tefila to the Dudley Street district of Roxbury. Again, two of the three moved in the 1920s, when Mishkan Tefila and Ohabei Shalom built their historic temple structures, one on Roxbury's Elm Hill and the other in the wealthy suburb of Brookline (Gamm 1999, 136–38). When Mishkan Tefila moved yet again in the 1950s, this time to the suburban district of Chestnut Hill, it was responding to the migration of its members in well-established form (Gamm 1999, 232–33).

Temple Emanu-El, the landmark Reform congregation on New York's Upper East Side, began life in downtown Manhattan in the 1840s, moving uptown in a series of steps over succeeding decades—to 12th Street in 1854, to 43d Street in 1868, to its monumental building at 65th Street and Fifth Avenue in 1930. "The character of Fifth Avenue near 43rd Street had altered; no longer residential, it was by then a noisy, commercial part of city life," according to the congregation's history. Louis Marshall, the congregation's president, "believed that the Congregation would be well served if it seized the opportunity to purchase the Astor mansion at 65th Street, a location convenient to all of Manhattan and an area guaranteed to remain residential as long as Central Park continues to exist" (Emanu-El, 2001).

"Even the Orthodox are beginning to respond to the same pressures as the other white groups," Albert J. Mayer observed, in his analysis of change in Detroit's Russell Woods neighborhood in the 1950s. "One of the most Orthodox organizations—a *yeshivah*—has purchased land in one of the 'Northwest' Jewish neighborhoods" (Mayer 1960, 212). In Houston, as African-Americans began moving into established Jewish districts in the southeastern section of the city in the 1950s, large numbers of Jews began moving to Houston's southwestern neighborhoods. Jewish institutions—the area's leading synagogues and the Jewish Community Center—joined this migration (Maas 1989, 68). Har Sinai, Baltimore's oldest Reform congregation, announced plans in 1995 to relocate from the city to the county, "where more and more Jewish families have been moving" (Apperson 1995).

Of course, Jewish institutions are not alone in their mobility. Manhattan's leading Protestant churches followed the city's affluent population uptown, much as Boston's churches relocated to the Back Bay. The Church of the Ascension, the First Presbyterian Church, and Grace Episcopal Church all moved to Fifth Avenue in the 1840s. The financial and social incentives for relocation were compelling. "Even a fashionable church lost much of its congregation and income if its neighborhood started to decline," Lockwood (1976, 219) argued. Thus St. Bartholomew's moved, and Christ Church and the Brick Presbyterian Church joined in the march northward. As the city's leading Protestant churches abandoned their old structures downtown, the Catholic diocese in many cases assumed ownership of the churches (Lockwood 1976, 220).

Douglass, studying the relocation of St. Louis' Protestant churches, found that most of the city's principle Protestant churches, unlike its Catholic churches, had moved to the West End, a small geographical area where the city's wealthiest residents made their homes. "Some of the oldest and most influential have reached their present sites as the result of a series of removals following upon large movements of population. They almost merit the appellation 'migratory churches,'" Douglass (1924, 61, 71) wrote. "That they should have moved as population moved was, in the main, inevitable; but that they should so largely have moved westward, in the direction of prestige and advantage to themselves, showed total lack of constructive policy and the effective will to serve all of the city equally."

Like other Protestant churches, African-American churches move from location to location. When Jews began settling in Boston's West End in the late nineteenth century, many blacks in the neighborhood left for the South End. In the middle 1900s, two black churches, the A.M.E. Zion Church and the Twelfth Baptist Church, joined in the migration, selling their structures in the West End and acquiring new buildings in the upper South End (Gamm 1995, 140–41). Two decades later, as a few middle class blacks began settling in upper Roxbury, St. Mark Congregational Church relocated to this district. Members of St. Mark, which had been located in the South End since the 1890s, recognized that their new church was not in a black district. "Many of the St. Mark members considered this move a mistake," according to the congregation's 1945 history. "They thought that the church was going too far away from the Colored neighborhood" (St. Mark Congregational Church 1945, 43). Soon, however, under the leadership of Rev. Samuel Leroy Laviscount, the congregation—and, with it, Elm Hill's middle class black community—began to prosper and grow. A second black church, Charles Street A.M.E. Church, moved to upper Roxbury in 1939. The congregation, which had been worshiping in the West End since the early nineteenth century, acquired a stone church a few blocks from St. Mark (Gamm 1999, 61).

The recent announcement by the Metropolitan Baptist Church that it is leaving Washington, D.C., for Prince George's County offers a clear reminder that Protestant and Jewish institutions remain as portable as ever. "The historic 6,000-member church, which started in 1864 with 10 freed slaves worshiping in a Civil War barracks, reluctantly concluded last month that its current location, at 13th and R streets NW in Cardoza-Shaw, poses too many obstacles to badly needed expansion," the *Washington Post* reported in January 2000 (Murphy and Gaines 2000). Tensions in its Washington neighborhood, related to the influx of white residents and antagonism over the church's use of an empty field as a parking lot, have led the church's membership to find a new site outside of the city. In Prince George's County, the Metropolitan Baptist Church will join a group of African-American megachurches that have recently moved to the suburbs. "The county has become home to many former

District congregations that have built sanctuaries the size of sports arenas. If Metropolitan moves to Prince George's, it will join 14,000-member Jericho City of Praise, off Route 202 in Landover, and 10,000-member Ebenezer AME Church, in Fort Washington," the Post reported. "Also, Evangel Church, a former D.C. congregation, is adding a 4,000-seat sanctuary on Central Avenue, and Landover Memorial plans to break ground for a huge sanctuary off Lotsford Vista Road this spring" (Harris 2000).

Rules of rootedness have meant that Jewish and Protestant institutions could survive by relocating out of a declining neighborhood and by moving out to the suburbs, but Catholic institutions have been permanently tied to their original location. Members of the typical white Methodist church described by Wilson and Davis responded to the urban exodus by considering new sites for their church. "Several persons feel quite strongly that the church ought to relocate," Wilson and Davis (1966, 14) wrote. "The insecurity about the future has been hard on congregational morale." Criticizing Hyde Park's plans for urban renewal, Monsignor John J. Egan, a spokesman for the Chicago archdiocese, complained that "the Catholic Church, unlike more mobile Protestant churches, could not abandon its 'cathedrals'" (Hirsch 1983, 165). Since successful relocation requires a healthy base of members and financial resources, Jewish and Protestant institutions generally moved out after many members had left but at a time when many still remained in the old neighborhood. Non-Catholic institutions that bided their time withered away and died at their old locations.

Traditional Rules: Authority

The third class of rules dealt with *authority*. In five distinct ways—creation and dissolution of an institution; acquisition, ownership, and disposal of funds and property; determination of policy and doctrinal questions; selection and dismissal of clergy; prerequisites for congregational worship—the rules of synagogues and most Protestant churches reflect the authority and autonomy of the individual congregation, while a Catholic church's rules reflect a system of hierarchical authority. Governed by rules that render the rabbi and any religious hierarchy superfluous, the American Jewish synagogue enjoys the purest form of congregational authority. In constrast, a Catholic parish does not exist apart from a priest and a hierarchy. "Catholic lay people cannot start a church on their own, nor can an entrepreneurial priest set up shop without Church approval," Nancy Tatom Ammerman writes. "The diocese draws parish lines and supplies parish priests" (Ammerman 1997, 330).

Rules of authority, by forcing Jewish and most Protestant institutions to guarantee their survival without outside support, ineluctably led these institutions to relocate when large numbers of their members had begun to move. No Jewish hierarchy and few Protestant hierarchies exist to sustain an institutional presence in urban neighborhoods. But, for Catholics, rules of authority mean that the local diocese can provide funding and priests for struggling

Catholic parishes. Rules of authority limit and constrain the parish's ability to determine outcomes; as Kenneth A. Shepsle argues in his study of legislatures, such rules strengthen an institution's ability to make credible commitments (Shepsle 1991, 254). While the parish's continued viability contributes to neighborhood stability, the parish could commit credibly to a long-term presence in its neighborhood only because of the rules establishing the authority of the archdiocese.

The Erosion of Catholic Exceptionalism

In the 1960s, the old rules defining the Catholic territorial parish came undone. With the collapse of these rules, the longstanding ability of the Catholic parish to anchor urban neighborhoods also began to unravel. Authority in the Catholic church remains vested in priests and bishops, but parishioners are now actively encouraged to participate in the leadership of their parishes. Even more significant for urban parishes, the Second Vatican Council established a process that has led to the decoupling of residency and church membership—effectively ending hundreds of years of Catholic doctrine that defined the typical parish in rigidly territorial terms. Finally, concomitant with these revisions to rules of authority and membership, the parish itself is now being regularly uprooted and dissolved, the victim of a shortage of priests, funds, and church-going parishioners.

Across the country, with the encouragement of the Vatican and dioceses, priests now discuss the finances and mission of their parishes in public. "Following the universal direction of Canon Law, the American bishops have instituted directives to create parish councils comprising lay people to help in the governance of parishes," (Gillis 1999, 30) notes, "but the authority and power of these bodies varies greatly depending upon the local bishop and pastor." Many dioceses have invited laity to work with clergy in planning for the consolidation of parishes and the establishment of parish clusters. Sometimes, as St. Brigid's parishioners asserted, the bishop's final authority can make this consultation seem pointless. "'The archdiocese didn't want the people to actually have ownership of the [pastoral planning] process but to perceive that they did,' says a priest who has served in San Francisco for more than 25 years," the *San Francisco Examiner* reported. "The archbishop's intractability on parish closures, says the priest, is now 'more about who is in charge than who is right'" (Fernandez 1994b). Still, in many other parishes across the country, the consultation between the pastor and parishioners is genuine and substantive. The traditional, authoritarian character of the church has softened considerably since the 1960s. Many priests and bishops work actively to promote a participatory process of decision making in their parishes and dioceses.

As another consequence of the Second Vatican Council, the centuries-old concept of the territorial parish has unraveled. Territorial parishes are no longer regarded simply as interchangeable units of a universal church. According to church doctrine since the 1960s, each parish has a unique iden-

tity. Consequently, Catholics may logically choose to identify with a parish other than the one in which they live. "Many contemporary Catholics select a parish in the same way they would shop for a school for their children, a health care facility, or a neighborhood," (Gillis, 1999, 32) writes. In many places, this "has resulted in the blurring of parish boundaries."

Rules of rootedness, like those of membership and authority, have also lost their traditional meaning. Across the United States, dioceses are closing churches and dissolving parishes. The structure and the neighborhood that it served, once regarded as inseparable and sacred, have become dispensable. In many cases, dioceses have closed ethnic parishes, as the disappearance of linguistic and cultural differences has made some churches redundant. But in many other cases, dioceses have merged territorial parishes, reflecting the abandonment of many urban neighborhoods by Catholics, as well as the scarcity of priests and funds to support urban churches. Since the late 1980s, several archdioceses and dioceses—including Detroit, Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, New York, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and Milwaukee—have closed large numbers of churches. "'It's bad, people feel very bad,' said Josephine Kominkiewitz at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church," according to the *Washington Post*, in its account of the Chicago decision. "'People have been coming to this church all their lives. Their families have been baptized, married and buried here for generations. They feel lost. They don't know what to do'" (Peterson 1990).

The decision to close St. Brigid's Church, in San Francisco, is a product of these various changes in American Catholicism. The territorial parish, an organizational form that developed through centuries of European experience, has now withered away as a viable institution in the United States. Challenged by ethnic parishes in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the territorial parish nevertheless prospered through the middle of the twentieth century. Since the 1960s, however, the territorial parish has been destroyed by membership rules and by the inability of the Catholic hierarchy to maintain a credible commitment to vulnerable urban churches. Because parishioners now know their parishes can be closed—and because even thriving parishes do not require a local residence—Catholic parishes can no longer sustain the fierce neighborhood attachments that characterized urban Catholics for most of the last century. They have become congregational churches, similar in most respects, except their governance structure, to synagogues and Protestant churches. And, as a consequence, their effectiveness as neighborhood anchors has declined. As Joe Dignan, a lifelong parishioner of St. Brigid's explained during the 1999 candlelight vigil and Mass, "We're homeless and we're praying for [that to] change" (Madden 1999).

Issues to Keep an Eye on

Parish Closings. From the colonial period through the 1960s, Catholic parishes made credible, long-term commitments to their neighborhoods. In recent years, though, dioceses across the country have been consolidating their parishes, closing churches in unprecedented numbers. The impact of these closings on urban neighborhoods can be traumatic. What is the process within a diocese that leads to parish closings? What other actions, such as pairing parishes, have dioceses taken to cope with dwindling resources?

Black Churches and Urban Congregants. The mobility of African-American churches is evident in Prince George's County, where a set of megachurches trace their roots to Washington neighborhoods. What leads a congregation to abandon one geographical area for another? How does this exodus of churches affect the community that is left behind? Does relocation affect the relationship of the church to the inner-city poor?

Catholic Dissent. Typical accounts of lay Catholics call attention to their dissent with Catholic doctrine on issues like birth control, abortion, and the ordination of women as priests. But vigorous dissent also exists regarding the church's governance structure. The authoritarian model of the contemporary American Catholic church emerged in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and it is currently under assault. What role do lay Catholics play in decision-making at the diocesan and parish level? Does greater participation in parish governance lead to higher levels of support by parishioners, as measured by attendance and contributions?

Suburban Congregations. In the first decades of suburbanization, synagogues and churches emphasized service to their local religious communities. To what extent do congregations seek members beyond their local area? How common are social action committees and other groups whose emphasis is on community service, often in an adjacent city?

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Latino Catholics and American Public Life

Timothy Matovina

Deacon Carlos Valdéz was angry. Gang member intimidation of seventh and eighth graders on the school playground of his parish, Ascension Catholic Church on the north side of Minneapolis, was so intense that the school principal had begun to patrol the schoolyard with a baseball bat. Frustrated by the lack of police response to the principal's pleas for help, in 1996 Valdéz enlisted the support of the Joint Ministry Project (JMP), a local faith-based community organization that addresses urban issues. Armed with JMP training in community organizing and public action, Valdéz and other parish leaders joined with JMP to gather 600 people and demand that the police chief and mayor increase patrols to deter gang recruitment. While at first city officials refused to negotiate, the media coverage that local organizers fostered soon shamed them into action. The following week "Safe Teams" comprised of civilians and police patrolled the schoolyard and adjacent neighborhood every afternoon. Gang members fled. Elated at their success, Valdéz and his fellow parishioners concluded that these events represented far more than just winning back their schoolyard. More importantly, they had learned that they could exercise collective power for the good of their community. As Deacon Valdéz summed up his own transformation after the victory, "I feel alive, and I'm being called by God to organize in my community, the Latino community." Subsequently Valdéz played a leading role in founding Sagrado Corazón parish; hundreds of Latino Catholics from this congregation have received leadership training in faith-based community organizing. Along with numerous other small victories stemming from this organizing effort, Latino leaders have created a Mercado Central business cooperative, raised $3 million for the cooperative's forty small businesses, and compelled the Immigration and Naturalization Service to process immigrant applications in a more timely and humane manner (Interfaith Funders, pp. 18-20).

The Latino Catholics of Minneapolis are part of the long-standing and growing Latino Catholic presence in the United States. Hispanic Catholics have been continuously present in what is now the United States for more than

Good Friday ritual of Jesus' passion and death concludes on the steps of San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio. Courtesy Gene Martínez.

twice as long as the nation has existed. Subjects of the Spanish crown founded the first diocese in the "New World" at San Juan, Puerto Rico (1513) and the first permanent European settlement within the current borders of the fifty states at St. Augustine, Florida (1565). In 1598 at present-day El Paso, Texas, Spanish subjects established the permanent foundation of Catholicism in what is now the Southwest. Despite their long-standing presence, however, for much of U.S. history Hispanics have constituted a relatively small and frequently overlooked group within U.S. Catholicism. But in the last half-century their numbers and their influence have increased dramatically. An influx of newcomers from such diverse locales as Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Argentina, along with ongoing Mexican immigration, added to the ranks of an established Hispanic population comprised primarily of Mexican-descent Catholics. Hispanics are the largest group of U.S. Catholics as well as the largest group of recent Catholic arrivals; they will comprise the majority of U.S. Catholics during the first decades of the new century. This demographic shift has changed the face of numerous Catholic parishes and U.S. Catholicism generally and, as the efforts of Deacon Valdéz and his collaborators illustrate, the civic landscape of cities and towns across the nation. Latino Catholics in U.S. public life are particularly noteworthy in two ways: their extensive participation in faith-based community organizations like JMP and their vibrant public rituals that often spill out of churches into the streets, neighborhoods, and commercial areas of local communities.

Participation in faith-based community organizations like JMP is the most consistent and extensive form of Latino Catholic political activism. Sociologist Richard Wood contends that faith-based community organizations, that is, organizations whose membership is comprised primarily of local congregations, "arguably represent the most widespread movement for social justice in America." A recent study (Warren and Wood) reveals that there are 133 such organizations in the United States with an office and at least one fulltime staff person. Collectively, these organizations link 3,500 congregations plus 500 other institutions like public schools and labor union locals; congregations engaged in faith-based community organizations encompass between 1.5 and 2.5 million members and are in nearly all major urban areas and many secondary cities across the nation. Latinos comprise a majority in about 21 percent of the aforementioned 3,500 congregations. This figure represents a level of Latino involvement that nearly doubles their population ratio, currently about 12.6 percent of the national total. In cities and regions with large Latino populations like Los Angeles, New York, Miami, Chicago, San Antonio, El Paso, and the Rio Grande Valley, Latino participation and leadership is even more conspicuous. For example, in Texas half of the member congregations in faith-based community organizations are Hispanic Catholic parishes. Not surprisingly, the five states with the largest number of faith-based community

organizations are California, Texas, Illinois, New York, and Florida, the five states with the heaviest concentration of Hispanic population.

Most of the 133 organizations are associated with one of four major organizing networks. The most famous of these is the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), which Saul Alinsky founded in 1940. Like the IAF, the Gamaliel Foundation is also based in Chicago, while the Pacific Institute for Community Organization (PICO) has its headquarters in Oakland and the Direct Action Research and Training Center (DART) is in Miami. The four networks contract with local organizations to provide professional organizers and leadership training. The Gamaliel Foundation, for example, supplied the organizer and training for Deacon Valdéz and others in Minneapolis. Although the local organizations remain autonomous, at times they work with other organizations on state and regional issues. Professional organizers often forge these collaborative links through their respective organizational networks. Latinos account for 16.3 percent of the professional organizers employed through the four networks and 21 percent of the board members in faith-based community organizations. Moreover, various Latinos are key leaders within the four organizational networks, such as Mary Gonzáles in the Gamaliel Foundation, Ernesto Cortés, Jr. in the IAF, and Denise Collazo and José Carrasco in PICO.

Religious leaders like the U.S. Catholic bishops have offered strong support for faith-based community organizations. In November 1969, Catholic bishops launched the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD, formerly the Campaign for Human Development) to address "the problems of poverty, racism and minority tensions" made painfully evident through the Civil Rights Movement and the rage and despair of poor urban Black Americans. In founding the CCHD, the bishops articulated two explicit goals: educating Catholics and other interested persons about contemporary social ills to promote "a greater spirit of solidarity" and funding support for "organized groups of white and minority poor to develop economic strength and political power." The latter goal has led CCHD to consistently support faith-based community organizations; in recent years about one third of all national CCHD funding has gone to such organizations (approximately $3 million in fiscal year 1999). Of three National Impact Projects that received major CCHD grants in 1999, two went to community organizing networks, the Gamaliel Foundation and the Industrial Areas Foundation (CCHD annual report). The aforementioned study of Warren and Wood reveals that the CCHD provides more funding for faith-based community organizations than all other religious givers combined; CCHD support totals nearly one-fifth of all income for faith-based community organizations nationwide.

The most renowned faith-based community organization that is overwhelmingly Latino is the Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) in San Antonio. IAF organizer Ernie Cortés worked with lay leaders and

priests like Edmundo Rodríguez, Albert Benavides, Charles Herzig, Patricio Flores, Hector Rodríguez, Bill Davis, and David García in the 1974 effort to found COPS among six Mexican Catholic parishes on San Antonio's west side. By the first organizational meeting that summer COPS had expanded to 27 churches, each of which agreed to provide leaders and annual dues to support the organization. Parish delegates at the inaugural meeting decided that the organization would initially focus on a single goal: improving the horrendous storm drainage on the west side. For decades the frequent flooding in west side neighborhoods had caused school closings, accidents, stalled cars, damaged homes, potholes, impassable roads, bridge collapses, a dearth of business establishments, even deaths. Amazingly, when COPS leaders researched past efforts to address flood problems they discovered that many drainage projects had actually been authorized in bond issues passed as far back as 1945. Outraged, they sought meetings with the city public works director and the city manager, but with no satisfactory results. Then, after a period of heavy flooding, COPS members filled city hall during a council meeting and related their horror stories of flooding catastrophes, as well as their findings on the city's failure to fulfill authorized drainage projects. Mayor Charles Becker, stunned by the crowd and the overwhelming evidence presented, ordered the city manager to devise a drainage project implementation plan. In November 1974, COPS took the lead in passing a $46.8 million bond issue for 15 west side drainage projects.

This initial major victory was only the beginning of COPS' long series of successful efforts at development and revitalization in neighborhoods on San Antonio's west and, subsequently, east and south sides. COPS has achieved more than $1 billion in infrastructure improvements for these primarily low-income and working-class neighborhoods. These improvements include new streets, sidewalks, libraries, parks, streetlights, clinics, affordable housing, and drainage systems, as well as significant advances in educational reform, job training, economic development, living wages, voter registration and active citizenship campaigns, after-school enrichment classes, college scholarships, and adult literacy. The organization's Project QUEST (Quality Employment through Skills Training) won the 1995 Innovation in American Government Award from Harvard University and the Ford Foundation. More importantly, COPS has transformed its members and the wider civil society of San Antonio. In the words of former San Antonio mayor and HUD secretary Henry Cisneros, "COPS has fundamentally altered the moral tone and the political and physical face of San Antonio. It has also confirmed . . .that one way to overcome poverty is to empower the poor to participate more fully in decisions that affect their lives." Grassroots COPS leaders agree, like parishioners from Our Lady of the Angels who attested on the occasion of COPS 25th anniversary that "many positive changes have come about in our community [because of COPS], but the most positive change has been in the attitude of our people.

Twenty-five years ago, we couldn't imagine that a city council member would attend our meetings, now we know that with the power of educated, organized people, anything is possible."

Beyond San Antonio, COPS set the tone for the establishment of other faith-based, multi-issue community organizations by transforming Saul Alinsky's model for organizing religious congregations. Under the innovative guidance of Ernie Cortés and COPS clerical and lay leaders, the organization adapted Alinsky's highly confrontational style of organizing to the cultural and religious sensibilities of Hispanic Catholics on San Antonio's west side. To be sure, COPS was necessarily confrontational, particularly in its early years, as an entrenched political and business establishment sought first to thwart and then to limit the organization's influence. But over time COPS leaders also worked collaboratively with elected officials and business executives, living out the dictum, common in faith-based organizing, to have "no permanent enemies and no permanent allies" but instead remain focused on the issue at hand. COPS also transcended the initial issue of drainage improvements to focus on a wider agenda, and ultimately on the primary agenda of creating a power organization that could address any number of issues and concerns that might arise. Moreover, like most faith-based organizing efforts, COPS' effectiveness and longevity are further enhanced by having an ongoing contractual relationship with one of the networks for leadership training and the services of professional organizers.

Scholars, reporters, and other observers often overlook yet another of the key innovations that Cortés and COPS leaders introduced into Alinsky-style organizing: the importance of integrating politics and faith. As sociologist Mark R. Warren has observed, "while Alinsky took a rather utilitarian view of churches as repositories of money and people to be mobilized, the modern IAF developed a close collaboration with people of faith, fusing religious traditions and power politics into a theology of organizing." Training sessions in faith-based organizing frequently include resources like the Bible, Catholic social encyclicals, and the pastoral letters of the U.S. Catholic bishops. For example, the figure of Moses, whom faith-based organizers often deem "the first organizer," is regularly engaged as a model for the vision, courage, relationship building, and public action of organizational leaders. Similar parallels are drawn with Jesus, Paul, and other significant biblical figures. Moreover, unlike efforts that IAF organizers initiated during the Alinsky era, the primary leaders in COPS are not activists committed to the cause, nor even clergy with social reform sympathies, but parishioners who perceive their activism as an extension of their commitment to family, church, and neighborhood. All but one of COPS' seven presidents has been an Hispanic woman, most of them middle-aged mothers with strong familial and parish ties. COPS leader Inez Ramírez summarizes the sentiments of many organizational members: "This is not merely politics we are engaged in, but correcting injustice, which is God's work

and the mission of the church. There is more to our spirituality than just going
to Mass on Sundays. Our spirituality embodies a deep concern for the physical
well-being of every individual" (Rogers, 124). The faith values of community
leaders like Ramírez, along with their life commitments within their churches
and neighborhoods, are a vital force for organizations like COPS that propose
to exert a sustained influence on urban life.

So strong is COPS interest in vital congregations that the organization has
even taken on the role of parish development, a process that encompasses iden-
tifying and training new leaders, collective learning based on Scripture and
church teachings, building congregational unity around common goals and
needs, expanding church outreach and ministries, and even the enhancement
of stewardship and church finances. Leaders at Sacred Heart parish reported
during COPS 25th anniversary that "parish development has been key in our
growth and success as a COPS parish." Significantly, so close is the collabora-
tive effort between COPS and the San Antonio Archdiocese that the archdio-
cese hired former COPS president Carmen Badillo to head its parish develop-
ment office. Many priests applaud COPS for revitalizing their theological
vision and their effectiveness in pastoral ministry. Both priests and lay leaders
report an increase in attendance, contributions, and congregational vibrancy as
a result of COPS membership. Father Dan Hennessey, who served as an early
COPS vice president as well as pastor of a member parish, challenged his fel-
low clergymen to get involved in COPS. "I told them, 'Guys, this is an insur-
ance policy to keep our key leaders here in our parish.' They were all flying out
to the north side – the ones who could afford it – and taking a good chunk of
our collection with them. Joining COPS is good economics. And it's good reli-
gion" (Rogers, 176). With Catholic parishes closing in the core of many U.S.
cities, IAF organizer Sister Mary Beth Larkin offered perhaps the most blunt
praise for the role of COPS in congregational life: "Not one parish on the west
side of San Antonio died after COPS started" (Rogers, 175).

The various alterations to previous IAF efforts enabled COPS to provide
an organizing model that numerous other community organizations have emu-
lated. IAF organizers in Texas, many of whom initially served an apprenticeship
with COPS, helped establish organizations in locales like Houston, El Paso,
the Rio Grande Valley, West Texas, Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, the Gulf Coast
region around Beaumont and Port Arthur, Fort Bend County south of
Houston, and the Eagle Pass-Del Rio border region. At COPS tenth anniver-
sary assembly in 1983, Ernie Cortés announced the formation of the Texas IAF
Network, which he then served as its first director. That same year this
statewide network of local community organizations won its first major victo-
ry on the issue of school finance equalization and reform. Subsequently, the
network lobbied successfully to gain critical funding for indigent health care
and infrastructure improvements in the *colonias*, poor, unincorporated commu-
nities along the Texas-Mexico border which, before the Texas IAF Network,

were completely bereft of potable water, sewage systems, and other basic amenities. The Network's Alliance Schools educational initiative, an effort to build strong schools in low-income neighborhoods through the mutual collaboration of parents, teachers, administrators, and community leaders, has received national acclaim from school reformers. In 1999, organization leaders pronounced COPS 25th anniversary assembly as an occasion to celebrate "25 Years of Organizing in the Southwest." Representatives from IAF-affiliated organizations across the Southwest had delegates present; these organizations now include groups from various locales in California, New Mexico, and Arizona. Cortés, who is now based in Los Angeles, heads this new effort to link IAF-affiliated organizations on a regional basis.

Significantly, faith-based community organizations like those affiliated with the Southwest IAF provide an alternative model for people of faith to engage in politics. As sociologist Warren has noted, the IAF and similar networks attempt to build local power organizations from the ground up, enabling working-class and other congregational members to participate more actively and effectively in our democratic society. Unlike most food banks, clothing drives, rental assistance programs, and other "charitable" social service efforts, faith-based community organizations do not focus on temporary assistance but on constructing a more just and vigorous democracy. Unlike the Christian coalition and any number of groups who in large part attempt to lobby policy decisions at the national level, faith-based community organizations focus on building mediating institutions that provide the "missing middle" in American politics. Rather than propose a fixed moral agenda that they promote in public policy debates, faith-based community organizations are efforts to build institutions that primarily address the need of reestablishing a more participatory democracy.

Not surprisingly, community organizers like Ernie Cortés frequently bemoan the widespread (and often unconscious) presupposition that voting is the sole means for ordinary U.S. citizens to participate in our democracy. While not diminishing the importance of voting, they stress that "what you do after the election" most clearly reveals how active you are as a citizen. Building strong community organizations is their way of enabling congregations and their members to engage meaningfully in public discourse and decision-making processes that affect their lives. This organizing model presumes people from diverse backgrounds and religious traditions engender values and perspectives that can enliven and enrich this public discourse and the decisions that flow from it. In other words, faith-based community organizing offers an inherent critique of a political culture with limited alternatives and thus represents a vital contribution to the revitalization of American democracy.

While accentuating the promise for rejuvenating democracy that faith-based community organizations offer, Mark R. Warren and others have noted several challenges and obstacles that still lie ahead for community organiza-

tions like those in the IAF network. One of these challenges is the difficult transition from organizations focused explicitly on local needs and concerns to regional and even national coalitions that are a force for a wider political transformation. This challenge and its potential for effecting policy decisions and social change will make the recent emergence of the Southwest IAF, as well as other statewide and regional organizing efforts like the PICO California Project, even more fascinating to observe over the coming months and years. Additionally, while organizations like COPS and the wider Texas IAF network have been highly successful at attracting member congregations among Catholic, historically African-American, and mainline Protestant churches, they have few Jewish, Islamic, or other non-Christian congregations and a similar dearth of evangelical or Pentecostal churches. In Texas IAF-affiliated organizations, for example, the lack of Anglo-American Southern Baptist congregations, the predominant denomination throughout the northern half of the state, poses a significant challenge for these organizations to achieve their objective of building within their ranks as broad a base of support as possible. Among Latinos, who abandon Catholicism for evangelical and Pentecostal congregations at an annual rate of some 60,000, these churches' lack of participation in community organizations drastically curtails the possibility that their Latino members will engage in organizing activities. The recent establishment of Christians Supporting Community Organizing (CSCO) in Boulder, Colorado is an attempt to address this concern; CSCO's initial project is to link evangelical and Pentecostal congregations to faith-based community organizations in Philadelphia, Boston, Rochester, Chicago, and Spokane. The success of this effort is another emerging story in the ongoing development of faith-based community organizing among Latinos and other groups in the United States.

News reports on community organizations do not usually focus on the day-to-day work of building the organizations and training their leaders, but on the organizations' massive public assemblies like the 600 people Deacon Valdéz and JMP turned out to confront the Minneapolis mayor and police chief, or the 6,000-delegate assembly for COPS 25th anniversary. These public assemblies combine symbols and actions like religious icons, the U.S. flag, congregational banners, prayer, singing, the pledge of allegiance, an enthusiastic roll call of member congregations present, an organizational leader's focus statement of the meeting's purpose, applause and other responses from the delegate assembly, personal testimonies on concerns like gang violence and drainage problems that embody community issues the organization is addressing, and pointed requests that invited political and other community leaders make specific commitments to support the organization's agenda for community improvement and development. Carefully planned and enacted, but also frequently marked by spontaneous and unexpected responses from designated speakers and the organizational delegates in attendance, these high energy events are a public

face of faith-based organizing that provide poignant impressions and memories for many first-time observers as well as frequent participants.

Along with faith-based community organizing, the religious traditions of Latino Catholics are one of the primary ways that they are active in the public spaces of urban life. For many Latinos, the assemblies and actions of faith-based community organizations are a form of public ritual that reflect their tradition of communal faith expressions filled with color, pageantry, vibrant singing, vivid religious imagery, and enthusiastic participation. Indeed, perhaps the most overlooked dimension of the Latino public presence in the United States is their ritual and devotional traditions, faith expressions that often spill out into streets and plazas of U.S. cities and towns.

Nowhere is this public ritual more conspicuous than at San Antonio's San Fernando Cathedral, the oldest cathedral sanctuary in the country (and a member of COPS). Founded by Spanish subjects in 1731, San Fernando has remained a predominantly Hispanic faith community under the flags of Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the United States, the Confederate States of America, and then the United States again. The prominence of Mexican Catholic traditions is readily evident in the annual public rituals that the San Fernando congregation celebrates. *Las posadas* (literally the "dwellings" or "shelters") re-enact the pilgrimage of Mary and Joseph on the way to Bethlehem. During the nine days before Christmas, these festive processions are organized in various parishioners' homes and neighborhoods and one grand *posada* is enacted through the streets of downtown San Antonio, with the holy pilgrims denied entry at sites like the city hall and county courthouse before finally receiving shelter at the cathedral. For the vigil of Our Lady of Guadalupe's feast day (December 12), the San Fernando congregation celebrates a *serenata* of songs to their celestial mother, the patroness of the Mexican people. In recent years the *serenata* has been transmitted throughout the Americas via television. The proclamation of Jesus' passion and death on Good Friday begins in the public market, winds through the city's downtown streets, and ends with the crucifixion on the steps of the cathedral. Later that evening the *servicio del santo entierro* (entombment or wake service) includes a candlelight procession with the body of Jesus through the plaza and streets around the cathedral. Frequently, San Fernando's 8:00 bilingual Sunday Mass, which is televised internationally, also encompasses Mexican Catholic traditions. These traditions include practices such as an Epiphany entrance procession with parishioners dressed as the magi, the blessing of children on a Sunday near the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (February 2), and the remembrance of the community's deceased heroes and leaders on a Sunday proximate to the feasts of All Saints and All Souls at the beginning of November (popularly known as *el Día de los Muertos*, the Day of the Dead).

While San Fernando has a long-standing tradition of public ritual, similar faith traditions are increasingly evident in the streets of numerous U.S.

towns and cities. Like European Catholic immigrants from previous genera-
tions, more recent arrivals from Latin America and the Caribbean bring trea-
sured expressions of faith with them, such as the Puerto Rican devotion to
their patron San Juan, the Cuban veneration of their patroness *Nuestra Señora
de la Caridad del Cobre* (Our Lady of Charity), Guatemalan faith in *El Cristo
Negro de Esquipulas* (the Black Christ), and El Salvadoran dedication to Oscar
Romero, the slain archbishop of San Salvador who is popularly acclaimed as a
martyr and saint. And, like their European co-religionists, Latino Catholics
express their devotion to Christ, the Eucharist, Mary, and particular patron
saints in massive public rituals. In New York, Miami, Los Angeles,
Washington, D.C., and other locales with significant Latino populations
across the nation, Latinos celebrate their feasts and religious traditions with
processions through city streets, outdoor Masses and prayer services, televised
worship, and other public manifestations of devotion that alter the sacred
landscape of numerous U.S. communities.

One of the most widespread traditions among all Latino groups is the
extensive devotion to the crucified Jesus and his suffering mother on Good
Friday. As at San Fernando, in many Hispanic parishes this devotion encom-
passes a public re-enactment of Jesus' trial, way of the cross, and crucifixion or
some other procession through the streets. Parishes like St. Bridget's on
Manhattan's lower east side, St. Stephen's in South Bend, Indiana, St.
Anthony's in Milwaukee, St. Clements in Santa Monica, California, and eight
Catholic congregations along 18th Street in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood are
just a few of the many predominantly Latino parishes that annually observe this
public ritual tradition.

Practitioners of public devotions like those associated with Good Friday
frequently contend that the celebration of their sacred traditions forms them as
a people by keeping their religious and cultural heritage alive. Many immigrant
participants in these devotions attest that the traditions enliven treasured mem-
ories of their childhood and native land; often they insist that the traditions be
celebrated in the way they remember them from their homeland. U.S.-born
Hispanics like journalist and San Fernando Cathedral parishioner Victor
Landa also acclaim these sacred traditions as a source of collective memory,
cultural rootedness, and ethnic identity and pride. As Landa wrote after a
recent Good Friday procession in which thousands accompanied Jesus carrying
his cross through San Antonio's downtown streets: "Every step down the *Via
Dolorosa* is an affirmation of our past, an understanding of our present, and a
courageous entrance into our future. Every year, as the procession winds its
way from the Market Square to the cathedral, a community deepens its roots."
Or, as his fellow parishioner Frank Paredes, Jr. put it, "The public rituals and
fiestas at San Fernando strengthen us in our identity by allowing us to pride-
fully celebrate our culture and faith."

Along with commentary on the ethnoreligious origins and significance of

Good Friday and other public rituals, media coverage often focuses on messages of political protest against injustice and violence that these rituals embody. The opening line of an April 1998 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* report observed: "The symbolism was blinding as an actor playing Jesus Christ was handed over to be crucified during a Good Friday re-enactment on the same [St. Anthony] church steps where a teenage boy was shot to death last month." This report went on to state that the annual ritual's "prayers and readings drew a line from the suffering and death of Christ 2,000 years ago to the social ills that plague this poor neighborhood today." *Chicago Tribune* reports of the Good Friday Way of the Cross in the Pilsen neighborhood make similar links between the suffering of Jesus and the suffering of contemporary Latino communities (see, e.g., 3/26/91, 4/14/95). In fact, as *Tribune* reporters have noted, it was the suffering of the community that led Mexican Catholics and parish priests in Pilsen to initiate this annual public ritual. On Christmas eve in 1976, ten children and two mothers died in a fire that swept through an apartment building two blocks from St. Vitus parish. Because they did not understand Spanish, Chicago firefighters who responded to this emergency were unaware that these victims were trapped inside the burning building. In a public meeting following this tragedy, parishioners from St. Vitus and other Pilsen parishes argued that these deaths resulted from a lack of Spanish-speaking firefighters, as well as absentee landlords, overcrowded housing, and city neglect of public services. The following Good Friday they began their annual Way of the Cross as an expression of faith intended to draw the community together in a collective act of solidarity, remember their lost loved ones, and connect their deaths and the plight of the Pilsen neighborhood with the unjust crucifixion of Jesus. Subsequently, the annual procession links the Stations of the Cross (the events that comprise Jesus' painful walk on the road to Calvary) with "community problems such as housing, crowded schools, immigration and gang violence." In the words of Father James Colleran, pastor of St. Vitus the year of the first Pilsen Way of the Cross, "the important thing is to relate the stations to what is happening in the community" (*Chicago Tribune* 3/26/91).

At their core, however, these rituals are not only an expression of political protest, nor merely sources of cultural affirmation and retention, but practitioners' treasured means of encountering the sacred in their lives. In the words of Ernest Muniz, a San Fernando parishioner who was a Roman soldier in the annual passion proclamation for over a decade: "The experience becomes so real to me that I feel as if I'm right there with Jesus, a Roman soldier whipping him and kicking him." After participating in Jesus' crucifixion, Muniz attests that he sheds his costume and "I go into the church, where I pray a lot and ask forgiveness" for his part in the suffering of Jesus (*San Antonio Express News*, 4/15/95). Various San Fernando parishioners recall the occasion when a young boy broke free from his parents and spontaneously stepped forward to wipe the face of Jesus during the annual Good Friday procession. One parish leader

echoed the sentiments of many others in asking rhetorically about this boy: "Did he touch the face of an actor or the face of Jesus himself?" Similarly, speaking to the devotees who gathered in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood for the Living Way of the Cross, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago commented: "The people who are walking along are reliving those mysteries [of Christ's passion and death] in their hearts" (*Chicago Tribune*, 4/22/00).

Latino religious leaders like Father Virgilio Elizondo, who served as rector of San Fernando Cathedral from 1983-1995, contend that "the Latinos' love for public ritual is a contribution we make to American society. I think there is a hunger for it in American life. It lets you enter into the power of a collective experience" (*Los Angeles Times*, 3/28/97). In a society that focuses more and more on individual spiritual quests and frequently neglects the human need for collective ritual, Latino traditions and congregations offer a significant model of one way the church can fulfill its public role and provide a religious experience that transcends cultural and denominational boundaries. The comments of various participants in the annual passion proclamation confirm that the San Fernando congregation's public ritual has influence and meaning far beyond the limits of the cathedral's predominantly Mexican Catholic congregation. Local Baptist minister Buckner Fanning, a frequent participant, attests that "when I walked behind Jesus on the Way of the Cross I wondered what I would have done had I been there. The people of San Fernando drew me into the passion and put me right there with Jesus." Even a local rabbi, Samuel Stahl, has publicly acknowledged the rich religious traditions San Fernando offers the city of San Antonio and expressed his gratitude for the sensitivity to Jewish-Christian relations in the way the passion is enacted. Sociologist of religion Stephen Warner, who is from a Presbyterian background, opines that the power of San Fernando's Good Friday procession and similar public rituals is that, "in a society as drenched as ours in symbolic representations," the color and vibrancy of this religious pageantry "fill[s] the memories of onlookers with indelible religious images" and gives religious messages "a competitive edge."

Implicit in such comments is the contention that Latino public ritual provides a new model of inclusive pluralism for a society often torn by divisive barriers between peoples and religions. Frequently, ecumenical and interfaith worship services, as well as "multicultural" events in religious and civic life, tend to focus on the commonalties between diverse peoples and religious traditions and downplay or ignore their differences. Conversely, Latino public ritual is firmly rooted in a particular ethnic and religious tradition, yet open to the participation of all. As sociologist Warner commented after his first experience of the San Fernando passion proclamation, "Many of these rituals were foreign to me….Right in front of us we saw realistically reenacted the suffering and death of Jesus, the cruelty of his tormentors, and the grief of his mother. There was nothing metaphorical, nothing merely figurative, nothing generic about these

rites. Yet, as an Anglo, I did not feel excluded." Latino leaders' decisions to celebrate public rituals bilingually at places like San Fernando and Pilsen have helped facilitate the growing participation of non-Hispanics in these rituals. To be sure, the massive crowds at the rituals are still predominantly Latino Catholics. But the increasing presence of people from other religious and cultural backgrounds is a fascinating phenomenon that led one San Antonio newspaper columnist to deem contemporary San Fernando the "celestial center of San Antonio," a ritual center embraced by a vast array of city residents and visitors. The accounts of non-Hispanics who are attracted to these sacred traditions, along with the ways a collective experience of public ritual forges bonds between diverse peoples, are elements of this story about Latino religion in American public life that require much further exploration, insightful interviews, and analysis.

Another significant but frequently overlooked element of the story is the practitioners' notion that their rituals embody a religious experience that transcends time and space. Anthropologist Karen Mary Davalos' outstanding study of Pilsen's Way of the Cross encompassed numerous conversations with leaders in the Good Friday ritual like Patricia, who summed up the intersection of yesterday and today: "Christ suffered way back 2,000 years ago, but he's still suffering now. His people are suffering. We're lamenting and wailing. And also we are a joyful people at the same time. . .So this is not a story, this is not a fairy tale. It happened, and it's happening now." Another interviewee for Davalos' study put it even more succinctly, stating that in the Way of the Cross "we are reliving that moment which is actually happening now." For these and other participants in Latino public rituals like those of Good Friday, the power of the ritual is its capacity to mediate an encounter with God that transcends limiting distinctions like those between Pilsen and Calvary Hill, Chicago and Jerusalem, our "secular" age and the "sacred" time of Jesus. For these practitioners, their religious traditions are not mere pious reenactments but an opportunity to participate in sacred events that are integrated with their everyday world and its meaning. This integration enables them not only to endure present trials and hardships with the power of faith; it also animates many devotees to struggle for the transformation of their personal and collective lives. In the words of yet another interviewee in the Davalos study, a woman named Claudia who was one of the first coordinators for the Pilsen Way of the Cross, this public ritual is "the real way of praying" because it is "the opportunity to reflect and analyze how we are living and the things we have to [do] in order to have a better life."

The complete significance of such graphic and exuberant rituals in the public spaces of twenty-first century U.S. towns and cities is a story that scholars, pastors, and reporters have not yet fully understood, much less exhausted. What is it that makes these rituals so vital, so meaningful, and so important to people? What is it about them that they even spark the imagination of non-

Hispanics previously unfamiliar with the traditions of Latino Catholicism? Surely all of the aforementioned analysis is part of the answer. But as this dramatic chapter of religion in American public life unfolds before our eyes, no doubt there is much more to this story that still has not been brought to light.

Issues to Keep an Eye on

The influence of faith-based community organizations on the life of local congregations. Scholars and reporters alike have examined the influence of faith-based community organizations on local politics, civic life, and economic development. But they have given relatively little attention to how these organizations shape the spirituality, theology, and faith expressions and commitments of local congregations and their members. This is a ripe topic for further analysis and investigation about Latino (and other) congregations.

Collaborative efforts of local faith-based community organizations in statewide, regional and national networks. The predominantly-Latino COPS organization highlighted in this essay is just one example of numerous faith-based community organizations across the nation. These organizations have amply demonstrated their ability to enable working-class and other congregational members to build a base of power and engage in democratic decision-making processes on the local level. Several current and ongoing efforts are intended to expand the influence of local organizations, such as Isaiah (formerly the Minnesota Collaboration Project), which includes the JMP organization mentioned at the outset of this essay, and the aforementioned PICO California, Texas IAF, and now Southwest IAF Networks. The success of local organizations in their attempts to build wider collaborative links is a significant issue in the ongoing evolution of faith-based community organizations.

Efforts to engage a more diverse array of congregations in faith-based community organizations. Collectively, Catholic, historically African-American, and mainline Protestant congregations comprise the overwhelming majority of churches in faith-based community organizations. Conversely, the organizations have relatively few Jewish, Islamic, or other non-Christian congregations and a similar dearth of evangelical or Protestant churches. Community organizers and the leaders of local organizations are well aware that these other congregations are absent from their ranks and have attempted to foster more broad-based participation in their organizations. Systematic efforts of this type, such as the recent establishment of Christians Supporting Community Organizing as mentioned above, are a crucial development in the ongoing evolution of faith-based organizing among Latinos and other groups in the United States.

Faith-based community organizations offer an alternative model for people of faith to engage in politics. Unlike groups who primarily attempt to lobby policy decisions at the national level such as the Christian collation, faith-based community organizations like COPS attempt to build local power organizations from the ground up. Rather than focus on a fixed moral agenda

that they promote in public policy debates, community organizations enable working-class and other congregational members to participate more actively and effectively in our democratic society. Thus they implicitly (and at times explicitly) reveal that people of faith can engage in politics not just by setting moral agendas rooted in religious traditions, but also by seeking to ensure that religious values like the dignity of all human persons are respected in the very process of public discourse and decision-making. Their *primary* focus on building institutions that rejuvenate our democratic process, rather than influencing specific policy issues *per se*, comprises an alternative model for integrating faith and politics that warrants further examination and analysis.

The work of faith-based community organizations in critical contemporary issues like school reform, affordable housing, crime, and neighborhood development. News media and scholars have given much attention to the successful efforts of faith-based community organizations on a host of vital community issues. Observers have also noted how community organizations frequently collaborate with political, business, educational, and other civic leaders in their efforts. These successes continue to be an important part of the story, particularly how faith-based community organizations often broker partnerships and innovative approaches in response to community issues.

The presence and meaning of Latino public ritual in numerous U.S. towns and cities. One of the primary ways that Latino Catholics are active in the public spaces of urban life is through the celebration of their religious traditions. These multivalent religious traditions have social, cultural, and political meanings and, most importantly, are a form of enacted theology that address the human need for collective ritual, embodied prayer, and connectedness to the sacred. The practices and meanings of Latino public ritual in particular locales is a timely topic for further investigation.

The participation of non-Latinos in Latino public ritual. While the vast majority of participants in Latino public rituals are Latinos themselves, a growing number of non-Latinos are present and active in these celebrations. Strikingly, the celebrations remain firmly rooted in a particular ethnic and religious tradition, yet they mediate a religious experience that frequently transcends cultural and denominational boundaries. Accounts of non-Latinos' experiences during these public rituals, along with analysis of how collective ritual forges bonds between diverse peoples, provide fresh perspectives for this developing story about Latino religion in American public life.

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Appendix: List of Faith-Based Community Organizations

The state-by-state listing that follows is based on a national study of faith-based community organizations conducted by Interfaith Funders, whom I gratefully acknowledge.

<u>Abbreviations for Organizing Networks</u>

DART	Direct Action Research and Training Center
GAM	Gamaliel Foundation
IAF	Industrial Areas Foundation
IND	Independent (i.e., not affiliated with a network)
IVP	Inter-Valley Project
OLTC	Organizing, Leadership, and Training Center
PICO	Pacific Institute for Community Organization
RCNO	Regional Council of Neighborhood Organizations

IAF	Valley Interfaith Project-Phoenix	AZ, Phoenix
IAF	East Valley Interfaith Sponsoring Committee	AZ, Tempe
IAF	Pima County Interfaith Council	AZ, Tucson
PICO	Orange County Congregation Community Organization	CA, Anaheim
PICO	Fresno Interfaith Sponsoring Committee	CA, Fresno
RCNO	Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches	CA, Los Angeles
IAF	Metropolitan Los Angeles Organization	CA, Los Angeles
Unknown	South Central Organizing Committee	CA, Los Angeles
IAF	United Neighborhood Organization	CA, Los Angeles
IAF	East Valley Organization	CA, Monrovia
PICO	Oakland Community Organization	CA, Oakland
GAM	Oakland Coalition of Congregations	CA, Oakland
Unknown	Southern California Organizing Project	CA, Pasadena
PICO	Contra Costa Interfaith Sponsoring Committee	CA, Richmond
IAF	Sacramento Valley Organizing Community (SVOC)	CA, Sacramento
PICO	Sacramento Area Congregations Together	CA, Sacramento
PICO	Inland Congregations United for Change (ICUC)	CA, San Bernardino
PICO	San Mateo County Organizing Project	CA, San Carlos
RCNO	United African-American Ministerial Action Council	CA, San Diego
PICO	San Diego Organizing Project	CA, San Diego
IAF	Valley Organized in Community Efforts	CA, San Fernando
IAF	Bay Area Organizing Project	CA, San Francisco
Unknown	West Coast Industrial Areas Foundation	CA, San Francisco
PICO	San Francisco Organizing Project	CA, San Francisco
PICO	People Acting in Community Together	CA, San Jose
PICO	Peninsula Interfaith Action	CA, San Mateo
Unknown	Orange County Sponsoring Committee	CA, Santa Ana
IAF	Sonoma-Napa Action Project (SNAP)	CA, Santa Rosa
Unknown	Sonoma County Faith Based Community	CA, Sebastopol
PICO	PACT for Stockton (was San Joaquin Interfaith Federation)	CA, Stockton

Unknown	South Stockton Community Concerns	CA, Stockton
IAF	Monterey Bay Organizing Project	CA, Watsonville
PICO	Metropolitan Organizations for People	CO, Denver
PICO	Congregations Building Community	CO, Windsor
OLTC	Greater Bridgeport Interfaith Action	CT, Bridgeport
IND	Elm City Congregations Organized	CT, New Haven
IVP	Naugatuck Valley Project	CT, Waterbury
IAF	Washington Interfaith Network	DC, Washington
IAF	Wilmington Interfaith Network	DE, Wilmington
DART	Volusia Interfaith Sponsoring Committee	FL, Daytona Beach
DART	Justice for All in Broward	FL, Fort Lauderdale
Unknown	Collier United for Rights and Equality	FL, Golden Gate
DART	Interchurch Coalition for Action, Reconcil & Empowerment (ICARE)	FL, Jacksonville
DART	People Acting in Community Together	FL, Miami
PICO	Orlando Interfaith Sponsoring Committee	FL, Orlando
PICO	Greater Pensacola Community Organization	FL, Pensacola
DART	Sarasotans United for Responsibility and Equity	FL, Sarasota
PICO	Congregations United for Community Action	FL, St Petersburg
DART	Hillsborough Organization for Progress and Equality (HOPE)	FL, Tampa
DART	People Engaged in Active Community Efforts (PEACE)	FL, West Palm Beach
IAF	Atlantans Building Leadership for Empowerment	GA, Atlanta
IND	Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE)	HI, Honolulu
GAM	Quad Cities Interfaith Sponsoring Committee	IA, Davenport
IAF	Des Moines Area Sponsoring Committee	IA, Des Moines
Unknown	Dominican Sisters-IL	IL, Aurora
RCNO	Central Illinois Organizing Project	IL, Bloomington
GAM	Alliance of Congregations Transforming the Southside	IL, Chicago
IND	Community Action Group	IL, Chicago
GAM	Interfaith Southsiders Allied In Action and Hope (ISAIAH)	IL, Chicago
GAM	Pilsen Neighbors Community Council	IL, Chicago
GAM	Metropolitan Alliance of Congregations	IL, Chicago
GAM	The Hyde Park and Kenwood Interfaith Council	IL, Chicago
IAF	United Power for Action and Justice	IL, Chicago & Cook C
GAM	South Suburban Action Council (SSAC)	IL, Hazel Crest
GAM	Joliet Area Church-Based Organizing Body (JACOB)	IL, Joliet
IND	Center for New Community	IL, Oak Park
GAM	Northwest Indiana Federation of Interfaith Organizations	IN, Gary
PICO	Wyandotte County Interfaith Sponsoring Council (WISC)	KS, Kansas City
DART	CLOUT	KY, Louisville
PICO	Louisiana Interfaith Together (LIFT)	LA, Baton Rouge
PICO	Working Interfaith Together (WIN)	LA, Baton Rouge
PICO	Greater Baton Rouge Congregational Based Organization	LA, Baton Rouge
PICO	Bayou Interfaith Sponsoring Committee (BISCO)	LA, Houma/Thibodaux
PICO	COPE	LA, Lafayette/New Ib
PICO	East Carroll Interfaith Sponsoring Committee	LA, Lake Providence

PICO	All Congregations Together	LA, New Orleans
IAF	The Jeremiah Group Northshore Development Project	LA, New Orleans
OLTC/IAF	Greater Boston Interfaith Organization	MA, Boston
OLTC/IAF	Brockton Interfaith Community Organizing and Leadership	MA, Brockton
OLTC	United Interfaith Action	MA, Fall River
IVP	Merrimack Valley Project	MA, Lawrence
OLTC	Essex County Community Organization	MA, Lynn
IVP/OLTC	Pioneer Valley Project	MA, Springfield
OLTC/IAF	Worcester Interfaith	MA, Worcester
IAF	Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD)	MD, Baltimore
IAF	Action in Montgomery Count	MD, Montgomery
IAF	Interfaith Action Communities	MD, Prince George's
GAM	Moses (includes Jeremiah Project, Noah, WDIFCO-Ruth)	MI, Detroit
GAM	West Detroit Interfaith Sponsoring Committee	MI, Detroit
GAM	Northeast Organization Allied for Hope	MI, Detroit
GAM	Jeremiah Project	MI, Detroit
DART	Michigan Organizing Project	MI, Muskegon Heights
GAM	EZEKIEL	MI, Saginaw
Unknown	United Now in Serving Our Neighborhoods	MI, Ypsilanti
GAM	Interfaith Action Organization	MN, Minneapolis
IND	Jewish Community Action	MN, Minneapolis
GAM	Minnesota Collaboration Project (= GRIP)	MN, St. Cloud
GAM	St. Paul Ecumenical Alliance of Cong. (SPEAC) / E Metro Isaiah	MN, St. Paul
Unknown	Minnesota Rural Organizing Project	MN, St. Paul
PICO	Kansas City Organizing Project	MO, Kansas City
GAM	Churches Committed to Community Concerns (CCCC)	MO, St. Louis
GAM	Churches Allied for Community Improvement	MO, St. Louis
GAM	Churches United for Community Action	MO, St. Louis
IAF	Amos Network	MS, Jackson
IAF	Helping Empower Local People (HELP)	NC, Charlotte
IAF	Omaha Temporary Organizing Committee	NE, Omaha
IAF	Community Organizing in Nebraska	NE, Winnebago
PICO	Camden Churches Organizing Project (CCOP)	NJ, Camden
IAF	Interfaith Community Organizing Project	NJ, Jersey City
IAF	Albuquerque Interfaith	NM, Albuquerque
IAF	South Bronx Churches	NY, Bronx
PICO	Community Action Project	NY, Brooklyn
IAF	East Brooklyn Congregations	NY, Brooklyn
Unknown	Brooklyn Interfaith for Action	NY, Brooklyn
PICO	Central Brooklyn Churches	NY, Brooklyn
GAM	Voice—Buffalo	NY, Buffalo
IAF	West Siders Together	NY, New York
IAF	East Harlem Partnership for Change	NY, New York
IAF	Lower Manhattan Together	NY, New York
IAF	Queens Citizens Organizations/Queens Citizens	NY, Rego Park

PICO	Interfaith Action	NY, Rochester
IAF	Long Island CAN	NY, Valley Stream
GAM	Amos Project	OH, Cincinnati
Unknown	United Churches Active in Neighborhoods	OH, Cincinnati
NTIC	WIN Action Organizing Project	OH, Cinncinati
GAM	Westside Eastside Congregations Acting Now (We-Can)	OH, Cleveland
GAM	Broadfaith Organization for Lorain's Development (BOLD)	OH, Cleveland
Unknown	Churches Acting Together for Change and Hope	OH, Cleveland
DART	BREAD Organization	OH, Columbus
DART	Leaders for Equality and Action in Dayton (LEAD)	OH, Dayton
IND	Interfaith Suburban Action Coalition	OH, Euclid
DART	Toledoans USA	OH, Toledo
GAM	ACTION	OH, Youngstown
IAF	Portland Organizing Project	OR, Portland
PICO	Congregations United for Neighborhood Action	PA, Allentown
RCNO	United Congregations of Chester County	PA, Coatsville
GAM	Congregational Action to Lift by Love	PA, Erie
Unknown	Religious Committee for Community Justice	PA, Norristown
PICO	Eastern Philadelphia Organizing Project	PA, Philadelphia
IAF	Philadelphia Interfaith Action	PA, Philadelphia
GAM	Shenango Valley Initiative	PA, Sharon
IVP	Rhode Island Organizing Project	RI, Providence
Unknown	Alliance For a Better Tomorrow	TN, Knoxville
IAF	Knoxville Interfaith Network	TN, Knoxville
IAF	Shelby County Interfaith Sponsoring Committee	TN, Memphis
IAF	Tying Nashville Together	TN, Nashville
IAF	Austin Interfaith Sponsoring Committee	TX, Austin
IAF	Triangle Interfaith Project	TX, Beaumont - Port
IAF	Dallas Area Interfaith	TX, Dallas
Unknown	The Border Organization	TX, Eagle Pass
IAF	El Paso Interreligious Sponsoring Organization (EPISO)	TX, El Paso
IAF	Allied Communities of Tarrant	TX, Fr. Worth
IAF	The Metropolitan Organization	TX, Houston
IAF	West Texas Organizing Strategy	TX, Lubbock
IAF	Valley Interfaith	TX, Mercedes
IAF	Metro Alliance	TX, San Antonio
IAF	COPS	TX, San Antonio
IAF	Fort Bend Interfaith Council	TX, Sugarland
IAF	Puget Sound Org. Project	WA, Seattle
IAF	Parent Organizing Project / Spokane Interfaith and Educ Alliance	WA, Spokane
GAM	Milwaukee Innercity Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH)	WI, Milwaukee
GAM	Racine Interfaith Coalition	WI, Racine
GAM	Hope Offered through Shared Ecumenical Action (HOSEA)	WI, West Allis

Historical Perspectives on Religion, Government and Social Welfare in America

Peter Dobkin Hall

There is a widespread misimpression that the separation of church and state applied so vigorously to the realm of public education in recent decades also holds sway in the realm of social services. The situation is complex and varied, but it is fair to say that funding arrangements rooted in nineteenth century collaborations between government and a wide variety of religiously-linked organizations are still very common and find broad acceptance among courts, legislators, religious leaders and clients. In fields like care of dependent children, the elderly, and the disabled, in the provision of rehabilitation services for those with drug addictions, in job training, and in the operation of group homes for the retarded or mentally ill, these partnerships provide a large portion of the services offered in our society.

As those who look soon find out, very large organizations like the Salvation Army, Catholic Charities USA, Lutheran Services in America, and Jewish Family Services are and have long been among the leading government contractors in the provision of social services in many parts of the nation.

But it is also true that there is a recent and strong trend to expand partnerships between government and faith-based organizations, and to give more scope to the expression of specific religious traditions in these programs. The charitable choice provision included in the welfare reform act of 1996 is certainly an excellent example of this trend.

Those interested in tracking the relations between governments and faith-based groups must come to terms with the immense variety of attitudes, arrangements, and historical trajectories at play, as well as with substantial geographical variations. The nation is now in the midst of one of its fairly frequent waves of experimentation and reform in the approach and structure of welfare programs. Each of these waves has had mixed results, leaving some elements in place, introducing some new forms, and all failing to resolve many presenting problems.

This essay provides readers with a survey of the unavoidably complex evolution of the policy debate over the role of religious groups in social service

provision. It begins with discussion of two major conceptual issues that have dogged the relationship between government and religious service providers. The first is the elusive problem of defining what a "sectarian" organization is; and the second is the unavoidable necessity of coming to terms with the immense variety of religious groups and the even greater complexity of organizational and theological ideas that shape and restrict the ways in which religious groups act in the public realm.

The essay then moves to consider the most significant historical influence on the interaction of religion and public life in the United States: liberal Protestantism. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, liberal Protestants had a disproportionate impact on the ethos that has shaped both the most common forms of religiously tied social welfare organizations and on the emerging structure of the welfare state. The paper then addresses the ways in which two other major groups, African-American Protestants and Roman Catholics, took advantage of changes in federal social welfare policy in the mid-twentieth century. It closes with a review of the impact of recent trends, including the devolution of responsibility for social welfare from the federal government to state and local governments, deregulation, and the turn toward relying more on faith-based organizations to provide social services.

Grasping the Public Role of Religion in Modern America

The problem of defining the boundaries of religious institutions that act in the public realm is not new. In his magisterial 1894 study of American charities, Amos Warner wrote of the difficulty of fully grasping the public role of religious organizations. "That there is no generally recognized definition of the word 'sectarian' is noteworthy," he lamented. "There are few institutions that will admit its applicability to themselves, and there are few to which it is not applied by some one. Many institutions having no trace of sectarianism in charter, constitution, or by-laws are yet administered in the interests of a sect. A willingness to admit beneficiaries of all denominations is frequently less an evidence of non-sectarianism than of a tendency to make proselytes (1894, 407-408)." In his research, Warner found a clear cut distinction between public and private charities," he continued,

> but none between sectarian and non-sectarian charities, is one that those who oppose public aid to sectarian schools would do well to recognize. Protestants are willing to tease legislators for public money on behalf of a hospital orphan asylum in which they are interested, urging that it is "doing good," and that it is preventing crime and pauperism, and so saving money to the tax payers. They do not see or will not acknowledge that the same could be said of a parochial school, and that the claim which they set up that their own institutions is "non-sectarian" is equivocal and unfair, and one which in practice the courts have never been able to make definite (409).

Surprisingly little has changed since Warner wrote. Despite the supposedly secular character of modern institutional life, faith-based organizations comprise the largest part of the charitable tax-exempt universe in numbers of organizations, volume of individual donations, and commitment of volunteer time. As responsibility for social services devolves from the federal level, they are playing an increasingly central role in providing human services, on the community level. And, according to recent studies, they are the single most important arena for imparting the values and competencies associated with effective civic participation and, as such, are essential to the welfare of the non-profit or "Third Sector" and the vitality of civil society (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1996). Nonetheless, the difficulties of understanding their role in public life remains as elusive as it was a century ago—and for many of the same reasons.

Despite their importance to human services provision, civic life, and the nonprofit sector, neither secular nor religious researchers have specifically addressed the ways in which faith-based organizations differ from their secular counterparts in organizational structure, mission, and process, the impact of the significantly different funding and regulatory environments in which they operate, or—perhaps most importantly—the extraordinary complexity within and diversity among religious entities.[1]

Structural Complexity and Diversity

Assessing the role of religious and religiously tied organizations in the nonprofit sector and the broader institutional universe requires that the organizational units being measured be in some significant sense comparable. Because of their structural and processual complexity, churches and religiously tied entities pose significant obstacles to researchers seeking to measure their impact as part of the universe of secular organizations. Some of these obstacles stem from the scarcity of quantifiable data: although treated as charitable tax-exempt organizations under federal and state laws, churches are not required to register as nonprofit entities or to file annual reports with government agencies. But the major obstacles are epistemological and hinge on the multiple meanings of the terms "church," "religious," and "religiously-tied organization."

The first range of definitional difficulties involves the structural diversity and complexity of religious institutions, which include a wide range of formal and informal entities. Formal religious organizations include:
- a variety of types of *free-standing congregations*, some of them membership entities organized corporately, others sole proprietorships — ranging from the *corporation sole* of Anglicanism to the store-front quasi-commercial

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1 Most efforts to measure the place of religious organizations in the nonprofit sector (Hodgkinson, Weitzman & Kirsch, 1988a, 1993; Cnaan, 1996) have used the congregation as the unit of analysis. This is problematic for a number of reasons, the most important being the variable significance of congregations in franchiseform denominations, in which social services are often provided through non-parochial entities.

enterprises of urban neighborhoods;

- an extraordinary variety of *federated or franchiseform organizations*, ranging from the "monarchical model" of Roman Catholicism and the "constitutional monarchy" of Episcopalianism and other episcopally-ordered Protestantisms, through such loosely-coupled denominational bodies as the Southern Baptist Convention.[2]

- *parachurch organizations* like the Promise Keepers, and Habitat for Humanity, which combine devotional and service provision activities which may or may not substitute for membership in an established community of worship;

- *interdenominational* and *ecumenical bodies* operating on local, regional, or national levels, which coordinate the activities of communities or worship and service;

- *secular corporations* established by clergy or members of religious orders — and by lay members of faith communities — are among the most common, diverse, and difficult to classify forms of faith-based organizations. Such organizations range from traditional voluntary/donative nonprofits through quasi-public agencies like community development corporations.

Different religious groups display different organizational preferences. Some, like the Roman Catholics, favor hierarchical franchise-form structures in which authority is concentrated in a single person. Others, like the Quakers, Baptists, and Pentecostals, favor congregational polities in which decision making is left to the membership. Still others, like the Presbyterians, favor large-scale denominational structures, but permit relatively democratic forms of decision making. But even these familiar ecclesiastical forms are rife with complexity and ambiguity: the seemingly "monarchical" Roman Catholic Church actually contains a variety of parallel structures: the hierarchical diocesan hierarchy and the religious orders, which stand outside the dioceses and are directly accountable to the Vatican (Dignan, 1933; Maida & Cafardi, 1984; Ellis, 1987; Dolan, 1987, 1992). Within these structures are a variety of collegial decision making bodies, some, like the College of Cardinals and periodical convenings like councils and synods, of ancient lineage—others, like the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, of recent invention. Similarly, though the Protestant Episcopal Church is nominally based on a national structure presided over by bishops and a National Convention of Delegates, the authority of this supposed hierarchy is undercut by the fact that the National Convention—a mixed group of clergy and laity—has no authority over its own bishops.

The mechanisms by which faith communities provide charitable, cultural, educational, health, and human services add additional layers of complexity. To begin with, the kinds of services likely to be provided, as well as the popula-

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2 Efforts to engage the use of franchiseform organizations in the nonprofit sector have been minimal. On this see Young (1989), Oster (1992), and Hunter (1993).

tions likely to be served, differ significantly from group to group. Theologically conservative "gathered" congregations are unlikely to support programs intended to reach those who have not already professed belief and adhered to the behavioral restrictions required for membership in these groups. Thus, for example, programs serving substance abusers or AIDS victims are rarely operated by conservative Protestants or ultra-Orthodox Jewish groups. Theologically liberal congregations and denominations and Roman Catholics, on the other hand, tend to direct their service provision efforts towards broader client populations, making them available on the basis of need rather than membership.

Theological orientation also influences the formal relationships between service provision mechanisms and devotional activities. Some groups, like the megachurches, provide services within the congregational structure—as a part of congregational life. Others prefer either to "hive off" secular corporations or encourage members to give money and time to non-religious enterprises. But even these preferences conceal domains of complexity and diversity. For example, while the Catholic Church provides some kinds of services through congregationally-based volunteer groups, like the Catholic Youth Organization, others, like some of the parochial schools, are secular corporations—many of which operate under a dual system of governance, under the authority of lay and religious boards of directors. Service providing entities also operate as part of the diocesan apparatus—others are operated by religious orders.

> But the entities operating within the formal domains of the ecclesiastical polity hardly exhaust the organizational possibilities. Many religious service providers are secular corporations with no formal ties to the church — but which are headed by clergy or members of religious orders and may have boards composed of co-religionists, like Boys Town (Oursler & Oursler, 1959), the famous orphanage established in the 1920s by Father Robert Flanagan or Covenant House, the youth services complex established in the 1960s by Father Bruce Ritter (Sennott, 1992).

"Religiously-tied" service provider entities of this kind seldom have financial ties to the church—though they may draw on the financial resources of Catholic donors (both Fr. Flanagan and Fr. Ritter were pioneers of direct mail fundraising).

Catholic grant makers, like the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities, play another variation on the theme of the religiously-tied nonprofit. Founded in 1945 under the will of General Motors founder John J. Raskob to support Catholic charities, members of the foundation's board had to be Raskob descendants *and* communicants in the church (Robinson, 1996). (At the same time, Raskob, the most prominent Catholic layman of the 1930s, excluded members of the clergy and religious orders from his board). The Catholic fra-

ternal organization, the Knights of Columbus, founded in 1894 and now boasting more than $4 billion in assets, is similarly firm in its commitment to Catholic causes (including grant support to Catholic service providers) but, like the Raskob Foundation, is lay-governed and has no formal ties to the Church (Kauffman, 1982).[3]

Another example of the complex relationships between faith communities and service provision can be seen in some of the Episcopal social and educational missions. At the turn of the century, Episcopal social gospellers, desiring to serve the needy in the cities, recognized that they would have little impact if they operated their settlement houses, schools, and other enterprises if they sought to proselytize (since whatever forms of material and cultural deprivation the urban poor may have suffered, lack of strong religious traditions was not one of them). Accordingly, they developed a model of non-proselytizing missionary activity, usually operating through secular corporations staffed by religiously committed individuals. Desiring to maintain ties to the religious groups that supported them and from whom they drew their staffs, while at the same time supporting practices of participatory governance needed to give credibility to their claims of non-proselytization, Anglicans developed a complex system of interlocking multiple boards which both gave clients a voice *and* ensured continuing religious control.[4]

The greatest complexity is found among liberal Protestants and groups that encourage social service through individual members rather than affiliated secular corporations. Early in the nineteenth century, a number of influential Congregationalist theologians withdrew their churches from direct participation in public life and devoted their social energies— via their members— to organizations with no explicit religious ties (Hall, 1994). To say that these organizations were non-religious, however, would be stretching the point in many cases. For example, most of the work of "reconstructing" the defeated South after the Civil War was done by individuals of intense religiosity, often recruited and funded by church bodies—but the vehicles

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3 For an interesting example of a Jewish counterpart to Raskob which similarly embodies a mission concerned with family unity, the perpetuation of a faith tradition, and grantmaking informed by religious sensibilities, see Deborah S. Gardner, *Looking to the Future*, *Honoring the Past: The Nathan Cummings Foundation* (1997).

4 The linkage between religious doctrine and belief, organizational preferences, and patterns of institutional development are revealed with particular clarity in the evolution of deinstitutionalization, privatization, and the creation of community-based care over the past quarter century. The liberal Protestants, for whom the establishment of the secular welfare state supported and guided by a complex of nonsectarian nonprofit advocacy and service organizations had been literally an article of faith, played a relatively small role in creating and new welfare regime because their doctrinal commitment to perfectionism had limited their organizational vision to serving the curable—leaving care of the hopelessly disabled to government (Katz, 1986). Thus, when New York turned to use established liberal Protestant and Jewish social welfare agencies for help in placing the deinstitutionalized profoundly retarded and mentally-ill, it was greeted with little interest.

they organized for teaching, healing, and providing technical assistance were explicitly "undenominational"/nonsectarian and sought to serve the public at large.[5] (Nonetheless, these emissaries of northern civilization were called the "Gideonites" by skeptical white southerners.) Even today, the boards of the major secular nonprofits are overwhelmingly composed of members of liberal Protestant congregations, suggesting the possibility that many "secular" entities may in fact be distinctive expressions of liberal Protestant social engagement.[6]

Liberal Judaism displays its own distinctive variant of this model of social engagement. Because the Judaisms are non-denominational—or, at best, very loosely-coupled as denominations—"Jewish" hospitals, schools, and charities are, in fact, secular corporations whose religious character derives from the composition of their boards, their financial dependence on Jewish donors, and their commitment to serving the Jewish community (Elazar, Sarna & Monson, 1992).

Such forms of secular/nonsectarian social provision differ from those of theologically conservative groups—Christian and Jewish—in important ways and resemble them in others. Because of their congregational polities, for example, Southern Baptists and Ultra-Orthodox Jews do not sponsor social service activities as denominationally or congregationally, instead generally

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5 In contrast, Catholics, Orthodox Jews, Protestant fundamentalists, and other "high tension" congregations, proved not only especially receptive to the new system, but played key roles in winning political acceptance for it. Their doctrines had always stressed service to their own faith communities and had rejected the liberal Protestants' model of "undenominational" service. Other aspects of their active participation in the implementation of the new regime also had deep doctrinal roots. They had always defined charity as a spiritual act involving personal relationships between those who gave and those who received (which is why, in the nineteenth century, they had resisted the development of voluntary associations and, during and after the Civil War, the bureaucratic professionalism of the Sanitary Commission and Reconstruction)—a charitable mode especially suited to the thankless tasks of caring for clients, like the profoundly retarded, who could never be expected to be cured or educated. They had always favored "need-based" charitableness based on the suffering of the poor, dependent, and disabled, rather than the calculating economistic "worthiness-based" activities of the Charity Organization Societies and "scientific philanthropy." Though these anti-institutional doctrinal convictions and organizational preferences had isolated them from the institutional mainstream for more than a century (an isolation reflected in their absence from the governing boards of core community institutions), they peculiarly equipped them to be leaders in the emergence of the New Federalist polity (Gaylin, Glaser, & Rothman, 1979; Olasky, 1992).

6 In investigating religious affiliations of hospital trustees in major metropolitan areas, David Swartz found an astonishing imbalance in the composition of the boards of non-denominational institutions (Swartz, 1994). Of 154 trustees of secular hospitals, Swartz found that 75 (49%) were identifiable as members of Episcopal, Congregational, Presbyterian, Unitarian, or Lutheran churches, 5 (3%) were Catholic, and 12 (8%) were Jewish. Only 6 trustees (4%) were Baptists, Methodists, and members of other Protestant groups. Looking at a broader sample of 675 trustees, Swartz found that Baptists, Methodists, and Catholics were overwhelmingly more likely to sit on the boards of hospitals with denominational ties and that the boards of these institutions were unlikely to include trustees who were not members of their faith communities: of the 10 Baptists serving as hospital trustees, all served on the boards of Baptist hospitals; of the 27 Methodists, 22 served on the boards of Methodist hospitals; of the 93 Catholics, 83 served on the boards of Catholic hospitals (34). "It is noteworthy," Swartz writes, "that only the older more established Protestant denominations have significant board representation…Baptists who make up a broad and diverse base of Protestant representation in the United States are hardly more

working through secular corporations established by members of their respective faiths. Such groups, however, are notable for the intensity of their commitment to serving their own faith communities and to imbuing the services they provide with explicitly religious messages (Iannacone, 1989).[7] However, the theologically conservative megachurches do virtually all of their service provision in-house (Trueheart, 1996).

African-American religious groups pose their own unique analytical challenges. An important recent study of civic participation which focuses on the sources of civic competency (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1996), singles out African-American congregations as by far the most effective transmitters of civic values and skills. Other studies note their extraordinary activism as service providers (Stanfield, 1993; Williams, Griffith & Young, 1993; Chang, Williams, Griffith & Young, 1994; Hall-Russell, 1996). Studies of urban organizational population trends (Hall, 1996), however, show that the proliferation of Black inner city congregations has not produced a related growth in the population of nonprofits and voluntary associations. This suggests that African-Americans, many of them members of theologically conservative non-denominational bodies with traditional anti-institutional inclinations, may favor forms of civic participation that use non-organizational vehicles for mobilizing resources.

Varying Models of Public Engagement

Religious groups differ significantly in their preferred modes of public engagement. On the whole, American religious bodies have eschewed direct involvement in electoral politics, preferring instead to influence the public's

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represented than the small Unitarian faith tradition. Only one trustee [in a population of 1660] is identified from…rapidly growing religious movements such as the Assemblies of God" (14-15). Swartz also found that Jews served as trustees far above their representation in the general population, comprising nearly a fifth of the entire sample of 675 trustees.W. Lloyd Warner (Warner & Lunt, 1941) found similarly disproportionate involvement of liberal Protestants in the associational life of "Yankee City" (Newburyport, Massachusetts). The study found Catholics to be associationally active— but primarily through organizations tied closely to the formal structures of the church.

7 As a recent article on Hasidic and ultra-Orthodox communities suggests (Berger, 1997), the organizational orientation of these groups defies easy categorization. In some instances, large populations of these sects have moved to rural areas and, by force of numbers and high levels of political participation, taken over local civic institutions and turned them to religious purposes. This became a subject of controversy in a federal court suit between the board of education of the Hasidic New York village, Kiryas Joel, and regional school administrators (Board of Education of Kiryas Joel v. Board of Education of Morn-Wood bury Central School District, 1994) which resulted in an important decision on church-state relations by the U.S. Supreme Court. In the wake of the Kiryas Joel decision, some ultra-Orthodox groups have eschewed the use of public institutions and depended entirely on voluntary, privately-supported bodies to deliver educational and other services and, at the same time, denied the jurisdiction of civil authorities (such as zoning and building enforcement bodies) over their activities. This complete rejection of the conventional concept of the role of religion in a pluralistic civil society— rejection of the notion that religious organizations exist in society rather than being coextensive with it—poses analytical problems of particular interest in light of the broad movement to create various forms of private government in the United States (Saurian, 1992; Hall, 1993; McKenzie, 1994).

moral and perceptual agendas. As De Tocqueville put it, religion in America is *less powerful* because of its avoidance of strivings for political power, but its influence was *more lasting* because it confined its activism to domains where its authority was uncontested (De Tocqueville, 1835, II: 323).

To say this is not to suggest that organized religion has limited the range of instrumentalities of public influence that it has been willing to use. Nor should it be taken to suggest that its influence has been anything less than profound. Ultimately, legitimacy of policy regimes rests less on electoral vicissitudes than on deeply held beliefs about the men, women, and their place in the universe—the central concerns of religion. The importance of the major religious groups in shaping these beliefs cannot be underestimated. The perfectionist ethos that underlay the great reform movements of the nineteenth century and the progressive/liberal movements that produced the twentieth century welfare state came directly from the social teachings of antebellum liberal Protestantism. Although the fatalist and Manichean strands in American political life have been less visible, at least until recently, their influence has been neither less enduring nor less grounded in the beliefs and practices of particular religious groups.

Whether we seek to understand the complexity and diversity of faith-based service provision, variations in organizational structure and process, impacts on civic engagement, or intergroup preferences in modes of public engagement, we ultimately must be attentive both to the important differences between religious and secular entities, the importance of theology, doctrine, and practice, and the ways in which formalized tenets of belief are translated into collective behavior. Unlike secular organizations, for which maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness are likely to be primary sources of legitimacy, in faith-based organizations, form and function, decision making, and the arenas in which decisions are made—are inevitably filtered through theological lenses in which optimization of spiritual, rather than material, outcomes are likely to be paramount considerations.

We are only beginning to map out the variety of structures characteristic of faith communities or taken on the more challenging task of tracing the ways in which different theological orientations and ecclesiastical polities are linked to forms of service provision. Accomplishing this task is clearly necessary to any effort to systematically evaluate the contributions of religious and religiously tied organizations to the provision of charitable, cultural, educational, health, and human services.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to understanding the public role of religion in America has been our attachment to using the firm (or, in the case of religion, the congregation) as the basic unit for study. This perspective overlooks the extent to which all forms of religious entities are uniquely embedded in more encompassing ecclesiastical polity structures on the one hand and networks of community relationships on the other.

The Importance of Connection

Any genuinely useful analytical framework applied to religion must go beyond the conventional analysis of the firm. Using organizations and firms as units of analysis exaggerate entities' autonomy and ignore their *connectedness*—the extent to which they are components of larger systems (Milofsky, 1987). Religion in general and Christianity in particular are concerned with connectedness, both in its attention to the formation of communities of believers and in the connection of believers to God and to other people in their social, economic, and political relations. This suggests that the appropriate unit of analysis in examining religious institutions is not the organization (congregation, parish, denomination) but the *marke* or *organizational field* — the aggregate of "key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services. The virtue of this unit of analysis is that it directs our attention not simply to competing firms…or to networks or organizations that actually interact…but to the totality of relevant actors" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991).

This perspective offers the additional advantage of focusing attention on the cognitive dimensions of organizational life—the values and beliefs that constitute the core of religious life. Organizational fields involve not only interactional behavior and the configuration of interorganizational structures, but also the development of mutual awareness among participants in sets of organizations committed to common enterprises—awareness that profoundly shapes organizational structure and process.

So, What <u>Is</u> a Religious Organization?

Additional challenges are posed by the difficulty of defining "religious organizations" especially when their fields of primary activity involve the provision of services which are not intrinsically religious in character but which may, or may not be, an extension of a religious ministry (Jeavons, 1994). This difficulty is increased when, as in the contemporary context, activities defined as religious have expanded beyond traditional "pulpit ministries" to include a wide range of professional callings, including organization management and public administration. In many denominations, lay ministries are assuming increasing importance, and when the religious activities of faith communities are being carried out not only in traditional church settings, but through secular corporations (Wuthnow, 1986; Jeavons, 1993; Bender, 1995).

Churches, religious institutions, and faith communities have to varying extents always been engaged in service provision but, for a variety of reasons, the scale, scope, and character of service commitments have changed in recent decades. Some of these reasons are internal, as when Vatican II redirected many Catholic religious from contemplative and sacerdotal to social service activities; at the same time, declining membership in inner-city congregations has led many Catholic and mainline Protestant congregations to redefine their religious missions in terms of service provision. Some of these reasons are

external, as when, in the 1980s, conservative Protestants were mobilized as political activists and service providers, primarily in response to government efforts to regulate the activities of church-sponsored secular corporations.[8]

An important 1993 paper by Thomas Jeavons discusses and attempts to schematize the definitional dilemmas involving "religious organizations." What "defines an organization as 'religious,'" Jeavons writes, "is not self-evident in many cases." In searching for defining characteristics, Jeavons points out that the universe of organizations is not a bi-modal world, entities are exclusively one thing or another, strictly secular or strictly religious. Defining characteristics "help us see where a particular organization seems to belong in a spectrum that runs from those that are profoundly, perhaps even purely, religious to those that are very clearly, even absolutely, secular in nature and function"(8-9).

Jeavons goes on to single out four possible ways to identify organizations as religious: 1) that their primary purposes and activities are sacerdotal; 2) that they identify themselves as religious through their commitment to fields of work "typically and appropriately associated with religious endeavors"; 3) that their participants, resources, products or services, and decision-making processes are religious in nature; 4) that they participate in formal or informal networks of organizations in which religion plays a major part.

Churches and other organizations in which religious identity or commitment are a formal prerequisite for participation or employment pose fewer definitional dilemmas. But many organizations—social service and health agencies, for example—may eschew sacerdotal functions and self-identification and yet, by virtue of their financial support and volunteer base, products and services, and decision-making processes be defined as religious organizations. Jeavons points out that such organizations, because they serve as foci for shared religious and identity and commitment may encourage volunteers and donors to self-select on the basis of belief, even if belief is not a formal prerequisite for participation. In addition, religiosity is likely to determine the field of service in which a faith-based agency becomes engaged.

Finally, religiosity is likely to profoundly impact the configurations of "connectedness" between organizational actors, between agencies and their environments, and between "key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services"

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8 According to Godfrey Hodgson, the political mobilization of the religious right began in the late 1970s, when the IRS sought to deny tax-exemption to independent Christian schools (on grounds that they were racially segregated) and to fundamentalist colleges (because of religious and gender discrimination). These rulings shattered the Christian community's notion that Christians could isolate themselves inside their own institutions and teach what they pleased. The realization that they could not do so linked up with the long-held conservative view that government is too powerful and intrusive, and this linkage is what made evangelicals active (Hodgson, 177). Since the late 1970s, the Christian right has made an enormous commitment both to establishing nonprofit entities, but to using them for explicitly political purposes (e.g., the Christian Coalition).

that, taken together, act as powerful forces in shaping the ways in which societies define and carry out collective tasks.

Civil society is not an empty space: its nature and extent are determined by the human networks and collective activities of any given population at any given time. As the work of Robert Putnam has persuasively demonstrated, the configuration of civil society varies both within nations (as in the differences between northern and southern Italy) and over time within the same nation (as in the rise and decline of associational activity in the United States since the mid-nineteenth century) (1994; Putnam & Gamm, 1999).

The following examples are intended to explore: 1) the correlative relations between religious bodies and forms of collective action; 2) the role of religion in the production of civic skills and values; 3) the association between particular religious beliefs and forms of civic engagement. They are intended to be suggestive, not definitive—and they are offered in the hope of encouraging the exploration of the public role of religion using perspectives that grant as much credence to the influence of religious belief and practice as to the power of economic, social, and political factors.

Religion and Civil Society

W. Lloyd Warner's fine-grained study of "Yankee City" (Newburyport, Massachusetts), conducted in the 1930s, found significant connections between congregations and their members' patterns of associational participation (Warner & Lunt, 1941). Not only did religion appear to be a more powerful factor than economic or political loyalties in shaping the overall associational architecture of the community (324), but also the intensity of associational involvement. Warner took particular note of the differences between liberal Protestant congregations (Congregationalist, Unitarian, and Episcopalian), conservative Protestants (Baptists and Methodists), and the Roman Catholics.

The liberal Protestants were notable not only for the extensiveness of their associational ties, but also for their willingness to sponsor secular or ecumenical groups like the YMCA, Boy Scouts, and Campfire—organizations which served the whole community rather than their own members (328). "The Yankee City Second Church," Warner wrote,

> has surrounded itself with some twenty associations whose behavior consists largely of secular activities that cannot be included in the sacred programs to which the church restricts its behavior…One of these associations is the Second Men's Church Club. This group has virtually no connection with the sacred ritual of the Church but helps to integrate the Church with the larger society; and through the participation of its members in the club's activities, the Church is directly related to the larger community itself. At meetings of the Men's Club, a speaker, chosen from the

> community regardless of his religious affiliation, talks on some
> topic of current interest, and a discussion by members and their
> invited guests follows. At occasional meetings the members of the
> Second Church Ladies Aid Society prepare and serve supper to the
> Men's Club and take part in the recreational program that follows.
> The activities of such associations are almost unlimited in their
> variation" (302-3).

"The Second Church of Yankee City," he continued, "dominated a Boy Scout troop that drew a large proportion of its members from other churches and religions. The church membership was predominantly Yankee, but the Boy Scout troop was commonly known as the 'League of Nations' because of the great number and variety of ethnics among its members" (317).

Yankee City's liberal Protestant congregations tended, like the Second Church, to give rise to "primary associations around which satellite associations are clustered" (310). These primary associations, in turn, give rise to and "ultimately control[led] the behavior and policies of the secondary associations" to which they were linked (311).

In contrast, Yankee City's more conservative Protestant congregations (Methodists and Baptists) displayed in proportion to the size of their memberships the fewest formal (interorganizational) and informal (membership) ties to other associations in the community. On the formal level, they were not sponsors of youth and athletic groups or ecumenical bodies like the YMCA or the Interdenominational Council. On the membership level, their members were the least likely of all of Yankee City's residents to be members of voluntary associations.

Roman Catholics, Yankee City's second largest faith community, were associationally active—but primarily with and through organizations connected to the Catholic Church. Thus, for example, Warner found the Immaculate Conception Church was the parent structure to the Catholic Boys' Club directly connected with it; the latter had a once-removed satellite of the Immaculate Conception Church which was the C.B.C. Basketball League. This last organization was composed of six associations which were its satellites and were indirect satellites of the Immaculate Conception Church (321). In contrast, the liberal Protestant churches, through their ties to the YMCA had 238 satellite connections to a wide variety of associations including the Scouts, athletic associations, hobby groups, and fraternal and sororal organizations (322).

Overall, in examining the ties between religious faith and associations, Warner found that Protestants alone (by which he meant liberal Protestants) accounted for over a third of the city's 357 associations, while Catholics were tied to only 33 (11%). Protestant groups, moreover, were far more likely to include Catholics and Jews as members than the other way around (174 or nearly 40% of the city's associations—most of them connected to liberal Protestant congregations—had Catholic and Jewish members) (346).

Associations of this type included the Yankee City Women's Club, the Yankee City Country Club, the Rotary, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Boy Scout troops (348).

Aware that these findings might be artifacts of the liberal Protestants' historic domination of community life in Yankee City or of the tendency of the well-to-do to be liberal Protestants and associationally active, Warner examined the patterns of associational involvement by members of different socioeconomic groups in these congregations. The fact that their lower middle class members displayed nearly identical patterns of congregational and associational participation as their upper-upper adherents suggested that belief rather than class was the major factor shaping civic activism.

Because Warner was primarily interested in affiliational and correlational phenomena rather than causation, he gave little attention to specifically theological and doctrinal factors and the ways in which they may have influenced some religious groups to be more intensively engaged in community life than others. Had he been, he might have noted not only how deeply rooted in theology, religious practice, and history was the associational architecture which led liberal Protestants to express their beliefs through secular or nonsectarian voluntary associations, but also the reaffirmation and elaboration of those practices by the "social gospel" programs embraced by the liberal Protestants of that era.

The Legacy of Liberal Protestantism

Historical studies have shown extraordinary linkages between religious and organizational demography: regions settled by liberal Protestants showed a distinct preference for private corporations as vehicles of collective action (Hall, 1982; Bowen, Nygren, Turner, & Duffy, 1994; Wright, 1994). This was no accident: the use of voluntary associations was championed by Congregationalist evangelists like Lyman Beecher as means of social, political, and moral reform—and secular associations became the chief instrumentality for liberal Protestant influence in the United States, even in areas where they were in the minority (Smith, 1957; Foster, 1965; Hall, 1995). This preference for collective action through voluntary associations was doctrinally-grounded in New Divinity Edwardsian Calvinism and its successor, the "New Haven Theology" of Nathaniel W. Taylor, Leonard Bacon, and Beecher—in the secular domains of politics, society, and economic life (Hall, 1994).

This theological innovation, with its stress of voluntary associations as moral instruments, was controversial. Baptists and Methodists—whose anti-institutionalism had for many years led them to oppose such things as a settled and educated clergy—attacked the liberals' advocacy of voluntary associations with fierce vehemence. Francis Wayland, president of Brown University, a leading political economist, and the most prominent Baptist intellectual in the United States, wrote a widely circulated polemic against associations in 1838 (Wayland, 1838). William Ellery Channing, the leader of Boston Unitarianism

also wrote an influential attack on voluntary associations—though he later recanted his views and become one of the nation's leading proponents of voluntarism (Channing, 1829).

Although religious conservatives eventually accommodated the associational impulse, the institutions they founded tended to serve their own faith communities rather than the general public. This became a major point of contention during the Civil War, when the conservatives' United States Christian Commission and the liberals' United States Sanitary Commission, struggled to dominate military relief activities. The failure of Reconstruction, particularly the Freedmen's Bureau's effort to rebuild southern social and economic institutions, was in large part due to conflict between liberal and conservative religious groups over whether these activities should serve sectarian or non-sectarian purposes.

The social gospel, which came to be embraced by both liberals and conservatives, embodied these differences in theology and organizational preference. Conservatives viewed charity as an instrument of conversion and generally provided services through congregations and other religious entities. Liberals preferred to work through non-sectarian organizations or collaborative entities like the charity organization societies—which, while not unconcerned with moral issues, primarily sought efficiency and effectiveness in providing social and economic services. The kinds of social and ethnic inclusiveness Warner would find by the 1930s in the Second Church's "League of Nations" scout troop and in the readiness of the church's members to form and join inclusive religiously heterogeneous civic groups like the service clubs was very much a product of the liberal religious sensibility. As Jane Addams put it in describing the "subjective necessity for settlement houses," adherents of the liberal version of the social gospel sought to "socialize" democracy by making the spiritual and material benefits of middle class life available to all.[9]

As Conrad Cherry points out in his recent study of the evolution of American theological education, the social gospel was preeminently a middle class creed which called "for social reform while professing the inherent worth

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9 C. Luther Fry's article, "Changes in Religious Organizations," in *Recent Social Trends* (Report, 1933, 1009-1060) provides a striking account of the impact of the social gospel on the religious establishment. "At the beginning of the century," he wrote, "interest in the social implications of the Gospel was limited to a small group of social reformers and theological students" (1014). Within a decade, Episcopalians, Methodists, Northern Baptists, and Presbyterians had joined to formulate a "Social Creed of the Protestant Churches," which was adopted by the ecumenical body to which they all belonged, the Federal Council of Churches.

Fry failed to mention that the first impulse towards articulating the purposes of social ministry had originated with the efforts of Unitarians William Ellery Channing and Joseph Tuckerman to create a "ministry-lat-large" for Boston's poor in the 1820s (Channing, 1835/1900; McColgan). Institutionalizing training for these ministries in the curricula of theological schools had originated among the Congregationalists, when the Hartford Seminary appointed Graham Taylor as Professor of Practical Theology (Street, 1958, 21). Taylor later went on to join the faculty of the Chicago Theological Seminary and to found Chicago Commons, one of the pioneer social settlements. Conrad Cherry provides an excellent description of the influence of the social gospel on American theological education in *Hurrying Toward Zion: Universities, Divinity Schools, and American Protestantism* (1995, 185-212).

and rights of the individual, affirming the fundamental integrity of American democratic capitalism, and holding to the conviction that upward social and economic mobility is the birthright of every American" (Cherry, 1995, 188). The social gospellers, he continues, had boundless confidence in the power of education to "lead people to choose the larger good over private interests" and to "train reformers who would lead other to correct the gross inequalities of class" (188).

Such impulses, informed by a new "Christian sociology" resulting from the cross-fertilization of new formulations of social ethics and the emergent profession of social work, moved liberal Protestant churches and their clergy into positions of community leadership as partners in constructing the coalitions of government, business, and voluntary entities that progressive business statesmen like Herbert Hoover viewed as the building blocks of the "associative state" alternative to socialism (Hoover, 1922). Unlike the Catholics and some of the more conservative Protestant denominations, the liberals generally invested their energies in nonsectarian secular community institutions—hospitals, schools, and welfare agencies—rather than organizations that primarily served or sought to enlarge their own faith communities.

The dichotomy of liberal Protestantisms committed to inclusive nonsectarian civic institutions and the preference of Roman Catholic and conservative Protestant groups for more exclusive forms of civic participation has endured, despite dramatic changes in the social, economic, and political fortunes of their respective adherents. Studies of the giving practices of the latter show them far more likely to give to their own congregations and to causes identified with their own faith communities than for broader civic purposes (Hoge, et al., 1996; Iannacone, 1998). A recent investigation of the religious affiliations of nonprofit hospital board membership in major metropolitan areas in the period 1930-1990, found that liberal Protestants were far more likely to sit on the boards of secular institutions than conservatives or Catholics, even in communities (like Atlanta and Los Angeles) where liberal Protestants were distinctly in the minority (Swartz, 1998). On the other hand, boards dominated by liberal Protestants were far more likely to be religiously heterogeneous than those controlled by Catholics or conservative Protestants—which seldom included members of other faiths.[10] This persistent pattern would appear to confirm Warner's observation of half a century earlier, which attributed these differences in civic orientation to faith rather than fortune.

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10 In examining a sample of 154 secular hospital trustees in 1990, the study found that 75 (49%) were identifiable as members of Episcopal, Congregational, Presbyterian, Unitarian, or Lutheran churches, 5 (3%) were Catholic, and 12 (8%) were Jewish. Only 6 trustees (4%) were Baptists, Methodists, and members of other conservative Protestant groups. Looking at a broader sample of 675 trustees, the study found that Baptists, Methodists, and Catholics were overwhelmingly more likely to sit on the boards of hospitals with ties to their own denominations and that these were unlikely to include trustees who were not members of their faith communities: of the 10 Baptists serving as hospital trustees, all served on the boards of Baptist hospitals; of the 27 Methodists, 22 served on the boards of Methodist hospitals; of the 93 Catholics, 83 served on the boards of Catholic hospitals (34).

Provocative insight into the origins of these differences is offered by a recent investigation of civic skills and participation by political scientists Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady (1994). Based on a survey of 15,000 individuals and 2,500 in-depth interviews, this study not only found that religion—more than income or education, workplace or school—accounted for such non-political civic skills as willingness to attend and plan meetings, to write letters, and to make speeches or presentations, but also that there were significant differences between religious groups in their possession of these skills and motives. Episcopalians, the only liberal Protestant group singled out in the analysis, displayed consistently greater skills both on the job and in church; Baptists, ranked next to last in church skills and last in workplace skills; Catholics, ranked the lowest in church skills and next to last in workplace skills (325-27). The study attributed religion's extraordinary impact to the fact that religious preferences tended to cut across rather than to mimic socio-economic strata. More interestingly, its findings suggested strong linkages between the acquisition of civic skills (and the willingness to use them in community life) and religious groups whose beliefs and practices encouraged broad congregational participation in worship, governance, and fund-raising.

Although suggestive of the linkages between faith and civic orientation, the findings never really engage the extent to which the ability of groups to impart civic skills is rooted in the intrinsically religious domains of theology, doctrine, and practice. Liberal Protestant laity are involved in every aspect of the organizational lives of their churches. They serve as members of bodies which make and implement decisions about everything from such spiritual and devotional issues as the hiring of clergy, admission of members, outreach ministries, music, and vestments, through such concrete organizational matters as membership development, fundraising, and maintenance of physical plant. Members serve in quasi-clerical capacities (as deacons and liturgical assistants), as lectors (who read portions of divine service), as Sunday school teachers, and in administrative capacities. Even in the Episcopal Church, where important formal spiritual responsibilities are conceded to middle judicatories (dioceses) and the national denominational body, the day-to-day business of parishes is almost completely conducted by laity. Although laity have come to play increasingly important roles in the Roman Catholic Church since Vatican II, decision making on doctrine, personnel, finance, and other central issues still remains almost entirely in the hands of clergy and diocesan bodies.

The allocation of authority between supra-congregational bodies, clergy, and laity is shaped by theology, doctrine, and practice. Though inevitably sensitive to the real world pressures of financial resources and demographics, *who* participates in decision making, *how* decisions are made, and the ways in which decisions are legitimated are necessarily shaped by religious, not secular criteria. Unlike secular nonprofit entities, religious bodies are not free to reshape their missions and methods in response to market pressures. This does not

mean that religious bodies are less amenable to change than secular ones, but, rather, that the mechanisms of change are far more likely to be grounded in values and history. The powerful influence of theology, doctrine, and practice extends beyond the internal concerns and activities of religious bodies to the ways in which they position themselves and their members in public life. The lack of civic skills that Verba and his associates found in certain religious groups do not involve organizational incapacity but, as studies of conservative Protestant congregations suggest, theologically mediated preferences for *different kinds* of capacity.

African-American Religion: An Alternative Model of Civil Religion?

If Verba, Schlozman & Brady were surprised by the strong linkage of religion and civic competence, they were even more amazed by what they found regarding the combined impact of race and religion. Churches attended by African-Americans, regardless of denomination, they found,

> have special potential for stimulating political participation. First, they belong to churches whose internal structure nurtures opportunities to exercise politically relevant skills. This process need not derive from activities that are intrinsically political. Running a rummage sale to benefit the church day care center or editing a church newsletter provides opportunities for the development of skills relevant to politics even though the enterprise in question is expressly non-political. In addition, African-Americans also seem to belong to more *politicized* churches where they are exposed to political stimuli, requests for political participation, and messages form the pulpit about political matters (383-4).

The validity of these observations is confirmed by my own research on religion and associational life in contemporary New Haven, Connecticut. 1996 data on New Haven's tax-exempt organizations offers some provocative insights into this issue. Of the 310 charitable tax-exempt entities in the 06511 zip code area, which includes the predominantly black Newhallville and Dixwell neighborhoods, 48 are identifiably African-American organizations (identified as such either by their names, locations, or histories). Of these, 30 are secular non-political organizations and 18 are congregations or religious organizations. Of the 30 secular non-political organizations, 9 are quasi-governmental entities, organizations (such as tenants' councils) formed either to influence government action or (as in the case of Head Start and community development corporations), created to carry out government policies.

The clustering of public agencies, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations in and around the Dixwell Plaza—an effort by city planners and foundations to create a community center for the city's oldest Black neighborhood—expresses the close relationships between religion, politics, and government. In 1996, the area contained the following public, nonprofit, and religious agencies:

Dixwell Avenue (East side, between Sperry and Admiral Streets:
Elm Haven Houses (public housing)
Isadore Wexler School (public school)
Dixwell Avenue United Church of Christ
Dixwell Community House
Dixwell Children's Creative Art Center (church-run nonprofit)
Dixwell Pre-School & Day Care Center (church-run nonprofit)
Hannah Gray Home (nonprofit eldercare facility)
Dixwell Avenue (West side, Bristol to Charles Street):
United House of Prayer for All People
St. Martin de Porres Roman Catholic Church
East Rock Lodge, Improved Benevolent Order of Elks
Greater New Haven Business & Professionals Association
New Haven Free Library-Stetson Branch
Christ Chapel New Testament Church
Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven
New Haven Board of Education/Head Start Center
Dixwell Neighborhood Corporation
Youth Business Enterprises
Community Children & Family Services
Connecticut Outreach Center
Young Ministers' Alliance
Varick African American Methodist Episcopal Church
Varick Family Life Center
VWA Drop-in Center/National AIDS Brigade
Sperry Street, Dixwell to Goffe
St. Martin de Porres Roman Catholic Church
Little Rock Church of Christ's Disciples
Mount Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
Fire House
Goffe Street, Sperry to Broadway
Agape Christian Center
St. Mary's United Free Will Baptist Church

This impressive cluster was not created by accident. It was very much the intention of the city's leaders and the foundations and federal agencies that lavishly funded their activities both to create new public spaces and to forge partnerships between community and municipal agencies. The prominence of churches as anchors for the effort—particularly Dixwell Avenue UCC, whose ultra-modern edifice is part of the integrated complex which includes public housing, a public school, and a nonprofit (but publicly-funded) community center housing an assortment of daycare, arts education, and recreation activities and services—testifies to the essentially political orientation (and effectiveness) of the city's African-American congregations. These findings are consistent with Verba,

Schlozman, and Brady's conclusions about the capacities of African-American churches to generate political skills and stimulate political participation.

As notable as the close organizational and locational relationships between governmental and religious agencies in New Haven's black community is the extraordinarily small number of identifiably African-American nonprofit organizations relative to their representation in the city's human population. Although blacks comprise 48.1% of the population in the 06511 zip code area, barely 16% of the nonprofits in the area are identifiably black community organizations, suggesting that associations are *not* a major vehicle of collective action for the city's African-Americans. Moreover, they suggest that New Haven's African-Americans, overwhelmingly members of doctrinally-conservative congregations, have been impressively responsive to their churches' teachings and have, in consequence, directed their voluntary energies into political and congregational domains—while generally avoiding spheres of non-political voluntarism. This might explain why the impressive growth in the number of African-American congregations over the past half-century has not been matched by a comparable proliferation of community-based voluntary organizations.

The influence of religious rather than racial factors on the organizational profile of New Haven contemporary black community is suggested by its striking contrast with the associational life of the city's black population before the second World War. Comprising only 4% of New Haven's population in 1940, the city's black community sustained 11 religious congregations (including 2 Baptist, 2 Methodist, 1 Congregational, 1 Episcopal, and 5 non-denominational bodies) and an impressive range of secular associations, including 6 Masonic and 2 Odd Fellows, and 1 Elks lodges, 2 independent social clubs, and 1 political association, and an old folks home (the Hannah Gray Home)—amounting to 4% of the city's population of non-proprietary entities.[11] According to Robert Austin Warner, the pre-war churches anchored networks of secular associations in a manner identical to that found by the Yankee City researchers. The Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church (one of the oldest black churches in the United States) not only contained men's and women's clubs, but sponsored Boy Scout and Camp Fire troops, a junior rifle corps, two drum corps, a dramatic association, a "Community Service Circle," a "Nurses and Mother's Baby Conference," and a loan library. In the mid-1920s, the congregation took the lead in organizing a social settlement, Dixwell Community House, that became a major target for philanthropic support from the white elite (Warner, 1940, 281-82).

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11 My tabulation of black organizations, based on listings in the 1940 city directory, may under-represent the actual population of black clubs and associations—for Robert Austin Warner's *New Haven's Negroes* (1940) lists a number of entities that the Price, Lee & Company enumerators seem to have missed. The Price, Lee city directories, because they were published in New Haven, were unusually accurate in listing white organizations.

By contrast, in 1996, while blacks comprised 36% of the city's population and black congregations comprised nearly a third of New Haven's congregations, identifiably black organizations comprised less than 5% of the city's population of secular nonprofits (Hall, 1999a). Given the rich associational life of earlier decades, the difference was not race or even economic resources [as Bailey wrote of the black population in the Nineteenth Ward in 1913, virtually all lived below "the safe line of economic independence" (13)], but preferences for forms of collective action that were closely correlated with religious affiliation.

Between 1940 and 1996, New Haven's black population not only grew impressively in size, it changed dramatically in composition. The pre-war black population was mostly native stock, largely descendants of an Afro-Caribs who had lived in the city since the early eighteenth century, supplemented by free blacks who had settled in the city after the Civil War (Bailey, 1913; Warner, 1940).[12] During and after the war, New Haven experienced a massive migration of southern blacks, primarily from the states of North and South Carolina, attracted by opportunities in the city's booming arms industry. The religious preferences of these migrants mirrored the religious demography of their home states: they were overwhelmingly Baptists or Methodists, although the congregations which they established in New Haven were unlikely to be affiliated with any of the national denominational bodies of these faith families—and this preference for membership in non-denominational congregations would grow over time until, by the 1990s, fully a third of New Haven's congregations would be free-standing faith communities.

The American South generally—and the Carolinas in particular—have been less than friendly to collective action through voluntary and nonprofit associations, preferring instead to provide services, when they were provided at all, through government agencies. In the 1780s, South Carolina statesman Aedanus Burke led opposition to the Society of the Cincinnati—one of the nation's first national voluntary associations (Burke, 1784). In the 1790s, their legislatures annulled the Elizabethan Statute of Charitable Uses and supported Virginian Thomas Jefferson's efforts to limit the powers of charitable corporations (Zollman, 1924, 49). This legacy of hostility to civil privatism endured into the present: the East South Central states (including the Carolinas) had the fewest nonprofits per capita in the United States and among the lowest levels of charitable giving (Hodgkinson, et al., 1992; Wolpert, 1993, 46-49; Bowen, et al., 1994, 26-27). It appears that black migrants to New Haven carried with them as part of the same cultural legacy that led them to establish theologically-conservative congregations, a preference for civic

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12 William Bailey's study of Negroes in New Haven's Ninth Ward found that 40% were born in northern states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), with the rest born in the South, primarily in the Carolinas (23%) and Virginia (19%) (Bailey, 1913, 7).

engagement through politics and government over civic engagement through voluntary associations and nonprofit organizations.

This preference is not, it appears, peculiar to New Haven's African-Americans. Sociologist John Stanfield, in writing on traditions of civic responsibility in the black community, suggests that understanding them requires that we

> revise our thinking about civic responsibility. Sociological studies of civic responsibility in particular and of philanthropy in general explore the ways in which such processes, such as socialization and social change, and structures, such as institutions and communities, influence human propensities to engage in civil stewardship. Conventional philanthropic studies with sociological foci tend to be grounded in structural-functional notions of social organization (institutions, communities, task organizations, social movements, societies), social processes (socialization), and stratification (class, gender, race). This grounding has encouraged a monocultural perspective in sociological philanthropic studies…[which] interprets American society as a mode of social organization with one value system, a system in which conflict is dysfunctional. Social and cultural diversity in monocultural social systems is presented either as a temporary antecedent to total assimilation or as pathological (Stanfield, 1993, 140).

Giving and volunteering, Stanfield points out, have different cultural meanings in different settings (on this, see also Hall-Russell, 1996). If so, the high levels of civic competency found by Verba and his associates in studying African-Americans suggest that associational activity may not be the best measure of community vitality. Finally, it is worth noting the extraordinary number of African-American congregations that have applied for and received charitable tax-exempt status. Given the fact that churches are not normally required to register for tax-exemption—and very few do—one is naturally inclined to ask why these entities should voluntarily assume the onerous burdens of record-keeping and public reporting that exempt status entails.

The answer appears to lie in the increasing importance of churches in general—and African-American churches in particular—in human services provision. Successful pursuit of government contracts, as well as successful grant seeking and fund raising from private agencies and donors, requires organizational and procedural formalities—particularly registration as a charitable tax-exempt entity and reasonably sophisticated financial information systems—in order to satisfy the monitoring, financial accountability, and oversight of funding agencies. Interestingly, these churches incorporated and registered as tax-exempts during the late 1960s and early 1970, when the federal government and private foundations were making major investments in grassroots/community-based organizations under the banner of the Great Society.

Curiously, when asked about their role in social service provision in the late 1980s, most congregations not only reported a remarkable range of programs and services including education, substance abuse, child abuse, parenting, domestic violence, job training/unemployment, adoption/foster care, homeless shelters, soup kitchens, youth programs, elderly programs, long-term illnesses, AIDS, food and clothing distribution, counseling, spiritual outreach, day care, recreation, social and political activism, finances, and various volunteer programs—but claimed that their programs were entirely financed by church funds, with no external forms of support (Chang, Williams, Griffith & Young, 1994, 93). However, researchers found that rather than actually maintaining these extensive programs, congregations and clergy were more likely to serve as points of access and referral for public and private agencies offering health, human services, and other forms of assistance.

In the wake of welfare reform, however, this networking role appears to be in the process of being replaced by a greater role in direct service provision. As indicated, older more established black congregations—Dixwell UCC and Varick AME—had been actively involved in large-scale public-private partnerships since the 1960s. Since the mid-1990s, non-denominational congregations appear to be playing increasingly important roles, both as service providers under government contract and as brokers of public and private community and economic development funds. With the legal obstacles to direct government subsidy of faith-based activity largely removed, this role seems likely to grow steadily—along with the increasing importance of black elected officials in the city's political life.

Towards New Paradigms After 1970: Deinstitutionalization, Devolution, and Faith-Based Service Provision

The civil privatism of Yankee City and the public sector activism of black New Haven represent what might be considered "traditional" paradigms of the role of religion in public life that, very likely, could be found almost anywhere in the United States before 1970. While granting organized religion an important role as a source of civic skills and values, the role of religion in the provision of essential cultural, educational, health care, and human services is assumed to be limited. Religious bodies *might* provide services to their own members and to the general public, but, because of legal constraints on direct government support of religious institutions stemming from the courts' interpretations of the Establishment Clause, these were likely to be adjuncts to services provided by secular nonprofit and government agencies.

Since the 1970s, new configurations of faith-based civic engagement and service provision have begun to emerge, driven by convergent changes in religious doctrine and practice, in public policy, and in political alignment. While these have assumed greater visibility since the "Republican Revolution" of 1994 and the sweeping programs of welfare reform adopted by Congress and state legislatures which have removed many of the barriers to public subsidies

to religious bodies and faith-based service providers, the basic elements of devolution and privatization began to develop decades earlier.

Although the efforts of Dorothea Dix and other nineteenth century reformers to create public institutions for the mentally disabled were considered triumphs of humanitarianism, by the mid-twentieth century these institutions were increasingly likely to be venues for abuse and neglect. As early as the 1950s, families of inmates and advocates for the retarded had litigated to improve conditions, but found the courts generally unwilling to intervene in these areas. That changed in the late 1960s, when ideas developed in civil rights litigation began to influence the way judges viewed the treatment of the disabled. Beginning with a successful suit against the state of Alabama in 1969, a wave of litigation swept through the states challenging not only conditions in the hospitals and training schools for mentally disabled, but also the very idea of institutionalization itself.

In 1975, after rejecting as inadequate the efforts of state agencies to improve the conditions under which the mentally disabled were housed, the courts ordered the State of New York to remove inmates from institutions and to "normalize" them through treatment and care in appropriate community settings. The state initially assumed that traditional voluntary agencies, particularly the large faith-based charities with whom they had for decades dealt in contracting for such services as foster care, would be willing to take up the task. But they found much greater enthusiasm among less traditional groups, particularly among minority social services organizations spawned by the War on Poverty (many of which were religiously-tied), among members of Catholic religious orders newly empowered by Vatican II, and among the state's growing Orthodox Jewish communities (Rothman & Rothman, 1984, 45-64). By the mid-1980s, the lion's share of group home care for the mentally disabled would be provided by such groups—which received virtually all of their financial support from grants and contracts with federal, state, and local government agencies (Gronbjerg, 1993). By the 1990s, many of these service providers would expand as large franchiseform agencies operating facilities throughout the country.

The Catholic Contrast

The involvement of Catholics individually and institutionally in this process illustrates both the complexity of emerging interorganizational relationships in contracting regimes and the influence of theological and ecclesial factors in shaping the faith-based service provision. As noted, although the established Catholic charities historically resisted involvement in the effort to create alternatives institutional care for the mentally disabled, clergy and religious sympathetic to the Second Vatican Council's reforms saw the challenge as an unparalleled opportunity to renew their missions and to embrace "the Christ of a poor and hungry people" by taking their faith into the world through lives of service in non-religious settings (Rothman & Rothman, 1984,

161). Enthusiasm for the possibilities for combining faith and careers was not restricted to the clergy or members of religious orders. As word of New York State's efforts to create a system of alternative, community-based treatment and care spread, young professionals working in special education, particularly Catholics, applied for positions. Perhaps in an earlier day, some of those who had been raised in blue-collar families and attended parochial schools might have joined a religious order. Although such a choice seemed out of the question in the 1970s, a career linked to doing good was not. They all had read Dorothy Day, admired her sense of social justice and shared her political sympathies…Day inspired a significant Catholic-left movement, which to those in retardation meant organizing alternatives to institutions (Rothman & Rothman, 1984, 175).

> The church's renewal of its social mission and its efforts to direct the commitment of the clergy, members of religious orders, and communicants into the world, dovetailed in the United States with changes in government policy toward the disadvantaged. The introduction of federal health insurance for the poor substituted an entitlement for charity and insisted upon a professionalization of benevolence. Medicaid policies governing hospital reimbursement required that staff possess diplomas (dedication was not enough), and accordingly, Catholic hospitals have to send their sister nurses and sister social workers to graduate schools. Then, just when Vatican II was urging members of the orders to pursue justice in the secular world, Medicaid was compelling them to be trained in the secular world, a combination that broke down the insularity of the convent (Rothman & Rothman, 1984, 161-62).

Shifts in doctrine and religious practice, in other words, converged with shifts in public policy favoring devolution of service delivery to states and localities, privatization of formerly public services, and trends in organized charity promoting entrepreneurialism and managerial professionalization.

Taken together, the church's doctrinal and administrative reforms, shifts in the policies of public and private institutions, and the increasing desire of young people to link careerism and idealism, amounted to a redefinition of the idea of ministry, which came to expand far beyond its traditional sacramental, ecclesiastical, and administrative confines. On the one hand, clergy and religious were increasingly likely to be doing their religious work in lay roles—teaching, operating group homes, working with the poor and dependent. On the other hand, committed laity were coming to view their own work in these settings as a form of ministry and as an important part of their effort to achieve "spiritual citizenship" within the church.

The extent to which these changed blurred conventional understandings of the organizational dimensions of religious life and the religiosity of organizations is suggested by the activities of priests like John Sabatos, who played a

key role in designing and implementing the political strategies which made the Catholics major operators of group homes in New York State. Sabatos, who had done extensive community organizing as a parish priest, was hired by the state and put in charge of community placement of deinstitutionalized retarded clients in the borough of Brooklyn. Although he had left the parochial priesthood, the Rothmans note, Sabatos had not left the church:

> he continued to do as a layman pretty much what he had done as a priest—that is, practice social work with the handicapped, now at the Brooklyn Developmental Center. His personal ties to the church hierarchy remained close, a fact of critical consequence when he took over the community placement program. Sabatos knew [Brooklyn] block by block, ethnic group by ethnic group, clergyman by clergyman, politician by politician .... And all this knowledge came into play in locating group home sites. Between 1976 and 1981, Sabatos oversaw the opening of fifty residences. He worked especially effectively with the Catholic Church, a ready ally. The Brooklyn diocese has a deeper commitment to retarded persons than other dioceses; it also had available a large number of empty convents suitablefor housing the retarded, and a network of bishops, priests, and agency directorsready to gather community support (Rothman & Rothman, 1984, 192).

Significantly, when efforts to locate a group home were opposed, Sabatos's defense was grounded not in secular terms, but religious ones that specifically framed social service delivery as a religious activity. "To bring those that are less fortunate under the [Church's] auspices…is the work of the Church," Sabatos would argue. "Rather than leaving a building vacant, to do it in this manner is only to intensify the presence of the Church and its theological commitment to the works of charity to all, regardless of their station in life. So we do not view that causing the area to go down the drain, but rather as a reaffirmation of the mission of the Catholic Church" (193).

Was Sabatos acting in a secular capacity? Were the group homes he created secular or faith-based entities? In a formal sense, they were secular—much as Sabatos himself was acting in a lay capacity. But as his own understanding of his activities suggest, he viewed himself—and the church—as extending, not abandoning their faith commitments.

New York led the nation in creating community-based care and treatment for the dependent and disabled. Its system of nonprofit group homes—many of them faith-based—supported by variable mixes of federal, state, and local funding, in many cases combined with traditional sources of private revenues (foundation grants and individual and corporate donations), would become a paradigm for the reorganization of social services throughout the country (Smith & Lipsky, 1993; Gronbjerg, 1993; Hall, 1995). Because it anticipated developments elsewhere, the New York model also provides precedents for the kinds

of dilemmas—in law, policy, and religion—likely to crop up as the system is emulated in other states.

The long-running litigation involving the ultra-Orthodox village of Kiryas Joel is a good example of the kind of definitional conundrum we are likely to see. As noted, ultra-Orthodox Jewish groups came to play a major role in the rise of New York's group home industry. Typically organized by devout women who shared an ardent opposition to abortion (and often had large families of their own) and were distressed at the prospect of Jewish children, retarded or not, living in Christian group homes, these entities leased residences in their own neighborhoods and took in Jewish children from Willowbrook and other state institutions. State officials conceded the necessity of contracting with religious groups because they knew that, if sectarian groups were not allowed first to care for their own, state institutions would never be emptied (Rothman & Rothman, 1984, 171).

Such concessions to necessity inevitably produced unintended consequences: when the ultra-Orthodox Satmar Hasidim, rejecting conventional notions of pluralism, petitioned the New York legislature to create the Village of Kiryas Joel within Monroe Township and to draw its boundaries to ensure that its inhabitants were exclusively members of their sect. Although the Satmar retained the usual mechanisms of municipal government, they educated their children in private religious schools for which they sought no public support. However, when their school district asked the township to provide special education services for its disabled children, citing "the panic, fear and trauma [the children] suffered in leaving their own community and being with people whose ways were so different," the town declined to do so—and the village sued, claiming religious discrimination.

As the justices noted when the dispute finally reached the United States Supreme Court in 1994, the case did not involve the usual question of government support for a private religious body such as a congregation or a parochial school, but, rather, funding for a municipal entity that would have been eligible had it not been for the special circumstances of Kiryas Joel's establishment. Observing that the New York legislature had authorized incorporation of the village with full knowledge that its boundaries were drawn for the purpose of creating a religious enclave, the court criticized the legislature for having "delegated civic authority on the basis of religious belief" rather than on the neutral principles which normally guided districting practices in the state (Board of Education v. Grumet, et al., 1994). Although Justice Kennedy confidently stated in his concurring opinion that "there is more than a fine line between the voluntary association that leads to a political community comprised of people who share a common religious faith, and the forced separation that occurs when the government draws explicit political boundaries on the basis of peoples' faith," in fact the case raised the possibility of future cases that the court might find less easy to decide. In this instance, the court could rule against the

Hasidim on the basis of the peculiar circumstances under which the village's boundaries had been drawn. But what if a similar case arose involving municipal institutions established under the usual "neutral principles," but which had come under the control of a religious group by virtue of their numerical predominance? In such an instance, the line between municipal and religious body would be far more difficult to draw—much as the boundaries between religious and secular corporations was becoming blurred by the growth of contracting regimes.

In addition to blurring the boundaries between church and state, the involvement of faith-based groups at the forefront of community-based service provision may impair religion's traditional role as a producer of civic values. From the beginning, litigation has been one of the primary techniques used by group home advocates to advance their cause. Initially used against state institutions to establish the right of the disabled to treatment and care, for the past decade it has increasingly focused on silencing individuals and citizens' groups (NIMBYS) who opposed the establishment of group homes. The litigation technique most favored by group home advocates is the SLAPP suit (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation), a strategy pioneered by developers to fight suits brought by environmentalists (Sills, 1993).[13] In 1989, Congress greatly enhanced the ability of group home advocates to pursue SLAPP suits through a set of amendments to the Fair Housing Act that enabled individuals or groups to bring discrimination complaints to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for investigation (Rich, 1991). If found valid, the complaints were forwarded to the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice for further action. Because HUD decided to interpret the anti-discrimination provisions of the Fair Housing Act as superseding the free speech and citizen petition provisions of the First Amendment, any individual or group opposing or criticizing a proposed group home—even in private conversation—risked being enmeshed in litigation that, subsidized by the limitless resources of the federal government, could drag on for years (Freedman, 1994; Hall, 1996; Hall, 1999b). Municipalities became liable to such suits if individuals attending public meetings made comments that could be construed as discriminatory. Group home advocates also became expert in manipulating press reports to depict opponents of group homes as bigots or worse.

Churches and clergy tended to take positions in these cases, invariably sid-

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13 A SLAPP suit is defined as "a civil complaint or counterclaim (for monetary damages and/or injunction),…filed against non-governmental individuals and/or groups,…because of their communications to a government body, official, or the electorate…on an issue of some public interest or concern." Although the acronym was initially used only with reference to private individuals, it has since been extended to describe similar frivolous suits against public officals. It is important to stress that not every suit filed by a developer against a citizen or a public official is a SLAPP suit. A SLAPP suit is a meritless action filed by a plaintiff whose primary goal is not to win the case but rather to silence or intimidate citizens or public officials who have participated in proceedings regarding public policy or public decision making.

ing with group home developers. In a Connecticut case of the period, for example, the rector of an Episcopal congregation with close ties to the operators of a group home, charged in the *New York Times* that neighborhoods opposed the home because they didn't want to see "a bunch of dark-skinned children running around" (Yarrow, 1992). He rallied his congregation to build a fence around the group home to "protect the children" from allegedly hostile residents (most of them senior Yale faculty, many of whom had distinguished themselves as supporters of the civil rights movement and who could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be regarded as hostile to the rights of the disabled). The effect of the 3 year litigation was summarized by one neighborhood resident:

> It financially ruined the neighborhood association and terrified residents. HUD investigators pressured neighbors to turn informer. Residents were afraid to join the association or to speak out at public meetings. The government even tried to deprive us of legal representation by threatening to call our attorney as a witness.... We couldn't take minutes at meetings of our board because these could be seized and used as evidence.... We tried to settle the case, but the terms of the consent decree drafted by the government were intolerable. They would have required residents to undergo an enforced course of political re-education and proposed unconstitutional restraints on our right to speak, write, and associate (Mahony, 1995).

Religious involvement with this kind of activism, which arrays quasi-governmental often faith-based nonprofit service providers against traditional voluntary associations, necessarily raises questions about the kinds of strains that doing government's business may place on their faith commitments.

Welfare Reform: Déjà Vu All Over Again?

The initiatives of the 1980s and 90s are only the most recent of a succession of efforts by Americans to "reform" welfare. In the early nineteenth century, newly disestablished Protestant churches sought to regain public influence by advocating for a variety of dependent and disabled groups—the urban poor, the deaf and dumb, the blind, and the mentally ill. The second wave came after the Civil War, when "liberal" Protestants, enthused about the possiblities of "scientific philanthropy," sought to reconstruct approaches to poor relief using the new instrumentalities of bureaucracy, expertise, and social engineering. Battling the use of poor relief as a mechanism of political patronage and locked in battle with the "sentimental philanthropy" of the Catholics (sentimental because it was based on a desire to relieve suffering, not a desire to reform society), the charities reformers rationalized a system of mixed public/private provision managed by university-trained social workers and public administrators.

The issues of contracting, privatization, and service provision by faith-based—or as they called them, sectarian—agencies was a central feature of the late nineteenth century welfare reform debate. Then as now lines

between secular and religious organizations were indistinct. While religious bodies became increasingly active in providing social, health, and educational services after the middle of the nineteenth century, these services were seldom (except in the case of the Roman Catholics) provided through religious corporations. Rather, religious groups created secular corporations which—depending on their polities and politics—operated with varying degrees of closeness to sponsoring religious bodies.

The roots of this practice of separating devotional and social ministry activities within religious communities were both doctrinal and pragmatic. In the first half of the nineteenth century, as noted, disestablishment had led the forebears of today's mainline Protestants to redefine the role of religion in public life. Rather than acting politically as institutions, they focused their energies on imparting civic values and skills to the faithful, empowering them to be moral actors as citizens, employers, and consumers.

The preference for secular corporations as vehicles for faith-based service provision also had a distinctly pragmatic motivation: secular status made these institutions eligible for government support—which, depending on the state, could be considerable. A 1910 federal census of "benevolent institutions" showed that between 8 and 66% of private agencies in 45 of 48 states accepted government appropriations. Social welfare expert Amos Warner took note of this situation in his 1894 study, *American Charities*. "There is a clear-cut distinction between public and private charities," Warner observed, "but none between sectarian and non-sectarian charities."

Arguments for and against contracting with faith-based agencies were strikingly similar to those offered today. "First and foremost in the minds of 'practical' people is the matter of economy," Warner noted—and in states like New York, Maryland, California, Pennsylvania, and Kansas, where more than half of the private benevolent institutions accepted government support, legislators evidently believed that contracting out was cheaper than establishing public agencies. Proponents also argued that

> private institutions, especially those for dependent and delinquent children, have a better effect upon the inmates than can public institutions. For one thing, dogmatic religious instruction can be given. For another, the spirit of self-sacrifice that pervades a private institution has a good effect upon the inmates, and is contrasted with the cold and officialized administration of the public institutions. Connected with this, as also with the matter of economy, is the fact that boards of trustees and of lady managers and visitors give freely of their time and energy and sympathy in aid of private undertakings (343).

As a charities reformer, Warner worried about government support of private agencies. He warned that contracting would inevitably advantage sectari-

an providers, especially the Catholics. "In almost every branch of philanthropic work," he wrote,

> Roman Catholic institutions can underbid competitors because…of the great organizations of teachers and nurses and administrators whose gratuitous services they can command; and if the State is to sublet its relief on the contract system, it is hard to see why those who can bid low should not get the contracts (342).

He worried that private institutions, which kept "their inmates busy at remunerative employment" competed unfairly with for-profit businesses. He suggested that the projected economies of contracting might be fleeting when private agencies were

> willing to make a very low bid, to make great temporary sacrifices, in order to get the subsidy system introduced—in order to establish connections between itself and the public treasury. "At first," said a United States senator, speaking of the charities of the District of Columbia, "they thrust in only the nose of the camel." (343)

Warner cast doubt on arguments that contracting would free service provision from "the blight of partisan politics and the spoils system." While granting the "miserable political jobbery connected with so many almshouses and insane asylums and other public charitable institutions" (343), he pointed out that contracting was not less prone to political manipulation.

There was no definitive outcome to the turn of the century welfare reform debate because, ultimately, human services provision remained a state and local responsibility—except in the case of selected groups like veterans—until the Great Depression. In states like New York, where the practice of contracting with religious groups was well-developed, the practice continued. While religious providers remained important, the major change in the system involved a distinct secularization of decision making. The charity organization societies that had spearheaded welfare reform had been top-heavy with Protestant clergy. By the 1920s, community chests and council of social agencies, organized and led by leading businesssmen, had displaced the clergy from leadership in social welfare. The field of social work, which had begun as a form of social ministry, became increasingly secular in emphasis as the new disciplines of sociology and social psychology displaced social ethics and "practical philanthropy" as intellectual foundations.

The increased federal role after 1932, while it increased the resources available to states and localities and supplemented their efforts with federal programs like the CCC and the WPA, did not fundamentaly alter the decentralized character of the system or significantly decrease the role of religious groups in service provision. Major changes only became evident with the dramatic expansion of federal social welfare responsibilities after the Second World War. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the new American welfare state was not based on large centralized bureaucracies. Service provision remained

overwhelmingly in the hands of states, localities, and private sector actors. What did change was an enormous enhancement of the federal role in setting social welfare policy and in making resources available to states, localities, and private agencies for their implementation.

The impact of these changes in policy and practice are evident in the fact that the number of civilian federal employees has grown only slightly, from 2.4 to 2.8 million since 1946, while the number of state and local government employees has grown from 3.5 to 14.7 million (US Department of Commerce, 1975, 1985, 2001). At the same time, the number of private nonprofit organizations—including religious bodies—grew enormously: In 1946, nonprofit organizations registered with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) numbered 80,250—17,450 of which were charitable entities. By 1996, a total of 1,188,510 nonprofits of all types were registered with the IRS—573,265 (48%) of them charitables. Over the fifty-year period, the total number of nonprofits increased fifteenfold—and the number of charitables thirty-three fold (Hall and Burke, in press)![14]

While religious bodies and faith-based organizations have remained important components of the welfare system, their role changed. Before the Second World War, because the social gospel was embraced across the religious spectrum, faith-based groups of every kind were far more likely to be engaged in social service programs, with or without public subsidy, than they would be in the decades following the war. In the 1950s and 60s, the decline of the social gospel, combined with the surburbanization of mainline Protestantism, left the task of service provision to primarily Catholic and African-American Protestant inner city churches.[15] These congregations and

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14 Federal civilian employment actually peaked in 1992 at 3.1 million—after twelve years of Republican control of the White House. Even so, this is a modest increase compared to the growth of state and local payrolls in the same period.

15 The "portability" of congregations varied according to theology and polity. Gathered Protestant and Jewish congregations followed their members. Catholic congregations, embedded in a parish system that was essential geographical in nature, could not move. On this, see Gerald Gamm's work in Chapter Three.

The decline of the social gospel is a complicated story. As early as the 1930s, it came under attack from formally sympathetic theologians like Reihold Niebuhr for its lack of political realism in the face of the rise of the totalitarianisms (this was really an attack on left-leaning colleagues who failed to see Stalin for what he was). Niebuhr's critique anticipated harsher and more explicitly political attacks on religious liberals in the McCarthy era.

The Yale Divinity School was, until the early 1950s, both a national center for socially-concerned religious scholarship and for training for social ministries. For half a century, its faculty had not only produced important social scholarship (like Liston Pope's classic 1940 community study *Millhands and Preachers*), but had been actively involved in such cutting-edge multi-disciplinary social sciences enterprises as the Institute of Human Relations. A measure of the extent of the collaboration between social science and religion at Yale until the early fifties is the fact that a third of the Divinity School's library consisted of materials relating to social welfare. (For an excellent account of the rise and fall of the social ministry curriculum at Yale, see Margaret Sawyer, "From Practical Philanthropy to Social Ethics: Jerome Davis, Liston Pope, and the Evolution of the Social Gospel at the Yale Divnity School" (2000). Pressure from conservative Yale alumni and well-publicized polemics like William F. Buckley's *God and Man at Yale* (1952) Liston Pope's resignation from the deanship, a purge of the Divinity School's

secular corporations they controlled would be prime beneficiaries of initiatives launched under Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty.

It is difficult to determine whether or to what extent these urban congregations suffered loss of autonomy because of their participation in anti-poverty programs because both Catholic and African-American religious bodies and their clergy have had long histories of political engagement. Mainline congregations, inexperienced in dealing with government agencies, seem more likely to encounter problems—which may be one reason why, in most places, they appear to be so reluctant to explore the possibilities offered by charitable choice (Goodstein, 2000).[16]

Conclusion: Dilemmas of Church and State

As the boundaries between religion, secular nonprofits, government, and—in instances where service provision is fee-driven—commerce become more blurred, it becomes increasingly urgent to forge well grounded understandings of the role of faith and faith-based entities and activities in public life.

Achieving this is important not only for religion, but for the public. The extraordinary constitutional and legal privileges accorded religion in the United States have been predicated on its willingness to distance itself institutionally from direct engagement in politics and business—by its willingness, as De Tocqueville observed, to trade temporal *power* for enduring public *influence* (II: 323).

Much of the debate over church-state issues since the 1940s has emphasized the hazard that religion poses for democracy. However, as government funding of faith-based service provision becomes an article of political faith, the focus of the debate is shifting to the threat that government poses to religion. History suggests that there is good reason for the latter concern.

On the occasions when religion has broken this constraint and engaged directly in the political fray, the consequences have usually been unfortunate: zealous sectarian support of religious establishments in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, of the sabbatarian, nativist, and abolitionist movements of ante bellum decades, of Prohibition and anti-Catholicism in the early twentieth century, and the anti-war and civil rights fervor of liberal clergy in the past half century, undoubtedly damaged both the groups that spearheaded these crusades and the public credibility of religion itself. In a society where religious adherence is voluntary, efforts to use the coercive power of the state for religious purposes are inevitably problematic because moralized political

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library, and a wholesale reorganization of the curriculum which included the renaming of the Stark Professorship—originally established as a chair of "practical philanthropy" then titled as a chair of "social ethics"—as the Stark Professorship of *Christian Ethics*. (Anecdotal evidence suggests that similar patterns unfolded in other institutions.)

16 A recent study of the implementation of charitable choice in Indiana shows that despite enthusiastic promotion of faith-based service provision by state officials, few churches—other than African-American ones—were willing to participate in government funded programs.

agendas usually constitute too narrow a basis for the kinds of compromise and coalition-building required by stable broad-based electoral majorities.

The experience of secular nonprofits in their growing involvement with government highlights some more pragmatic dilemmas. As long as nonprofits remained primarily dependent on donations, earned revenues, and grants from foundations and corporations, their financial management systems and public reporting procedures remained rudimentary. Fulfilling government agency reporting requirements necessitated a revolution in nonprofit management, producing a pronounced shift in power from boards and volunteers to cadres of paid professionally-trained staff. This shift was reinforced by the entrepreneurialism of the professional managers who, as careerists (rather than institutional loyalists) were constantly seeking to increase revenues, enlarge programs, and demonstrate success in conventional corporate terms—always with an eye on their next job. These processes fueled a displacement of organizational missions that has transformed secular nonprofits into enterprises that are almost indistinguishable from for-profit businesses. (As the president of a large university recently put it, when asked whether his institution had any kind of corporate social responsibility towards the impoverished city in which it was located, "Our sole corporate responsibility is to fulfill our charter purpose—and to deploy our assets, including our real estate, in a manner to insure maximum financial return in order to carry out its charter purpose.")

Religious bodies are, generally speaking, peculiarly unprofessional in their management. Clergy seldom receive any formal training in administrative matters. Few congregations can rarely afford to hire professional managers— and generally depend, in administering their finances, on lay volunteers with business or accounting backgrounds. In congregations that have launched service ministries on any scale—if the Episcopal day school experience is any guide— have suffered damaging tensions as clergy, parish, and day school staff have tried to negotiate the differences in their missions (on this, see Lemler, 1993; National Association of Episcopal Schools, 1996). (As Catholics began to depend on laity rather than members of religious orders to staff their schools and hospitals, similar tensions developed between religious missions and education and health care industry norms).

Finally, religious bodies need to consider the risks associated with dependence on the vagaries of government funding. Programs and policies in vogue now may not be in favor down the line—after an institution has invested resources in physical plant and staff. Secular nonprofits experienced this problem as federal social spending began to decline in the 1980s. Religious bodies, which are far more constrained in their ability to raise alternative revenues, can't ignore the threat that this poses to their solvency. Indeed, many urban churches that invested heavily in physical plant for programs in the social gospel era found themselves heavily burdened once ecclesial fashions had shifted and their congregations had begun to decline in numbers and wealth.

In sum, the opportunities for greater service and public influence offered to religious bodies by charitable choice need to be weighed against the very real theological and organizational dilemmas. It is one thing to provide human services voluntarily as an extension of a religious ministry; it is quite another to provide them under contract to a government agency. Working within a ministry, a religious group is accountable only to God; working under contract inevitably subjects faith communities to oversight and monitoring that may compromise not only their beliefs, but their constitutional freedoms. More seriously, as social service and the search for the revenues needed to provide them become more central to the work of religious bodies, they run the danger of displacing their faith commitments in favor of more pragmatic concerns.

Dependence on faith-based service providers also poses dilemmas for democratic government. Traditionally, objections to church-state entanglement have centered on the sectarianizing of politics—a hazard that, given contemporary religious diversity, seems remote. Rather, the transformation of American institutional life—in particular, the emergence of the nonprofit sector—raise a range of new problems relating to oversight and accountability.

Traditional voluntary associations—membership organizations that were supported by donors and staffed by volunteers—were uniquely responsive to their stakeholders. The nonprofit organizations that largely replaced these entities after the Second World War—memberless organizations supported by government and foundation grants and contracts and earned income and staffed by professional managers—are uniquely *un*responsive to their stakeholders. Businesses are accountable to stockholders, customers, and regulatory agencies. Government is accountable to voters. But nonprofits, with no stockholders, with services consumed by clients who do not pay for them, and operating in a funding environment that gives managers extraordinary discretion, are accountable only to inattentive state attorneys general and an understaffed IRS. Because they operate under expectations that they are fulfilling "higher purposes," nonprofits are generally exempt from the kind of public scrutiny to which business and government are subject. (They are, in addition, generally exempt from freedom of information requirements, even when carrying out public tasks under government subsidy). [17]

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17 When New Haven implemented its urban renewal efforts in the 1960s, it chose to channel federal and foundation funds through nonprofit rather than public agencies. This enabled the mayor to avoid bidding, civil service, and public reporting requirements imposed on public agencies. When these practices were challenged in the 1990s, the city argued that it did not have to open financial or other records to the press because the agencies in question were private—even though they were completely subsidized by government, staffed by public officials, and operating out of City Hall. In 1999, Connecticut's open government commission ruled against the city in a landmark decision. The city's response has been to push for amendments to FOI and other statutes that would prevent public access to information about publicly funded projects. On the accountablity problems of contemporary nonprofits, see Harriet Bograd's study of state attorneys general (1994) and Peter Dobkin Hall's critique of legal and regulatory trends (1999c).

Religiosity compounds the non-accountability of nonprofits because religious bodies enjoy a variety of special First Amendment protections from government oversight and regulation. In the early 1990s, a broad coalition of religious groups attempted to codify these protections in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which would have protected churches from government regulation if such regulation impaired their religious practices. The U.S. Supreme Court overturned the statute, but congressional friends of organized religion continue to work on drafting a statute that can afford religous bodies the protection they seek while overcoming the court's constitutional objections to the 1994 enactment. Should they succeed, faith-based service providers may find themselves enjoying almost complete immunity from public or government oversight—a very problematic situation, especially in agencies providing care to clients (like children and the profoundly disabled) who are unable to represent their own interests.

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Religious Congregations and Welfare Reform: Assessing the Potential

Mark Chaves

Several years have passed since the groundbreaking passage of The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. A once obscure piece of that legislation—section 104, known as "charitable choice"—altered the conditions under which religious organizations may deliver publicly supported social services to the poor. The charitable choice provisions, and the advocacy efforts surrounding them, have renewed attention to normative and empirical questions concerning church/state relations in general, and religion's role in our social welfare system in particular.

The charitable choice language in the welfare reform legislation requires states to include religious organizations as eligible contractees if they contract with nonprofit organizations for social service delivery using funding streams established by this legislation. States may not require that a religious organization alter its form of internal governance or remove religious art, icons, scripture, or other symbols as a condition for contracting to deliver services, and the law asserts that contracting religious organizations shall retain control over the definition, development, practice, and expression of their religious beliefs. This legislation is widely interpreted as establishing that organizations whose main activity is religion (such as congregations) may receive public money to support social service activity. Further legislative change in this direction is likely as pro-charitable choice advocates seek to attach similar provisions to other funding streams.

It is not clear exactly what charitable choice permits that was not previously permitted, at least de facto. The legality of government funding for religiously-affiliated organizations whose main activity is social service delivery, such as Catholic Charities USA, the Salvation Army, and Lutheran Social Services in America—or other, smaller, religiously-affiliated social service agencies—has been established for a long time and is not affected by charitable choice. Research also has shown that, before charitable choice became law, religious social service providers wishing to maintain a religious atmosphere or religious content in their programming—and not all, perhaps not even most, religious social service providers wish to do this—commonly did so openly and with no consequent problems with or interference from their government fun-

ders. Stephen Monsma (1996), for example, surveyed international aid agencies and child service agencies in 1993-94. For those organizations that received both government funding and reported that they engaged in religious practices, the majority of religious practices that they engage in—62 percent for the international aid agencies and 77 percent for the child service agencies—were done openly. Only a minority of religiously affiliated, government-funded, child service agencies—11 percent—reported having to curtail religious activities, and only a minority—22 percent— publicly funded, religious, international aid agencies reported experiencing any sort of pressure or problem about their religious activities. Most if not all of the activities about which problems were reported, such as requiring attendance at religious services, are the kind of sectarian worship, instruction, or proselytizing activities that are prohibited even under charitable choice. Such results may legitimately make us wonder just what problem charitable choice legislation was intended to solve.

More significant than legal change, however, may be the administrative actions inspired by the charitable choice movement. Several states have established programs that proactively encourage religious organizations to apply for government funding or somehow develop partnerships with government anti-poverty programs. At the national level, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has created a Center for Community and Interfaith Partnerships for the same purpose. More dramatically, the charitable choice movement also has inspired earmarking of public money for religious organizations. HUD has announced that the amount of money it will direct in 2001 to "faith-based" housing and community groups would be $200 million more than the amount such groups received in 2000. California recently launched a "Faith-Based Initiative" that dedicated up to $5 million for grants to religious organizations for employment assistance programs. It is worth noting that although charitable choice, in its legal sense, mandates only *nondiscrimination* with respect to religion in funding competitions, the charitable choice movement has inspired administrative actions that amount to *preferences* for religious organizations in public funding streams.

There is much to say about these efforts. They raise legal, practical, moral, theological, and sociological questions, all of which deserve close attention. This chapter will concentrate on questions concerning congregations that are raised by charitable choice. Religious congregations—churches, synagogues, mosques—constitute only a subset of the "faith-based organizations" envisioned by charitable choice advocates, and probably not the most important subset. Although advocates of "faith-based" social service often point to congregation-based programs as exemplars, congregations are far less important actors in the social service arena than are religious social service agencies like the Salvation Army and Catholic Charities (McCarthy and Castelli 1998). Moreover, early signs indicate that, when states make special efforts to encourage religious organizations to seek public funding for anti-poverty work, the

majority of grants and contracts go to religious organizations dedicated to social service activity, not to congregations (Sherman, 2000; Anderson, Orr, and Silverman, 2000).

Why, then, examine congregations in this context? First, congregations are the core religious organizations in American society, and they are the prototypical "pervasively sectarian" organizations whose inclusion in large numbers in our publicly supported social welfare system would constitute a qualitative change in church/state relations regarding social services. Second, congregations are an appropriate subset of religious organizations for the purpose of examining some of the key assumptions behind the charitable choice movement. One key assumption is that there is a distinctively religious approach to social services, one that might be undermined by collaborations with government and secular nonprofits. If there is a distinctively holistic or transformational approach to social service delivery that emerges from a religious base, it ought to be visible in the activities undertaken by the organizations—congregations—where religion is most central.

A second key assumption behind the charitable choice movement, related to the first, is that the religiously distinctive approach constitutes an important alternative to social services delivered by nonreligious, most notably government, agencies, and this alternative approach's distinctiveness is potentially undermined by collaboration with such agencies. If that approach is likely to be undermined by collaborations with secular organizations, we ought to see systematically different congregational activity when secular, especially government, collaborators are involved. Congregations are appropriate organizations—perhaps the most appropriate organizations—in which to examine these assumptions by looking for evidence that religiously-based social services are distinctively holistic, personable, and so on, or that a holistic approach to social service is likely to be undermined by collaboration with nonreligious, especially government, agencies.

I will address several specific questions in this chapter. Among them: To what extent are congregations currently involved in social service delivery? What kinds of things do they do? Do congregations engage in social services in particular kinds of ways? With whom do they collaborate, and with what consequences for their activities? To what extent are religious congregations inclined to take advantage of new funding opportunities made explicit by charitable choice? Whatever the absolute level of interest among congregations in moving in this direction, which subsets of congregations are likely to take advantage of these opportunities and be part of this movement to channel more public funds through religious organizations? Data from the National Congregations Study (NCS), a 1998 survey of a nationally representative sample of 1236 religious congregations, will be used to address these questions.[1]

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1 For more information about National Congregations Study methodology, see Chaves et al. (1999).

The answers are sometimes surprising.

The rest of this chapter is divided into two main sections. The first uses NCS data to address the questions listed above. A second, shorter, section moves beyond these data to call attention to several issues that ought to receive attention in discussions about religion and social services.

FOCUS ON CONGREGATIONS[2]

What Social Services Do Congregations Do?

Charitable choice advocates sometimes argue that congregations already are an important component of our social welfare system, giving the impression that the vast majority of them actively and intensively engage in social services. The truth is somewhat different. Although a majority of congregations— 57 percent—engage in some more or less formal social service, community development, or neighborhood organizing projects, the intensity of that involvement varies greatly. Regarding food programs, for example, congregations may donate money to a community food bank, supply volunteers for a Meals on Wheels project, organize a food drive every Thanksgiving, or operate independent food pantries or soup kitchens. When it comes to housing, congregations may provide volunteers to do occasional home repair for the needy, assist first-time home buyers with congregational funds, participate in neighborhood redevelopment efforts, or build affordable housing for senior citizens. When serving the homeless, congregations might donate money to a neighborhood shelter, provide volunteers who prepare dinner at a shelter on a rotating basis with other congregations, or actually provide shelter for homeless women and children in the congregation's building.

One measure of the depth to which congregations are involved in these activities is the percent having a staff person devoting at least quarter-time to social service projects. Only 6 percent of all congregations, and only 12 percent of those reporting some degree of social service involvement, have such a staff person. Other measures are also informative. The median dollar amount spent by congregations directly in support of social service programs is about $1,200, about three percent the median congregation's total budget. In the median congregation with social service projects of some sort, only 10 congregants are involved in this work as volunteers. The basic picture is clear: although most congregations do some sort of social service activity, only a small minority actively and intensively engage in such activity.

Congregations also favor some types of projects over others. Housing, clothing, and, especially, food projects are more common than programs dealing with health, education, domestic violence, tutoring/mentoring, substance abuse, or work issues. Fewer than 10 percent of congregations have programs

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2 This section summarizes results reported in more detail in Chaves (1999) and Chaves and Tsitsos (2000).

in any of these latter areas. By comparison, 11 percent have clothing projects, 18 percent have housing/shelter projects, and 33 percent have food-related projects. Eight percent of congregations report providing services to homeless people.

The big picture here is that congregations are much more likely to engage in activities that address the immediate needs of individuals for food, clothing, and shelter than to engage in projects or programs that require sustained involvement to meet longer-term goals. Congregations certainly are not absent from this latter type of activity, but they engage in it much less frequently. This pattern is confirmed when we directly examine the programs reported by congregations with an eye to distinguishing longer-term, face-to-face activities, on the one hand, from shorter-term, more fleeting activities, on the other hand. Programs that appear to involve only short-term or fleeting kinds of contact with the needy are far more common among congregations than programs that involve more intensive or long-term, face-to-face interaction. Only 10 percent of congregations (comprising 20 percent of attenders) are involved in the more personal kinds of programs. On the other, 36 percent of congregations (including over 50 percent of attenders) participate in or support the more fleeting kinds of activities.

These results contradict one of the above mentioned assumptions that often is articulated in discourse about charitable choice: that religious organizations engage in social services in a distinctively holistic or personal way. NCS results show that there is a distinctive type of congregational involvement in social services, but it is not of the sort usually envisioned. Congregational social services are much more commonly characterized by attention to short-term emergency needs, especially for food, clothing, and shelter, than by attention to more personal and intensive face-to-face interaction or by holistic attention to cross-cutting problems.

How Do Congregations Do Social Services?

Beyond the tendency to focus on short-term, emergency needs, congregations also tend to structure their social service involvement in a distinctive way. In the most common housing-related activities, for example, congregations take on home repair or renovation projects for the needy, providing both materials and volunteers to do the work—often in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity. Another common type of activity is at the intersection of food programs and serving the homeless: cooking meals for the homeless on a regular basis. Fairly typical of this subcategory is the congregation that has a "red beans and rice ministry to feed the homeless once a week," or the one that prepares a "homeless dinner once a week," or the congregation that "serves breakfast on Saturday and lunch on Sunday to the homeless and hungry."

A general pattern is discernible: When congregations do more than donate money or canned goods or old clothes, they are most apt to organize small groups of volunteers to conduct relatively well-defined tasks on a periodic

basis—15 people spend several weekends renovating a house, 5 people cook dinner at a homeless shelter one night a week, 10 young people spend two summer weeks painting a school in a poor community, and so on. Half of all congregations say that they support social service activities by providing volunteers. Of congregations engaged in some level of social service activity, 90 percent support at least one activity with volunteers from the congregation. At the same time, the total number of volunteers provided by the typical congregation is rather small. As mentioned above, in the median congregation engaged in some level of social service activity, only 10 of its people have volunteered in these activities over the past year. In 80 percent of the congregations engaged in these activities, fewer than 30 volunteers participated in the past year. In this light, it probably is not an accident that congregational involvement is highest where organizations have emerged to exploit congregations' capacity to mobilize relatively small numbers of volunteers to carry out well-defined and bounded tasks.

The preceding paragraphs provide a portrait of congregations' social service activities that is more modest—and realistic—than much of the public discourse on this topic. Armed with a realistic appraisal of congregations' social service activities, however, we need not abandon the notion that congregations are sites of important anti-poverty work in our society. A small percentage of active congregations does not imply trivial absolute levels of contribution. There are approximately 300,000 congregations in the United States. If one-half of one percent of those congregations are deeply engaged in social service activity, that represents roughly 1500 congregations. Some of those congregations currently run large-scale and multi-faceted social service programs that are central to the well-being of their communities. These are the congregations that have received the most media attention in recent years. Recognizing that these congregations are very uncommon—and likely to remain very uncommon in the future—does not mean that the contributions of these congregations should be minimized. This recognition should, however, prompt a shift from sweeping claims about idealized congregations to more modest assessments about the potential role that a small percentage of active congregations might play under a new welfare regime.

Which congregations do more social services?

Although the aggregate rate of congregations' social service activity is rather low, some congregations obviously do quite a lot of this activity, including operating their own programs. Which congregations are most active? Let me highlight three patterns. The first is unsurprising, but its importance is such that it should be clearly stated: larger congregations do more than smaller congregations. Although only about 1 percent of congregations have more than 900 regularly participating adults, these largest 1 percent account for about one-quarter of the money directly spent by congregations on social service activity. Only about 10 percent of congregations have 250 or more regular par-

ticipants, but this 10 percent accounts for more than half the money that all congregations spend on social service activity. Clearly, a minority of large congregations do the bulk of the social services carried out by all congregations.

A second pattern is less obvious. On the one hand, congregations located in poor neighborhoods tend to do more social service activity than congregations located in non-poor neighborhoods. On the other hand, congregations with more middle class people in them do more social service activity than congregations with more poor people in them, *and this is true even of congregations in poor neighborhoods*. Taken together, these two results imply that the congregations located in poor neighborhoods but composed of non-poor people do the most social service and community activity. Within poor communities, less poor or more middle-class congregations do the most social service activity. This pattern suggests that a congregation's own resources are crucially important in generating social service activity. Congregations located in poor neighborhoods, but without the internal resources that come with middle-class constituents, do not do as much social service activity as congregations with more of those resources.

Third, religious tradition matters in ways we have come to expect. Congregations associated with mainline Protestant denominations do more social services than conservative Protestant congregations. Catholic congregations are neither more nor less active than conservative Protestant congregations. Beyond denominational affiliation, self-described theologically liberal congregations also do more social services than self-described conservative congregations. This pattern is consistent with previous research on both congregations and individuals showing that mainline individuals and congregations are, in a variety of ways, more connected to their surrounding communities than are individuals and congregations associated with more evangelical or conservative traditions (Wuthnow 1999; Chaves et al. 2001; Ammerman 2001).

With whom, and with what consequences, do congregations collaborate in social service delivery?

Congregational social service activity is mainly done in collaboration with other organizations. Eighty-four percent of congregations that do social services have at least one collaborator on at least one program. Seventy-two percent of all programs are done in collaboration with others. Although other congregations are the single most common type of collaborator, congregations that do social services are as likely to collaborate with some sort of secular organization (59 percent of congregations, 38 percent of programs) as with some sort of religious organization (58 percent of congregations, 40 percent of programs). Although only 3 percent of congregations currently receive government financial support for their social service activity, about a fifth of those with programs collaborate in some fashion with a government agency. Clearly, when congregations do social services they mainly do them in collaboration with others, including secular and government agencies in non-trivial numbers.

Congregations are not equally likely to collaborate. Large, mainline Protestant, theologically liberal congregations with more college graduates are significantly more likely than others to collaborate on social services. Interestingly, although there are no race differences in the likelihood of collaborating in general, predominantly African-American congregations are significantly more likely than white congregations to collaborate with *secular* organizations on social services.

When congregations collaborate with secular, especially government agencies, are they less likely to engage in the longer-term, more holistic or transformational kinds of social services some claim to be their special purview? The clear answer is *no*. Looking first at individual programs, congregational social service programs involving secular collaborators are slightly *more* likely (9.8 percent versus 6.8 percent) than programs involving non-secular, or no collaborators to be more personal and long-term. And they are significantly *less* likely (24.6 percent versus 35 percent) to be more fleeting and superficial. Programs involving government collaborators are significantly *less* likely to be fleeting and superficial (21.3 percent versus 31.6 percent). The pattern is similar when we focus on congregations as wholes rather than on specific programs: With many other variables controlled, congregations with secular collaborators are significantly *more* likely to be engaged in longer-term, more personal, more face-to-face kinds of social service activities than are congregations without such collaborations. Congregations with government collaborators are no less likely than congregations without government collaborators to participate in or support those kinds of programs. None of these differences is large, and we are mindful of the limits of measurement here. We would not want to argue on the basis of these results alone that secular collaborations actually encourage more holistic kinds of social services. Still, these results clearly do not support the notion that such collaborations are likely to *discourage* holistic social services.

Thus, contrary to another assumption described above—that a distinctively holistic or personal approach to social services is potentially threatened by collaborations with secular, especially government, agencies—there is no evidence here that collaborating with secular organizations in general, or with government agencies in particular, makes congregations less likely to engage in the more personalistic and longer-term social service activities some think are more likely to occur within a religious sphere that guards its autonomy. Indeed, such collaborations may even *encourage* the more holistic types of activities some claim to be the distinctive province of religious organizations.

Who Will Take Advantage of Charitable Coice?

Congregations' current involvement in social services is only part of the story. We also might ask about congregations' interest in expanding their social service activities by taking advantage of funding opportunities prompted by the charitable choice movement. Whatever social services they currently provide,

and whatever the current levels of collaboration with secular and government agencies, are religious congregations inclined to take advantage of new funding opportunities made explicit by charitable choice?

The National Congregations Study collected data from congregations via 60-minute interviews with a key informant (a minister, priest, rabbi, or other leader) from each congregation. Informants were asked whether or not they thought their congregation would apply for government money to support the congregations' human services programs. Fifteen percent of congregations sufficiently oppose the idea of receiving government money for the informant to say they have a congregational policy against receiving such support. However, 36 percent of congregations would be interested in applying for government money to support human services programs.

This should not be taken to mean that more than one-third of American congregations are likely to apply for government grants and contracts in the coming years. A clergyperson's expressed interest in moving in this direction is not at all the same thing as willingness among people in the congregation, and we know from other research that clergy tend to be more supportive than parishioners of moving in this direction. This number, then, probably should be interpreted as a maximum—an estimate of the percentage of American congregations for which there is some chance that they actually would apply for government funds if given the opportunity. Recall, however, that only about 3 percent of congregations currently receive government money for social service projects. From this baseline even a small increase—say, 5 percentage points—in the proportion of congregations receiving public funds could represent a major change in church-state relations in the United States and a major increase in religious congregations' participation in our social welfare system. The overall level of expressed willingness to seek government support indicates that there is at least some potential for increased numbers of government-congregation partnerships in social service delivery. There is a market for charitable choice implementation in American religion.

Whatever the absolute level of interest among congregations, which subsets of congregations are likely to take advantage of charitable choice opportunities and participate in this movement to channel more public funds through religious organizations? As with current levels of social service activity, large congregations are considerably more likely to express interest in seeking government funds. The most interesting patterns, however, demonstrate the enduring power both of race and of a liberal/conservative institutional and ideological divide to structure American religion's engagement with state and society. These patterns are particularly noteworthy because they run counter to what has been the national politics surrounding charitable choice.

Regarding race, a congregation's ethnic composition is by far the most powerful predictor of willingness to apply for government funds. Informants from 64 percent of predominantly African-American congregations expressed

a willingness to apply for government funds compared to only 28 percent from predominantly white congregations. Controlling other congregational features, predominantly black congregations are *five times* more likely than other congregations to seek public support for social service activities.

Placing this result in the context of two other facts about African-American religion further enhances its importance. First, there already is a lower wall—both culturally and institutionally—between church and state in African-American religion than in other religious communities in the United States. Second, clergy in predominantly black churches enjoy greater power than their counterparts in predominantly white churches to initiate and implement congregational programs of their choosing. Both of these features of African-American religion increase the likelihood that clergy-reported interest in seeking government funding will translate into concrete organizational action. In this light, I would predict that, if charitable choice initiatives successfully redirect public monies to religious congregations, African-American congregations will be substantially over represented among those who take advantage of these opportunities.

Regarding the liberal/conservative ideological and institutional divide among whites, Catholic and liberal/moderate Protestant congregations are significantly more likely to apply for government funds in support of social service activities than are conservative/evangelical congregations. Forty-one percent of congregations in liberal/moderate Protestant denominations said they would be willing to apply for government funds compared to 40 percent of Catholic congregations and only 28 percent of congregations in conservative/evangelical denominations. Furthermore, when informants were asked to classify their congregations as liberal-leaning, conservative-leaning, or middle-of-the-road, congregations identified as theologically and politically conservative are significantly less likely to express willingness to apply for government funds, and this is true even after controlling denominational affiliation and other characteristics. Although the institutional boundaries represented by denominations remain salient on this issue, liberal/conservative ideological identities cross-cut denominational lines in important ways, and this cultural divide matters when it comes to expressed willingness to pursue charitable choice opportunities.

These religious tradition differences present a stark contrast to the political battle lines on charitable choice. At the national elite level of Congresspeople and major advocacy organizations, it was, in general political, and religious *conservatives* who were the strongest *advocates* of charitable choice legislation, and political and religious *liberals* who were most strongly *against* it. Senator John Ashcroft, Republican of Missouri sponsored the charitable choice section of the welfare reform legislation, and prominent conservative religious organizations such as the Christian Coalition and the Family Research Council actively promoted initiatives inspired by this legislation.

Nationally prominent liberal religious organizations, in contrast, strongly opposed charitable choice legislation and initiatives. Americans United for the Separation of Church and State assembled a coalition of 46 organizations opposed to Charitable Choice, including Catholics for a Free Choice; Central Conference of American Rabbis; Friends Committee on National Legislation; General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church; Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington Office; Unitarian Universalist Association, Washington Office; United Church of Christ, Office for Church in Society; and Union of American Hebrew Congregations. These organizations opposed charitable choice mainly in the name of avoiding deeper engagement between churches and the state.

This debate has attenuated somewhat since the 1996 passage of the welfare reform legislation. Now that charitable choice is a legislative fait accompli—at least with respect to welfare reform—religious groups of all stripes are trying to figure out what it means and how best to move forward in the new context. Still, it is worth noting that the religious differences among congregations when it comes to an expressed willingness to pursue government funding of social services (liberals more in favor than conservatives) are the mirror image of the religious differences among national elites on this issue (conservatives in favor, liberals opposed).

The congregation-level differences, however, are consistent with a long-standing sociological divide within American religion. Whether labeled premillenialist/postmillenialist, fundamentalist/modernist, or conservative/liberal, American religion has long been characterized by a difference between, on the one hand, religion that encourages reformist engagement with state and society and, on the other hand, religion that avoids such engagement. If charitable choice initiatives are successful in reaching American congregations, the congregations most likely to take advantage may not be the ones our political and religious leaders expect to take advantage. It is possible, of course, that the charitable choice movement will alter the institutional landscape in ways that will make the future very different from the present. It seems more likely, however, that the longstanding cultural and institutional divides in American religion will remain more potent predictors of congregational inclinations and activity than would be expected on the basis of the national politics of charitable choice.

Beyond Congregations

Charitable choice raises issues beyond congregations, and it raises questions that we do not yet have sufficient empirical evidence to answer. While the first section of this chapter focused on empirical questions that were answerable with available evidence, here I raise some questions that go beyond the available evidence about congregations in particular or religious organizations in general. These are offered as issues that ought to receive attention as we move forward in a climate in which religiously-based social services are receiving quite a lot of attention.

Are religious social services better than secular social services?

The strong version of the charitable choice agenda—the agenda of preferring religious to secular social service providers rather than simply refraining from discriminating against religious providers—is in large measure based on claims about religious organizations' greater effectiveness in delivering social services. Public discourse on religious nonprofit organizations is filled with claims like these: Religious organizations are especially effective in working with the hardest-to-serve populations. They are more flexible and responsive than government agencies and, presumably, than secular nonprofits. They provide more holistic kinds of service, attending to individuals' multiple needs. They are generally more successful than government agencies and, presumably, secular nonprofit service providers. And all of these differences are produced by the religious content in "faith-based" social services. Consequential public policy decisions have been and continue to be made in part on the basis of claims like these.

The ubiquity of these claims notwithstanding, at this writing, *such claims about religious organizations' distinct effectiveness are almost completely without empirical foundation*. Schools are the only organizational population on which there is a well-developed research literature addressing the differences, including differences in effectiveness, between religious and secular organizations (Coleman et al. 1982; Bryk et al. 1992). Although we have case studies of other sorts of religious nonprofits conducted with an eye to their functioning and effectiveness relative to similar secular organizations, beyond schools there are very few examples of systematic comparisons between religious and secular nonprofit organizations. Indeed, at this writing, I know of only one extant study which systematically compares religious with secular organizations among a group of organizations centrally involved in service delivery to the American poor or to individuals receiving public assistance and therefore directly implicated in welfare reform.

Reingold et al. (2000) compared religious and secular social service agencies in seven Indiana counties, with mixed results regarding the advantages religious organizations may have over secular organizations. On the one hand, they found that religious organizations are more likely to have tightened client eligibility criteria in response to welfare reform; are less confident about their ability to improve clients job skills; and have fewer ties to public funding agencies, for-profit firms that may provide employment opportunities for clients, and other service providers. On the other hand, a survey of clients showed that the most disadvantaged welfare recipients are more likely to seek assistance from religious than from secular organizations. It would be premature to draw any strong conclusions on the basis of just one study, except perhaps to say that its results suggest that the differences between religious and secular social service agencies are likely to be more complex than we might expect. We need additional research of this sort to help us develop a coherent picture of reli-

gion's consequences for organizational behavior. Until a larger body of solid research develops in this subject, the correct answer to the question—are religious social services better than secular social services?—is: *we do not know*.

Is public funding the key kind of partnership between government and congregations?

Funding relationships are only one sort of possible collaboration between congregations and government. Non-financial collaborations might include government agencies calling specific churches from time to time, asking them to provide free groceries or money to clients, parole offices or other government agencies referring people to congregation-based AA or NA groups, congregations "adopting" or "mentoring" poor families referred to them by local welfare agencies, and so on.

The potential expansion of financial relationships—government agencies funding programs run by congregations—has received the most attention and seems to generate the most enthusiasm (from some) and dismay (from others), but these may not be the most important kind of congregation-government collaboration that we will see in the future. It is not, for example, the most common kind of collaboration existing today. Although only three percent of congregations currently receive government funding, 11 percent somehow collaborate with government agencies on social service projects. This means that about twice as many congregations somehow collaborate with government in a way not involving money than receive public funds in support of their work. Similarly, a recent effort to catalogue *new* government-FBO collaborations found that about one-third did not involve financial relationships (Sherman, 2000). Non-financial kinds of partnerships between congregations and government deserve attention.

To what extent is the relationship between government funding and "faith-based" activity top-down rather than bottom-up?

This question is related to the point I made earlier about the extent to which congregation-based social services are already largely done in collaboration with other organizations, including secular nonprofits and government. This embeddedness of religious social services within larger institutional environments surely also characterizes non-congregational religious social services, an observation that motivates a question: Will new government-religion partnerships emerge because government reaches out to and funds or otherwise supports *existing* efforts of congregations and other religious organizations—this is what I mean by bottom-up—or will new funding opportunities for religious organizations initiated by government agencies at various levels essentially create new efforts, as people and individuals shift their activities and start new efforts in response to new opportunities for financial support?

The popular image, I think, is the bottom-up one—the underlying assumption is that there is all this great "faith-based" work happening out there and government should find ways to support it. But it is clear that at least some

social service activity carried out by religious organizations emerged in response to new opportunities and organizing efforts that actually have their source in secular nonprofits or in government. Many congregation-based food programs, for example, would not exist were they not organized and supported by secular food banks and local governments. I think we need to consider the extent to which the new funding opportunities and emphases inspired by the charitable choice movement might call forth organizations and efforts that were not there before and would not be there now were it not for this new climate. That kind of development raises different issues and concerns than one in which the predominant pattern is that already-existing efforts simply receive new support.

Will expanding government/religion partnerships have unintended consequences?

The intentional and well-meaning efforts of fallible human beings with limited knowledge often produce consequences that we did not intend. On the subject at hand, I can think of four potentially important kinds of unintended consequences of aggressive efforts to expand partnerships between government and religious organizations.

Opportunism. Outright fraud—an organization pretending to be religious simply for the purpose of enhancing its chances to receive public funding—is always a possibility, but I am thinking of a more subtle kind of opportunism. Consider the following example: Recently, the United States Department of Health and Human Services issued a request-for-proposals (RFP) soliciting applications for grants to fund coalition building and service coordination around domestic violence issues. In the spirit of charitable choice, this RFP stated that priority would be given to proposals from coalitions led by religious organizations. In one county I know, the secular nonprofit organization that would have been the natural lead organization for such a project—it has considerable experience and expertise in coalition building—instead sought out a religious nonprofit, a small Catholic women's shelter, to take the lead. This shelter would have been a natural participant in a coalition of organizations seeking money in response to this RFP, but it had no experience or expertise in larger coalition building or service coordination. It was chosen as the lead organization, at least on paper, only because the RFP stated that applications would be given extra points if a religious organization is the lead.

As it happens, this effort fell apart before a grant proposal was submitted, but this is an instructive example nonetheless. If government (or, for that matter, foundation) funding streams start to systematically prefer (as opposed to simply refrain from discriminating against) religious organizations, it is reasonable to expect various sorts of organizational jockeying designed to increase a proposal's likelihood of being funded. I believe it is important to recognize the potential for this kind of dynamic, and to consider the possibility that charitable-choice inspired preferences for funding religious organizations—even if

they wind up passing constitutional muster— might very well distort on-the-ground organizational dynamics in undesirable ways.

A second potential unintended consequence of the charitable choice movement is that it may *increase competition for clients and funding among nonprofit social service organizations*. The charitable choice movement, it should be noted, has been focused on redirecting existing social service funding so that more of it goes to religious organizations, not on expanding the overall size of the human service funding pool. As I write, many states are in a time of budget surpluses, some of which, in some states, is being used to increase the amount of money spent on social services. But this time of surplus is not likely to last forever, and in the next wave of debate over welfare policy the question of reducing federal block grants to states for social services probably will be on the table. If the charitable choice movement leads to, say, a 5 or 10 percent increase in the number of congregations and other religious organizations competing for a pool of money that is not expanding—or even decreasing—that would be a noticeable increase in competition for funds among nonprofit organizations. Conventional wisdom notwithstanding, increasing competition does not always lead to increased efficiency and better quality products or services. The end result of increased competition among nonprofit social service agencies might well be a weaker overall social service sector. Even if the sector as a whole is not, in the end, weakened by such increased competition, it is reasonable to ask what will have been accomplished if the result of these efforts to bring more religious organizations into the social service arena is simply to have shifted resources from one set of organizations to another. Recall that this shift cannot, at present, be justified by saying that religious social services are better for the needy than are secular social services. That is far from clear.

Neither bigger nor more is necessarily better. There are two different senses in which the involvement of religious organizations in social services might be "expanded." Expansion could occur by making existing programs bigger, or it could occur by involving more religious organizations in social service work. Somewhat counter-intuitively, even if existing faith-based programs are the most excellent, high-quality programs going, expansion of either sort—especially fast expansion—is not necessarily a good idea. Even if existing efforts are excellent, and expansion is pursued with best intentions of enlarging or replicating this excellence, neither sort of expansion will necessarily realize that intention.

Cnaan (1999), for example, describes the challenges faced by a Philadelphia congregation that was supporting several Alcoholics Anonymous and other substance abuser groups. The city of Philadelphia, after cutting its own publicly-funded AA program, began having its probation and parole officers refer offenders with substance abuse problems to the church's programs. This was a new partnership between government and a congregation—one that did not involve a financial relationship. The consequence of this new partnership was

that the church was overwhelmed by all the new clients and had great difficulty managing the expansion. Vandalism increased, thefts and damage to their building occurred, and volunteers who worked at the congregation complained of abusive behavior by clients. The moral is that a congregation-based program or effort that is very successful at one level of operation may not be equally successful when it is expanded. New government collaborations, with or without funding, might lead to program expansion that then presents its own challenges for congregations to manage. Bigger is not necessarily better.

Neither is "more" necessarily better, in the following sense. Even if the 3 percent of congregations that received government money before charitable choice are doing the most excellent, most high-quality programming possible, it does not mean that the next 3 percent—those who seek funds in a new environment where they are easier to obtain—will be equally high quality. By definition, the religious organizations that seek government funds in a climate where such partnerships are encouraged and celebrated are a different kind of organization than those that started and operated programs, and that sought and obtained outside support before it was the fashionable thing to do. Maybe whatever it was that led congregations and religious organizations to develop programs and forge partnerships with government before presidential candidates' celebratory remarks about such partnerships, before major attention from mass media, and before aggressive outreach to religious organizations on the part of some government agencies is, in fact, essential to their success. As the charitable choice movement gathers steam, it will be important to track the characteristics and operations of religious organizations that are brought into this work by the movement itself.

Conclusion

We are in a moment of enthusiasm about the role that religious organizations play in our social welfare system, and a moment of high interest in expanding that role and creating new kinds of partnerships between government and religious organizations. These partnerships are portrayed by some as the potential cornerstone of our future welfare system and the solution to many difficult problems caused by poverty. They are portrayed by others as the harbinger of disaster. I think they are neither. Religious organizations will play an important role in our future social welfare system, but that is not new. Welfare reform has brought with it some new opportunities and dangers in this arena, and I think we should chart a course that avoids both naive triumphalism about the opportunities and exaggerated fears about the dangers. Social scientists and journalists should instead engage in realistic, pragmatic, and clear-headed assessment of the possibilities—and limits—of religion's role in our social welfare system. In this chapter I have tried to help us along that path by providing some basic facts about congregations' social service activities, and also by raising some broader questions that are worth attending to as we move into the future.

Issues to Keep an Eye On

Many religiously based social service providers already receive government funds of some sort. To what extent does religion play a key part in the services delivered by such organizations? If there is religious content to the social services, does collaboration with government in fact hamper the religious activities? How accurate is the assumption that those who run religiously-based social services want to include religious content in their services? How accurate is the assumption that, when religious social service providers do want to include religious content of a non-proselytizing sort (religious symbols on walls, prayer before meals, discussions with clients about religion), they are constrained from doing this by their government collaborations?

A religious social service provider which includes religious content in its services might be compared with a functionally similar one that does not include religious content. How, if at all, are two such organizations different? Is one more effective than the other?

The California Faith-Based Initiative is a state-level instantiation of the charitable choice movement. It is particularly fascinating because it sets up a public funding stream to which only religious organizations are eligible to apply. Which organizations were funded through this initiative? How many had received government contracts before? How many were first-time recipients? What activities are being funded through this Initiative? Do they have religious content? What are the constitutional implications of a state government establishing a funding stream for which only religious organizations need apply?

As a result of the charitable choice movement, there now are federal, state, and local government funding streams to which religious organizations are being explicitly encouraged to apply. What are the on-the-ground consequences of this sort of charitable-choice-inspired encouragement for nonprofit organizations in the relevant field? Does competition for government money increase? Do nonprofits seek out religious collaborators to enhance their chances of funding?

Mississippi's Faith & Families program was an effort to involve congregations in mentoring relationships with poor people, and it sometimes is cited as a model by charitable choice advocates. In fact, the program was a failure which was stopped after a short time, mainly, I believe, for lack of interest on the part of congregations. How did this initiative come to be? Why did it fail?

How many of the "faith-based" programs funded through California's, Indiana's, or other states' faith-based initiatives were pre-existing programs run by religious organizations? How many were developed in response to enhanced opportunities for funding?

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Black Churches and Civic Traditions: Outreach, Activism, and the Politics of Public Funding of Faith-Based Ministries

Fredrick C. Harris

Religion serves multiple purposes in the civic life of African-Americans. Viewed by a generation of scholars as a form of social control that helped blacks cope with slavery and racial segregation, the variety of Christianity that emerged out of the black American experience contributed to various movements for racial reform for much of the twentieth century. What evolved out of Afro-Christianity is a civic tradition that nurtures a sense of charity for the poor and an active engagement in political life. While black religious traditions had different ideas about how to challenge racial inequalities in American life—indeed whether at all churches should challenge inequalities through political agitation—by the post-civil rights era most black religious traditions were at a consensus about the need for churches to be vigorously engaged in community outreach and to be involved, in some way, in political matters.

As an institution reflecting the interests of an economically marginal population, urban black ministers and churches have been committed to providing social services to the poor. However, that commitment varies, depending on the financial constraints of a congregation as well as on the doctrinal beliefs that may influence how churches approach the needs of the poor. Like most religious traditions, black churches exist to meet the spiritual needs of their members, leading them to devote most of their resources to maintaining and expanding the needs of the institution. For a church that can comfortably sustain its daily operations, community outreach efforts present less of a financial constraint on the institution than if that church was not on a strong financial footing. Even if churches have the financial and administrative capacity to provide social services to particular constituencies in need, doctrinal perspectives, such as the belief that the personal salvation of a person in need supercedes their social service needs, may impede the effectiveness of faith-based social services.

As policymakers consider using public funds to finance the social service programs of churches—an initiative that has been coined charitable choice—the administrative capacity of churches to manage programs and the doctrinal

beliefs that may constrain the effective delivery of programs should be strongly considered. Beyond these considerations, however, another civic tradition of black churches may further complicate charitable choice initiatives–the high degree of ministers and churches that are engaged in electoral politics. The participation of ministers and churches in electoral activities is not unique to African-American communities. Indeed, over the past two decades majority-white fundamentalist Christians have supported the elections of social conservatives, both in local and national contests. However, when considering the level of political activity in black churches and the social needs of congregants and community constituencies, public funding of faith-based ministries raise concerns beyond institutional capacity and doctrinal views.

This essay explores two civic traditions in black religious life–the aggressive support for faith-based social services in black communities and the strong engagement of black ministers and churches in political activities. The history of black churches' involvement in both civic traditions along with evidence from recent opinion surveys suggests that not only are black churches involved in a variety of social service activities but there is great enthusiasm among blacks for their churches to address the needs of the poor. Responses from opinion surveys also indicate that the desire for faith-based initiatives may conflict with the need for black churches to place greater emphasis on personal salvation. The tension between the belief that black churches should expand community outreach efforts and the belief that black churches should spend more time on personal salvation points to conflicts that may influence the success of public funding for faith-based programs.

The second civic tradition—the engagement of black clergy and churches in electoral activities—should also frame discussions about public funding of faith-based initiatives. Indeed, activist black clergy and churches have a long tradition in American politics that stretches back to the Reconstruction era when black men first gained the right to vote. That tradition of political engagement—especially when placed in context of ministers aligning themselves with urban political machines in northern cities during the heyday of black migration to northern cities—may provide some insight into the potential perils of using government money to fund the programs of activist ministers and churches. After considering the two civic traditions, the essay illustrates the potential problems that might beset charitable choice initiatives by considering how government funding for social services operated as a form of political patronage during the era of machine politics in Chicago.

The Evolution of Black Churches as Faith-Based Communities

To understand why there is strong support among blacks for black churches' engagement in community outreach, we have to consider the historical development of black religious institutions and how they were integral to the idea of "racial uplift." During the mid to late 19th century, a period of heightened institutional building in the aftermath of slavery, black churches became

the center of black life, operating not only as places of worship for congregants but also as the incubator behind schools, business enterprises, clarity, politics, and recreation. Urban churches, in particular, offered an array of outreach services, encouraging congregants to help reform prison inmates, visit hospitals to assist the sick, and provide food and clothing for the indigent. In some instances, urban churches founded hospitals, orphanages, and nursing homes for freedmen and women (Montgomery 1993).

Schools were among the first initiatives to be supported by churches. Though predominately white religious societies, such as the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, the American Missionary Association, and the Methodist Freedmen's Aid Society, were instrumental in developing black education before and after the Civil War, local black congregations also planned and implemented education programs. These initiatives were aimed at promoting the personal advancement of freedmen and women who would collectively "advance the race" by lifting, over time, the educational level of African-Americans. The cooperation of churches in educational activities was so strong that black congregants pooled together meager resources to "pay teachers salaries, purchase books, or rent additional space for class rooms." Others would assist by welcoming teachers into their homes since some of them could not afford housing on their own given their modest salaries (Montgomery 1993, 148).

In addition to education, mutual aid and burial societies, which were associated with local churches, also served as an important source of community support for freedmen and women. These societies were formed to provide assistance to members in time of death or sickness. They were created and flourished because of the discrimination blacks faced from white charities and insurance companies. Indeed, their origins in black churches led to the development of black-owned insurance companies, one of the first, and perhaps longest-lasting, business enterprises surviving over several generations. More than a source of black economic cooperation, church-rooted mutual aid societies were "inspired by the spirit of Christian charity" where black congregants scrapped together pennies "in order to aid each other in time of sickness but more especially to insure themselves a decent Christian burial" (Frazier, 42).

Church-based community outreach programs expanded at the turn of the century in response to the erosion of the civil rights reforms of Reconstruction and to expanding black migration from the rural south to the cities of the South and North. While helping migrants adjust to their new environment was a desire of many black churches, the flood of migrants into existing black neighborhoods stretched the capacity of black congregations to handle the problem. Both financial constraints and institutional priorities prevented greater resources to be devoted to the needs of migrants. "Despite their continuing sensitivity to the welfare needs of the people generally," historian William Montgomery explains, "(black) churches by the turn of the century

did not always rank as the most important community service agencies. Because their members were generally poor, they often had little money to spend on charity" (300).

Mortgage debt on church property provided the greatest financial constraint to community outreach efforts. During the "great migration" established churches purchased larger structures to accommodate the flow of migrants, draining congregations of resources that could have been used to support social services. Desperately poor migrants who did not join established churches, formed their own congregations in private homes or in storefronts, opting to worship in class-stratified settings. In their classic study of black churches published in the early 1930s, Benjamin E. Mays and Joseph W. Nicholson noted that many blacks expressed frustration over the lack of church-sponsored community services in black communities. They observed that "individuals interested in social welfare often charge the church with being incompetent because it does not assume to satisfy many of the non-religious community needs." Pointing to the problems that plagued many urban black churches, "in reality the church is so limited by lack of funds, equipment and personnel that it could not adequately assume all the responsibilities that the public might place upon it"(164-65).

When community outreach programs were launched, usually by large Protestant congregations, success varied from church to church and city to city. Most of the outreach efforts were short-lived. In Chicago, for example, the Olivet Baptist Church, the largest black church in that city during the first wave of black migration, provided a wide variety of social services, including recreational activities for youth, an employment bureau, and a health and baby clinic, all established during the teens (Sernett 1997, 143-4). At the turn-of-the-century, similar outreach efforts were attempted earlier in Chicago through the efforts of the African Methodist Episcopal minister Reverdy Ransom. Ransom founded the Institutional Church and Social Settlement in 1900, a church modeled more like Jane Adam's social settlement house than a congregation of the A.M.E. church. Ransom's Institutional Church offered migrants desperately needed social services, including manual training, an employment agency, and a nursery. Unfortunately, the Institutional Church was short-lived since the A.M.E. church hierarchy believed that Ranson was spending too much effort on social betterment and not enough time on the spiritual needs of his congregation.

Other churches contributed to community outreach efforts by cooperating with existing social service agencies such as the YWCA/YMCA and the Urban League, organizations that were also assisting black migrants. While funding and doctrinal beliefs that stressed personal salvation over social reform–a perspective that was particularly emphasized by Pentecostal churches–hindered cooperative efforts between churches and secularly-based social service agencies, some cooperative efforts were successful for awhile.

In Brooklyn, for instance, black churches coordinated scouting programs, athletic activities such as baseball and basketball leagues, and educational programs such as summer vocation schools in conjunction with a variety of social agencies and community organizations. Youth programs, which were organized mostly by church women, were greatly empathized to combat juvenile delinquency, a major problem in Brooklyn's black communities during the 1930s. As Clarence Taylor observes in his history of Brooklyn's black churches, "by organizing programs for children and teenagers, parishioners (churches) attempted to represent healthy alternatives to street life." They did so by keeping "the church doors open past the usual service hours in order to offer social, recreational, and sporting events for black children," making a few of the black churches in the borough "social service centers stressing moral uplift" (1994, 131). Churches that provided recreational activities for black youth were the exception rather than the rule. Benjamin E. Mays and Joseph W. Nicholson's survey of black churches discovered that only 27 percent of congregations from their survey were engaged in providing youth with recreational activities. Though the lack of resources partly explains the absence of recreational activities at churches, puritanical attitudes that regarded dancing, card playing, and ball playing as "sinful behavior" also explains the low number of church-based youth programs in black urban communities during the migration era. The financial inability to create and sustain community outreach efforts and religious attitudes about recreational activities that were considered too secular would continue to stifle the development of church-based youth activities as well as other outreach efforts well into the civil rights era.

Black Churches and Civic Life in the Post-Segregation Era

Though the civil rights movement and the black power movement altered both religious and secular institutions in black communities, it should be noted that only a minority of black ministers and churches support either movement. In recounting the success of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Martin Luther King, Jr. pointed to the difficulties of mobilizing support from black ministers in that city, noting their apathy "stemmed from a sincere feeling that ministers were not to get mixed up in such earthy, temporal matters as social and economic improvement" (1985, 35). The attitudes and the actions of ministers in Montgomery were not unusual. However, the success of the civil rights and black power movements had long-term consequences for how black ministers and communities thought about the role of black churches in public life.

As the sociologist C. Eric Lincoln declared in the early 1970s, the pre-civil rights black church "died an agonized death in the harsh turmoil which tried the faith so rigorously in the decade of the 'Savage Sixties'" (Lincoln 1974). The fact that most black ministers were not involved in movement activities—and that some even actively opposed the movement—is beside the point. Since clerics were a visible part of the leadership cadre of movement activists and because of the movement's emphasis on Christian values, the movement pro-

jected an image throughout American life that black churches were the vanguard of social change in black communities. Civil rights activist Septima Clark once commented on the contradiction between the image and reality, observing that "so many preachers supported the Movement that we say it was based in the churches, yet many preachers couldn't take sides with it because they thought they had too much to lose" (88).

The economic progress of blacks since the civil rights movement should—in theory—indicate that religion is less important in the lives of blacks than it was prior to the civil rights movement. As modernization theorists would predict, the secularization of a society and increases in education attainment and income should make individuals less interested in the sacred. Although there is evidence that church attendance has declined among blacks—and Americans in general since the 1960s—strong feelings of religious commitment among blacks have hardly changed over the decades. Consider black responses to questions from the 1992 National Black Politics Study regarding "God presence" in black communities (Table 1).

When asked if the oppression blacks face today is a sign that God is "removed from the black community," 17 percent of respondents agreed with that statement which suggests that blacks do not blame group conditions on a "neglectful God." When asked if the progress made by blacks is an indication of "God's presence" in the black community, 75 percent agreed. Given the choice between the two perspectives—whether God was removed from the black community or whether God has been a positive force in the black community—86 percent chose the view that God has been a positive force. The symbolism of black progress being linked to a sacred entity among a majority of blacks suggests that there would be little opposition to publicly funded community outreach initiatives through black churches.

Table 1
Attitudes About God's Influence on the
Condition of the Black Community

	Agree/God's Presence (%)
The humiliation and oppression experienced by black people is surely a sign that God is almost totally removed from the black community.	17
The recent progress made by blacks is an indication of God's presence in the black community.	73

Source: 1992-1993 National Black Politics Survey (N = 1,175)

Not only does black public opinion confirm the support of black church- es' involvement in community outreach but the attitudes and actions of black ministers about outreach efforts seems to have greatly increased since Mays and Nicholson's survey of black ministers during the 1930s. The Mays and Nicholson survey reported few outreach initiatives by ministers; Lincoln and Mamiya's survey of black ministers during the 1980s—taken roughly fifty years later—reported that 68 percent of black congregations cooperated, in some way, with social agencies or secular groups in community outreach.

Reflecting the long-term socialization effects of the civil rights movement, nearly half (43 percent) of ministers engaged in outreach did so through tradi- tional civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). However, when asked whether they were involved in direct social service delivery, less than 10 percent cited daycare (two percent), drug and alcohol abuse programs (four percent), assistance to senior citizens (seven percent), welfare and housing programs (seven percent), food assistance or clothing banks (seven percent), educational programs (five per- cent), or health-related issues (eight percent). About 20 percent of clergy who reported that their church cooperated with other organizations in outreach reported involvement with youth programs (19 percent). Even fewer ministers reported that their church received funding from government agencies to carry out outreach efforts. Of the six percent receiving government funding to do outreach work, most involved direct social service delivery, such as head start programs, food programs, or daycare.

Some churches have used government funding to simultaneously provide social services and to stimulate business enterprises in black communities. Reverend Floyd Flake, a former U.S. Representative and pastor of the Allen Temple African Methodist Episcopal Church of Queens, New York, provides one example of how activist ministers and churches have used government funding for community outreach efforts and economic development. In many ways, Allen Temple is a modern-day version of Reverdy Ransom's Institutional Church and Settlement house that operated in Chicago at the turn of the twentieth century. Allen Temple provides congregants and the surrounding community housing and jobs through a for-profit corporation which manages a Senior Citizen Section 8-202 Complex, a Burger King franchise, as well as small enterprises. It founded a neighborhood preservation and development corporation that rehabilitates vacant housing units and provides direct home improvement services to local residents.

Another housing program, the Allen A.M.E. Hall Estates, is a develop- ment of affordable housing units that provides low and moderate income res- idents with the opportunity for home ownership. The church also operates a shelter and counseling for women and children who are victims of domestic violence and a senior citizens center that provides recreational and social activ-

ities. The seniors program also serves meals daily and offers transportation and shopping assistance to the elderly who are homebound. For Medicaid eligible senior citizens, a church-run home care agency provides services for the disabled in their own home.

It goes without saying that the Allen Temple A.M.E. Church is unique, but there are a few other black churches around the country that combine government-sponsored social service programs with economic development initiatives. They include the Abyssinian Baptist Church of Harlem, Hartford Memorial Baptist Church of Detroit, and Brentwood Baptist Church of Houston, among others.

By the early 1990s, there is some evidence that black churches have become more engaged in community outreach. The 1992 National Black Politics Survey asked respondents who reported being a member of a congregation if their church sponsored community outreach programs such as "a food program and clothing program for the needy, a drug or alcohol abuse program, a daycare center or nursery, or a senior citizens outreach program." A clear majority of black churchgoers—86 percent—reported that their place of worship was involved in some type of community outreach. Indeed, for those who reported that their church was involved, about 70 percent answered that they were either "active" or "fairly active" in outreach activities. These responses, if accurate, suggest that if government-funded social services were placed in black churches there would be an army of volunteers to assist in those efforts.

Black Churches and Political Activism

Just as church-based community outreach programs evolved during the era of Reconstruction, so did the political engagement of black ministers and churches. When newly freed black men were given the right to vote, black churches provided the organizational resources to mobilize the new black electorate. Churches provided the physical space for political gatherings, ministers and church members served as delegates to state constitutional conventions and ran for elected office, and news about politics was regularly dissimilated through black pulpits. Although the political engagement of black churches was relatively short-lived, as a consequence of black disfranchisement by the turn of the twentieth century, many black churches continued the civic tradition of political activism in northern cities where blacks flexed their political muscles.

Many northern black churches worked in cooperation with the newly-founded civil rights groups such as the NAACP and the Urban League, which was founded to help black migrants adjust to the cities. Some churches aligned themselves with political machines, allowing political elites to employ churches as a direct vehicle for black voter mobilization. Political candidates made direct appeals before black congregations and many black ministers endorsed candidates for public office, thereby delivering votes to a preferred candidate. As political scientist Harold Gosnell observed in his 1935 classic study of black

politics in Chicago, "It is not uncommon on a Sunday morning during a pri-
mary or [general] election campaign to see a number of white candidates on
the platform ready to present their claims for support at the polls as soon as the
regular service is over and before the congregation is disbanded. . . .The
church is an institution which plays an important role in their social life and
they look to it for advice on political matters" (1967, 96). The electoral activi-
ties of black ministers and congregants only strengthened in the post-civil
rights era as the voting rights of southern blacks were restored and the civil
rights movement turned its focus toward electoral politics and away from the
politics of protest.

Indeed, the civic tradition of church-based activism is so strong that it is
commonplace to see ministerial support for political candidates as an integral
part of the politics of black communities. Just as blacks strongly support
church-based community outreach efforts, they are also strongly supportive of
church-based political activism. The 1992 National Black Politics Study asked
respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:
"black churches or places of worship should be involved in politics." While a
strong minority of blacks—a third—"somewhat disagreed" or "strongly dis-

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Table 2
The Intensity of Church-Based
Political Activism among Blacks

	Yes (%)
Has a member of the clergy or someone in an official position talked about the need for people to become involved in politics?	63
In the past year, have you heard any discussions of politics at your church or place of worship?	61
Has any national or local leader spoken at a regular religious service?	48
Have you talked to people about political matters at your church or place of worship?	44
Has a member of the clergy or someone in an official position ever suggested that you vote for or against certain candidates in an election?	29

Source: 1992-1993 National Black Politics Survey (N=1,175).

agreed" that black churches should be engaged in politics, nearly 70 percent "agreed" or "somewhat agreed."

Table 2 demonstrates the intensity of church-based activism in black communities. Respondents to the 1992 National Black Politics survey were asked a variety of questions about the level of political activities in their churches. When asked if their minister or someone in an official position at their church talked about the need for people to become more involved in politics, 63 percent of respondents reported that a leader had talked about the need for political involvement. Another 61 percent of respondents answered affirmatively that they had heard discussions about politics at their place of worship. Additionally, 44 percent of black churchgoers reported that they personally chatted with others about politics at their church, further demonstrating how black churches may operate as a source of politicization in black communities. As previous studies have demonstrated, the frequency of political discussions increases the likelihood that congregants will directly engage in political activities.

Beyond discussing political matters, respondents reported a high degree of direct political activities at their churches. When asked if a local or national leader spoke at a regular church service, 48 percent reported hearing a speech by a political leader. Moreover, 29 percent reported that a member of the clergy or someone in an official position at their church suggested that they vote for or against a political candidate. While these modes of church-based activism facilitate the involvement of blacks in the political sphere by providing an alternative source of political information and by giving individuals the opportunity to learn about politics, they also provide political elites with resources to support their candidacies and policy initiatives. Though most religious leaders in black churches do not endorse candidates, as the survey responses indicate, a solid core of black religious leaders, perhaps a third, do engage in candidate endorsements.

Views about church-based activism differ considerably by race. Though both blacks and whites equally approve of religious leaders taking a stand on social issues, blacks are substantially more likely than whites to believe that churches or political leaders should back political candidates or that a minister had a right to promote a particular point of view during church services (Harris 1999, 110-111). By some estimates, blacks are three times as likely as whites to report that their religious leaders frequently discuss politics, more than twice as likely to be encouraged to vote at their place of worship, and more than five times as likely to be visited by a political candidate at their church. As a consequence, black churchgoers are more likely to be activated directly into politics through their place of worship than white churchgoers (Harris 1999, 112-113).

These findings indicate that black churches continue to be an important source of political mobilization in black communities. Through clerical appeals, candidate visits at churches, church-sponsored political forums,

endorsements by ministerial groups, and the rare instances of church-based fund-raising for candidates, the historical roots of church-based activism continues to flourish as a black civic tradition.

Traditions in Conflict? Activist Clergy and the Public Funding of Faith-Based Programs

The two civic traditions of the black church—the participation and desire for faith-based social services, and political activism through church networks—may be in conflict with policy initiatives, such as charitable choice, that use government funding to support church-based social services. Through charitable choice, churches have the right to compete for state-awarded social service contracts. Putting aside the constitutional questions about the separation of church and state and worries about whether government money will be used to promote proselytizing, questions regarding the potential for conflicts of interests—that is, questions about the ethics of activist churches and ministers receiving contracts because of their support of political candidates—has been largely overlooked.

This conflict is not just a concern for black churches; it also has implications for other religious traditions that are directly involved in political activities. White evangelical churches, for instance, are also highly engaged in electoral activities and their activism may also give them advantages in the procurement of government contracts in certain instances. However, since black churches are considerably more likely to engage in political activities than majority-white congregations, and because of the civic tradition of activism in black churches, charitable choice initiatives may have the unintended consequences of being used as a means of political patronage. Not only would this possibility raise ethical questions about money and politics—a problem that seems to pervade all sectors of American politics—it also may have a corrupting influence on the politics of black communities. In the past, politicians have used government money to build alliances with black ministers, using funds to award supporters and punish opponents.

The political relationships that form between ministers and politicians are rooted in the practices of mutual support. Both activist ministers and politicians have strong incentives to solicit support from the other. For ministers these incentives can either be material, altruistic, or symbolic and political elites have an array of incentives to induce ministers into civic action. They can supplement the revenue of churches through "donations," expand church revenues by hosting government-sponsored programs in churches, or, in some rare cases, they might hire ministers as government employees. Ministers, of course, can also be altruistically motivated by the desire to provide outreach programs.

Ministers, on the other hand, have resources at their disposal. Like most elected officials, politicians are primarily interested in getting elected or re-elected. Depending on the office, electoral strategies may entail maintaining or

expanding electoral coalitions and insuring that prospects for re-election are expanded by satisfying the needs of often diverse constituencies. As the survey data above indicates, activist black clergy can assist politicians in their efforts to woo the black electorate by endorsing candidates, allowing candidates to speak before their congregations, or just by simply mentioning the candidate's name during church services.

The Case of Patronage Politics and Chicago Ministers

Perhaps the best illustration of how government funds have been used as a way to build political support among black ministers is the ruff-and-tumble politics of Chicago. Because of its tradition of patronage-style politics, considering the alliances of black ministers and politicians may provide a skewed perspective of the consequences of using government funds to subsidize faith-based ministries. Nevertheless, the Chicago experience can shed light on how government funding can be used as a way for political elites to build alliances with ministers and how that alliance may impede the political interest of black communities.

In Chicago, the incentives for activist clergy and for politicians seeking black support have been related to the city's tradition of machine-style politics. For some ministers, their political activism has been influenced by their support of candidates and policies that they have backed in exchange for patronage. Indeed, this exchange is a part of black Chicago's political development and extends well beyond the politics of the pulpit to encompass almost every aspect of the city's civic life. Although this exchange has allowed many black churches to provide social services to needy congregants and neighborhood residents, over the decades the relationship has undermined the efforts of reform-minded political candidates and movements that challenged the machine over issues such as open housing, equal educational opportunities, police brutality, black employment in city government, as well as other issues that address racial inequalities in the city.

In the post-World War II era, as the Democratic party solidified its grip on Chicago's political life, two forces would influence the political nexus between activist clergy and politicians: the development in the 1950s of Richard J. Daley's powerful machine, including a black submachine led by Congressman William Dawson, and the emergence of Chicago's civil rights campaigns in the 1960s and 1970s. While blacks contributed to Daley's successful electoral coalition, his support softened as black activists challenged Daley on school segregation, open housing, slum housing, and police brutality. These reform-minded activists, which included few black ministers among its ranks, clashed with machine-backed political and religious elites who worked to thwart reform-oriented movements that emerged out of Chicago's black communities.

However, as James Q. Wilson notes in his research on black leadership in Chicago during the 1950s, most black ministers avoided participation in civic

affairs altogether (1960, 127-130). But clergy who were engaged in civic life were divided in their support for the machine. Wilson noted that "several prominent Negro ministers who have large congregations never fail to support the Dawson organization and are personally close to him." As he explains further, the social class dynamics influenced support for the machine: "these ministers are characteristically Baptist or Pentecostal, with large followings among lower-income Negroes," while those who were suspicious of Dawson and the machine were "often better educated and with wealthier congregations" (127).

The incentives and sanctions the Daley machine and the Dawson submachine used to consolidate the support of black political elites are legendary and are beyond the scope of this essay. However, one activist clergy learned early on about the potential benefits that could be distributed by the machine. After unsuccessfully challenging the machine's black incumbent congressman, William Dawson, as a Republican candidate, Reverend Wilber Daniels, pastor of the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church and then president of the local NAACP, quickly made overtures to Daley. Reverend Daniels operated as a strategic actor, avoiding possible sanctions from the machine while also extracting symbolic and material resources in exchange for his loyalty to the mayor:

> I went into his office and won him over. That was not easy, because usually if you crossed Daley you were in the doghouse for the rest of your life. But I realized that I lived in a city that Daley was running, and I wanted to be with him because he could help me with what I wanted to do. From the day we met until the day he died, he was strictly a good friend, all the way down the pike.[1]

As a symbolic reward for his support of the machine, Daley appointed Reverend Daniels to the civilian police board in 1972; he later served as the president of the board under the Jane Byrne administration in the late 1970s. The board, among several duties, is responsible for monitoring police misconduct. However, neither the board, nor Daniels, challenged the policies of the mayor or the police chief, both of whom disregarded civilian complaints about police misconduct. Police brutality in Chicago during the 1960s and 1970s was a serious problem, symbolized by police violence against protesters during the 1968 National Democratic Party convention and the police murder of Black Panther activists Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in 1969. As one reporter described Reverend Daniels's performance as a reformer in 1980: "He served a limp stint as president of the Chicago NAACP during the height of the civil rights movement; he sat as a member of the old Police Board for many years without raising a ruckus; and now he speaks ill of citizens' groups that monitor the board and some board members who would bring change."[2]

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1 Grant Pick, "Daniel in the Lion's Den," *Chicago Reader*, 25 July, 1980.

2 Ibid.

Although not considered a reformer, Reverend Daniels' support of the Daley machine netted material benefits to his church that not only cared for the minister's congregants but also helped residents of Englewood, a poor and working class neighborhood that surrounded Daniels' church. Indeed, during the late 1960s and early 1970s Richard Daley assisted Reverend Daniels with securing funding from city and federal agencies to build low and moderate income housing in Englewood. By 1979 the church had an annual budget near $1 million with real-estate holdings totaling $9 million.

Reverend Daniels' strategy of working within the constraints of patronage-style politics symbolizes the tradition of one dimension of clergy-oriented civic action in Chicago. When asked what separated the ministers who supported the Daley machine from those who did not, Reverend A. Patterson Jackson, the late senior pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, pointed to the financial independence of clergy as a factor. His assessment reveals how important it is for activist black ministers to be financially independent, so that they will not be influenced by political patronage or dependency on government funding that has the potential to hamper their activism. Reverend Jackson notes this problem when Martin Luther King Jr. failed to recruit influential ministers in Chicago for his campaign against open housing in 1966. "It is a known fact that a number of our black preachers eat at the mayor's table. You don't eat at the mayor's table and fight the mayor. Quite naturally had they allowed Dr. King in their pulpit they were not an ally to the mayor."[3]

Describing his own situation, Reverend Jackson, whose church built housing for the elderly without the support of the city, noted that:

> [Liberty Baptist Church] have never received a dime from any politician in this church, in its construction, in its program, in anything. The church made sure that I was freed from any wants, so I never had to ask any politician for anything....Give to Caesar what's Caesar and to God what's God. We feel that if you accept a favor from a politician one day you will have to pay it back. I know that.

The Chicago Freedom Movement did not win concessions from the Daley regime. As the most racially segregated city in the United States, the movement could not mobilize enough support to defeat housing segregation and poverty. Many ministers who opposed the movement or kept silent were rewarded. The mayor used the largess of federal monies designated for Johnson's War on Poverty and the city's department of Human Services to undermine clergy dissent. As historian Melvin Holli explains, "Federal anti-poverty money was used to keep black churches pro-administration, or at least to keep them from becoming forums for Daley's opponents."[4] Patronage for black clergy would continue to undermine black opposition to the machine well after the demise of

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3 Interview with A. Patterson Jackson, 14 November 1990.

4 Barnaby Dinges, "Mayor Daley Courting Black Ministers," *The Chicago Reporter*, December 1989.

the movement, becoming an obstacle to black mobilization in behalf of Harold Washington's failed independent campaign for mayor in 1977. The election of Washington in 1983 would successfully challenge the power of the machine and, as happened during the King's Chicago Freedom Movement, black ministers would be deeply divided over a movement that pushed for both racial equality and the dismantling of machine politics.

Although most cities and locales in the United States do not have a tradition of patronage-style politics, much can be learned from the Chicago experience. On the one hand, charitable choice provides the impetus for promoting black civic life by availing churches of the resources to address the needs of marginal communities. On the other hand, charitable choice also has the potential to undermine the civic tradition of church activism by rewarding contracts to activist ministers and churches who might be lured into accepting contracts in exchange for their support of political campaigns or policy initiatives. One could make the argument that since politically powerful individuals and institutions in American society use their influence to extract benefits from government, why should religious institutions be treated any differently?

If charitable choice is to work, safeguards should be put in place to assure that churches and ministers who are competing for contracts do not get special favor. Grants should be offered to churches that have the institutional capacity to sponsor programs rather to those that have the best political connections. Indeed, it is quite likely that both criteria will overlap since the larger, more established churches are more likely to engage in political activities and to sponsor community outreach programs. With safeguards against political favoritism, the two civic traditions in black religious life may well continue to flourish, unblemished.

Issues to Keep an Eye On

First Civic Tradition. Faith-based social services have a long tradition in black communities. They evolved out of the need to address the condition of ex-slaves during the era of Reconstruction and continued on during the "great migration" of rural southern blacks to the cities of the north and south. The success of these services depended on the financial and administrative capacity of local congregations. They also depended on the doctrinal views of congregations who were reluctant to support outreach efforts that would promote "sinful" behavior.

Second Civic Tradition. Just as faith-based social services have a long tradition in black communities, so do the tradition of church-based political activism. That tradition was nurtured during the period of Reconstruction, continued through the alignment of activist black ministers with political machines in northern cities, and was very much part of the civil rights activism of the 1960s. Today, a considerable number of black churches are engaged in some form of political activity. That activity ranges from most black churches regularly discussing political matters during church services to a quarter of ministers endorsing political candidates.

Past Attempts at Government Funding of Churches. In urban machine cities such as Chicago, political elites have used public funding of church-faith ministries to build political alliances with black ministers. At times, these alliances have compromised the ability of activist ministers who receive funding to speak out on political matters that may be in conflict with political elites who are supportive of their faith-based efforts.

Implications for Charitable Choice. Although most cities and locales in the United States do not have a tradition of patronage-style politics, much can be learned from the Chicago experience. On the one hand, charitable choice provides the impetus for promoting black civic life by availing churches with the resources to address the needs of marginal communities. On the other hand, charitable choice also has the potential to undermine the civic tradition of church activism by rewarding contracts to activist ministers and churches who might be lured into accepting funding in exchange for their public support of political campaigns or policy initiatives that may or may not be in the interests of their constituencies.

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$$\boxed{\text{VIII}}$$

Charitable Choice:
The Law As It Is and May Be

Marc D. Stern

The impression is abroad that when the law is clear, government agencies comply. Conversely, it is popularly assumed that if government agencies routinely engage in a practice touching on constitutional concerns, the practice must be constitutional. Neither proposition is true. A third, related, commonly held misconception is equally untrue. After 50 years of constitutional litigation over the Establishment Clause, one might be excused for thinking that the meaning of the clause was settled. However, the boundaries of what is and is not permissible are not at all well marked. Part of the debate over charitable choice stems from the Supreme Court's own re-examination of its traditional interpretation of the Clause as a ban on aid to religious institutions, no matter what competing secular institutions are funded. Three, perhaps four, current free standing Justices would jettison that no-aid rule in favor of a rule of equal treatment of religious and secular institutions.

The debate over charitable choice–the idea that government should subsidize sectarian agencies to provide social services even if the services are profoundly sectarian is a classic instance of these three interrelated axioms.[1] Some constitutional rules are clear, but ignored by government agencies. Some scenarios lie in between existing decisions. Other times government gives no thought to the Constitution, but does what seems popular, politically desirable, or expedient. The unexamined practice is then bootstrapped into an argument in favor of constitutionality.

The legislation most commonly referred to as charitable choice is a portion of the 1996 welfare reform law, more properly known as the *Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Act* (TANF). That provision applies only to certain programs, notably welfare to work programs funded under TANF. (More recently, charitable choice provisions were included in the *Children's Health Act*[2]; the *Community Renewal Tax Relief Act of 2000*[3] and the *Community Services*

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1 The phrase "non-sectarian" is sometimes used to describe any pan-Protestant activity, so long as there is no preference for any particular Protestant denomination. More broadly, it means a practice acceptable to all (or most) Christians, or even most in the Judeo-Christian tradition. None of these meanings is the equivalent of secular for constitutional purposes.

2 P.L.106 - 310, § 1955, 114 Stat. 1212. Unlike TANF, this section requires notice to participants about alternative providers.

3 P.L. 106 - 554.

Block Grants of 1998.[4] As will be noted, President Clinton issued a statement when signing the *Children's Health Act* indicating a narrower compass for charitable choice than intended by its congressional sponsors, particularly Senator Ashcroft.

The term charitable choice reflects the view that beneficiaries should have a choice whether to utilize government funded social services programs at secular or religious providers. (The name is something of a misnomer since the legislation in fact does not guarantee any such right.) These provisions authorize states to provide services authorized by the statute through private contractors. The legislation goes on to say that the state may contract directly with private providers or may issue vouchers to participants, enabling them to secure approved services. So far vouchers appear not to have been a major part of charitable choice programs. Absent a voucher program, participants will have only such choices as the government makes available.

Charitable choice provisions go on to provide that religious organizations can participate in both voucher and direct grant programs on the same terms as other organizations, provided the assistance is consistent with the Establishment Clause. The Act does not explicitly prohibit *more* favorable treatment of religious institutions. In particular, religious organizations can retain their organizational form without government interference. This provision was designed to forestall the need for houses of worship to set up separate, nominally secular, corporations as a prerequisite to receiving government grants.

Religious contractors are protected from being required to remove religious symbols from their premises. Moreover, religious organizations can receive aid and retain their exemption from the anti-religious discrimination provision of the employment discrimination laws.[5] This provision generated the most significant political opposition to charitable choice, and remains particularly controversial with civil rights groups who object to any weakening of the anti-discrimination principle. TANF also provides for limits on federal audits of religious organizations that establish segregated accounts for federal funds. Organizations may not use federal funds to support "sectarian worship, instruction, or proselytization."

The Act confers limited rights on beneficiaries. No one may be forced to attend a religious program to which they object. If a recipient objects to participation in a religious program, she must be offered an alternative program, equally accessible and of the same value, within a reasonable time. Nothing in TANF requires that beneficiaries be notified of this right, although some of

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4 42 U.S.C. § 9920.

5 The lower courts have divided on whether employers taking governmental funds can invoke a provision of the anti-employment discrimination laws permitting religious organizations to engage in religious discrimination. There is also some question whether a recipient of tax funds may constitutionally discriminate in employment. See *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602 (1971) (White, J., dissenting).

the later charitable choice programs do require such notice. No participant may be denied admission to a federally funded program on the basis of his or her religion or religious belief, nor may a participant be coerced to "actively participate" in a religious practice. The Act does not explain whether mandatory but passive attendance at a religious service is considered "active participation in a religious practice."

As noted, similar provisions are now incorporated in the Children's Health Act of 2000[6], Community Renewal Tax Relief Act, and the Community Services Block Grant Program.[7] In addition, several federal programs for the homeless specifically allow for participation by religious organizations, although these do not spell out any special rights or limitations. It can be expected that more efforts to broaden charitable choice will be forthcoming in the 107th Congress, probably seeking to apply it to all federal programs. Several states, notably Indiana, Florida and Wisconsin, have passed general charitable choice laws.

Charitable choice is complicated by the fact that the universe of religious social services providers is so large, diverse and diffuse, that the term covers a wide range of religious providers. Various Federations of Jewish Philanthropies are religiously affiliated (though in the case of Jews it is always difficult to tell whether one speaks of a religious or ethnic group). Services provided by Jewish Federations are generally secular, frustratingly so for some Jews. Catholic Charities is largely the same (although this varies from diocese to diocese), with the exception of matters touching on abortion and contraception. Yet identical government funded programs run by institutions affiliated with other faiths (or even Judaism or Catholicism, but under different institutional auspices) will be laden with sectarian perspectives. The differences on the ground have profound legal implications, but the entire range of providers fit comfortably under the rubric "religious (sectarian) social services".

Likewise, religious commitments can range from a passive, non-coercive, religious symbol on a wall to mandatory attendance at a sermon prior to a government funded meal. (Imagine having to listen to a sermon on an empty stomach!) In still other cases, the religious component is a requirement to accept religious propositions as a prerequisite for admission (*e.g.*, an openness to accepting Jesus as a condition for entry into a drug rehabilitation program)[8]. In some programs, these religious references will be incidental. In others, they will be pervasive. Any of these factors might or might not make a program "religious" for constitutional purposes, but they are too often indiscriminately lumped together when discussing "charitable choice."

Houses of worship (*e.g.* churches, synagogues, mosques and temples) are

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6 P.L. 106-310 (2000).

7 42 U.S.C. § 9920, adopted in 1998.

8 *Cf. Wazeerud-Din v. Good Will Home Industries*, 325 N.J. App. 3, 737 A.2d 683 (1999). The program at issue in that case was not government-funded.

what lawyers call pervasively sectarian organizations, that is, institutions whose every activity is permeated with religious practice. Under current law, they are presumably ineligible for government aid because religion permeates every aspect of their activity. Nevertheless, it is a matter of common knowledge—and in this case, it is even true—that houses of worship run fully secular social service programs at government expense (feeding programs for the homeless or GED preparation programs are common examples). These programs are as secular as government run programs, and have not been challenged as unconstitutional. The rule against aiding pervasively sectarian agencies is sometimes observed by requiring pervasively sectarian institutions to create separate secular corporations, a requirement charitable choice legislation would dispense with. Sometimes, it is simply ignored.

Religious institutions operate social service programs for a variety of motives, but often only because they are concerned with the public weal. Churches also provide social services because they are genuinely committed to helping serve the less fortunate as a matter of religious duty. This subjective religious intent is irrelevant to the constitutionality of government aid directed at such programs. But what of the house of worship that conceives of social services as a means of religious outreach, to save souls, i.e., the Chabad Movement or the Salvation Army? An answer to that question requires a look at history.

History of Religious Involvement

American religious institutions have a long history of social involvement. For Protestant churches, the development was natural, given Protestant hegemony over early American life, coupled with a theological view of man that insisted that social problems were a direct result of human depravity for which only religion could provide a cure. On this thesis, attacking distortions of the marketplace, empowering labor unions or imposing minimum wage laws would not cure social ills. Only religion could aid the poor by saving them from sin. Churches could, with some financial assistance, also serve the poor more cheaply than government by harnessing eager volunteers and utilizing existing church facilities. Then, as now, this was a powerful argument.

In the case of Jewish Federations and Catholic Charities, the creation of social welfare institutions dates to eras of large-scale immigration of fellow believers, who for a variety of reasons needed help in adjusting to their new American homes. In the 19th century, "public" government welfare programs were either non-existent or themselves so Protestant in character as to be unwelcoming and unacceptable to Catholics and Jews.

History of the Legal Dispute

As a practical matter, charitable choice came to the notice of the law in the mid-to-late 19th century. Disputes over the constitutional propriety of charitable choice occurred against the backdrop of the bitter battle over aid to Catholic parochial schools, a battle which paralleled, even preceded, the battle

over sectarian social services. The *contretemps* over aid to social welfare institutions appears not to have been as bitter as that over parochial schools. Perhaps this was because both Catholics and Protestants operated social welfare institutions eligible for government (state) funding, while only Catholics had significant numbers of parochial schools. Social welfare services are also less obviously ideologically driven than the education of the young. Protestants sought to block aid to parochial schools, urging that it was un-American to finance anything but public (i.e., Protestant) schools. To buttress that argument, they invoked substantial but not incontrovertible evidence that the Founders intended to prohibit government financing of religious education and instruction. Protestants were especially fearful of funding schools subject to the control of a Catholic Church, which was in the 19th century theologically opposed to the separation of church and state.[9] For their part, Catholics complained about the unfairness of being taxed to support public schools which were only thinly disguised Protestant schools, and then having to pay Catholic schools tuition to provide their children an acceptable education. They claimed to seek only an equal share of school funds, not the creation of a theocracy.

In the wake of the dispute over aid to parochial schools, many states adopted constitutional provisions against expending funds on any institution under control of a religious organization. (These are sometimes known as Blaine Amendments.) Some of these provisions were narrowly confined to education; others were broader, and prohibited all forms of aid to sectarian institutions.

In New York, Jews supported the Protestants on the parochial school aid question, and Catholics on the social welfare question. Apparently, Jews held the swing votes at the 1894 Constitutional Convention, because both propositions were written into law. New York strictly prohibits aid to parochial schools, but explicitly permits aid to sectarian social service providers. These provisions remain in effect.

State courts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries divided over the constitutionality[10] under state constitutions of funding social services through private sectarian providers. *Bennett v. City of La Grange*[11] invalidated a contract with the Salvation Army requiring the Army to "handle charitable cases" for a fixed monthly fee. The Georgia Supreme Court, without discussing the question of whether there was any religious content to, or discrimination in, the operation of the program, invalidated the contract:

> [W]hen the City of La Grange made the contract with the Salvation Army, by which the latter, a sectarian institution, assumed the care of the poor of that city, although at actual cost, this was

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9 M. Stern, School Vouchers, "The Church-State Debate That Really Isn't," 31 *Connecticut Law Review* 977 (1999).

10 The Federal Constitution's Establishment Clause did not apply to the states until World War II. Because the role of the federal government in social services was relatively small until the New Deal, the issue of charitable choice did not often arise under the Federal Constitution.

11 153 Ga. 428, 112 S.E. 482 (1922).

giving a great advantage and the most substantial aid to the
Salvation Army in the prosecution of its benevolent and religious
purposes. The giving of loaves and fishes is a powerful instrumen-
tality in the successful prosecution of the work of a sectarian insti-
tution.[12]

The Nevada Supreme Court earlier reached a similar result in *State ex rel
Nevada Orphan Asylum v. Hallock*,[13] invalidating *per diem* payments to a
Catholic orphanage.[14] Illinois at first followed *Hallock* in *Cook County v. Chicago
Industrial School for Girls*,[15] and did not allow subsidies to a sectarian child care
institution. It later reversed ground, *Dunn v. Chicago Industrial School for
Girls*,[16] holding that *per diem* payments to the same school for delinquent
Catholic girls were constitutional, where the fees were less than the actual cost
of providing care. In both schools, Catholic religious instruction was offered,
and the instruction was under the management of members of the Catholic
clergy. Admission was always limited to Catholics.

Other courts have expanded on the *Dunn* court's argument that there is no
constitutional violation where the state pays less than the full cost of social ser-
vices it would otherwise be obligated to provide. *Community Council v.
Jordan*[17] and *Schade v. Allegheny County Institution*,[18] are leading modern expres-
sions of this theory.

In *Community Council v. Jordan*, *supra*, a local government contracted with
the Salvation Army to provide emergency relief services on nights and week-
ends. The contract called for the government to reimburse the Salvation Army
for 40 percent of its expenditures for such services. The services were provid-
ed at a Salvation Army center, which had religious symbols displayed on the
walls. Chapel services took place at the welfare center, but participation was
voluntary, and conferred no substantial advantage on applicants.

The Arizona Supreme Court first rejected a strict no-aid theory–that is,
the view that government may never subsidize a religious organization, and the
argument that the ability to provide social services was a sufficiently important
benefit to religion as to be constitutionally proscribed. Instead, the court held

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12 The Georgia Attorney General later opined that a government contract with the YMCA for
    the provision of recreational services was "probably" unconstitutional, *Ga. O.A.G.* 69-136
    (1969) (unofficial). More recently, the Attorney General prohibited giving grants to church-
    run after school programs. *Ga. O.A.G.* 00-5.

13 16 Nev. 373 (1882).

14 The orphan asylum in question was operated by an order of Catholic nuns, but accepted
    orphans of all creeds. Only Catholic prayers were recited publicly. Protestant children were
    excused from oral recitation of these prayers, although they were required to kneel during
    these devotions. The court invalidated $75.00 a year child payments to the home as being in
    violation of a constitutional provision barring the use of public funds for sectarian purposes.

15 125 Ill. 540, 18 N.E. 183 (1888).

16 380 Ill. 613, 117 N.E. 735 (1917).

17 102 Ariz. 448, 432 P.2d 460 (1967).

18 386 Pa. 507, 126 A.2d 911 (1958).

that so long as the state paid less than the actual cost of services it was in any event obligated to provide, there was no impermissible aid to religion. It observed, however, that costs included only actual welfare expenditures (*i.e*, for food, clothing or shelter). Payment for labor would constitute unconstitutional aid to the institution. That distinction is surely not obvious.

While *Community Council v. Jordan* could be confined to those cases in which religious institutions merely serve as conduits for government funds to purchase secular services, the same cannot be said of *Schade v. Allegheny County Institution*, *supra*. There, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upheld an agreement under which a county paid for the court-ordered placements of juveniles in sectarian homes:

> The cost of the maintenance of neglected children either by the State or the County is neither a charity nor a benevolence, but a governmental duty…. A considerable part of this money is recouped…from the parents of these minor wards. The balance of the funds so expended are, in legal effect, payments to the child— not the institution—supporting and maintaining him or her.…The Constitution does not prohibit the State or any of its agencies from doing business with denominational or sectarian institutions, nor from paying just debts to them when incurred at its direction or with its approval.[19]

This argument is sometimes known as the "child-benefit" theory.[20] It posits that aid does not benefit institutions, but children, and hence does not come within the constitutional proscriptions on aiding religion.

Finally, the Oklahoma Supreme Court in *Murrow Indian Orphans Home v. Childers*,[21] made an additional argument in support of payments to sectarian child care institutions:

> It is not the exposure to religious influence that is to be avoided: it is the adoption of sectarian principles or the monetary support of one or several or all sects that the State must not do. Could these officials refuse to pay claims incurred by the keeping of needy children in private homes under contract where the State deliberately adopted the policy of placing children in homes observing the same religious principles as were practiced by the families from which the children came? We think not.

Whose Rights Need to be Protected?

Modern Americans conceive of church state disputes as about the power of citizens to resist being taxed to pay for sectarian institutions, or the right of sectarian providers to equal treatment with their secular competitors. More

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19   386 Pa. at 512, 126 A.2d at 914.

20   See *Bd. of Educ. v. Allen*, 392 U.S. 236 (1968).

21   171 P.2d 600, 602 (Okla. 1946). The orphanage there was operated by Baptists. Children were encouraged, but not required, to participate in church services of their choice.

rarely, Establishment Clause cases present problems of religious coercion, such as mandatory attendance at church as a condition of probation or attendance at a religiously based anti-alcoholism program following a DWI conviction.

However, in the case of homes away from home such as orphanages, mental hospitals, or old age homes, there is the perspective of service recipients to consider as well. Where a government funded program is provided on an out patient basis, recipients can receive necessary religious services elsewhere and at private expense. A participant in a welfare to work program will not be denied the ability to practice her faith, attend services of his choosing or seek spiritual counseling if the Constitution required government funded transition to work programs to be secular.

But what of the child for whom an orphanage provides a substitute for the family? If government funding carries with it an obligation to be devoid of religious instruction, indoctrination or proselytizing, then the state is not being neutral about religious choices. If the state insists on permitting the child to be raised in the faith of his or her parents,[22] it is subsidizing religious instruction, generally something the Constitution forbids, and forcing religion on the child. If it attempts to provide a minimum of religious instruction, but maintains a secular pattern of life in the home, it is again dictating how religious a child's life will be.

Early Federal Constitutional Law

In 1899, *Bradfield v. Roberts*, a rare 19th century Federal Establishment Clause challenge to a government contract with a sectarian service provider, reached the United States Supreme Court. The District of Columbia had contracted with the Sisters of Charity to provide health care for the indigent at a hospital run by the order. The evidence showed that all were admitted to the hospital regardless of faith. There were no differences in care between this hospital and other public hospitals. The hospital board of directors was dominated by Catholics.[23]

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22 These questions arose in a case challenging New York City's child care programs, which functioned largely on a denominational basis, except that these there were not many quality Protestant programs. The result was Protestant children, who at the time of the suit were mostly black, received inferior public care. For the decision, which approved a settlement imposing substantial limits on the religious life of children in care in Catholic and Jewish institutions, see *Wilder v. Sugarman*, 965 F.2d 1196 (2d Cir. 1992).

Even the assumption that the child is to be raised in the faith of the parents interferes with the perfect liberty of the child and for that matter, the parents. Just because a child is born a Catholic does not mean the parents would have given it an orthodox Catholic upbringing, or taught it to comply with the teachings of the church on all points. For the state to insist that a child have no faith until it is an adult, is likewise to depart from neutrality on religious questions. To insist that a Catholic institution raise Catholic children as religion free is to deny the freedom of the institution, an issue which today arises in connection with contraception services in Catholic homes. (The problem is sometimes elided by having someone else provide these services to those in Catholic child care facilities.)

23 Abortion had not yet surfaced as an issue that divides Catholic and public hospitals. Catholic hospitals, bound by Ethical Directives for Catholic Health Care, will not perform abortions or sterilizations, and in some cases have religiously based differences in regard to end of life

Taxpayers sued under the Establishment Clause, challenging the funding of this religious hospital. The Supreme Court thought the claim not serious. Its decision is correctly understood to stand for the proposition that the bare fact that the government contracts with a sectarian affiliated provider is not a violation of the federal Establishment Clause.[24]

The Supreme Court has recently reiterated this holding.[25] Federal government practice has long assimilated it. The use of religiously affiliated providers is so routine (even more so with regard to foreign aid than domestic services)[26] as to excite almost no comment. Indeed, so well settled is the practice that it seems almost churlish to suggest that the contrary position is not without merit.

As the Georgia Supreme Court noted in *City of La Grange*, sectarian social services serve a variety of purposes for the sponsoring institution beyond fulfilling a religious obligation to assist those in need. Social services provide an opportunity to contact potential converts in a context that will favorably dispose them to the faith. Providing social services casts religion in a favorable light, and demonstrates the sort of practical faith that is so appealing to Americans. In the case of newer or unpopular faiths, government funded social services can be a public relations boon.

The provision of social services under the aegis of the faith also allows it to care for its existing members in a non-threatening atmosphere, keeping them loyal, and sparing believers from exposure to the secular world or competing faiths, exposure which can undermine religious loyalties.

Nevertheless, it is true that *Bradfield v. Roberts* and the disarray in the state courts indicates that, unlike the consensus against tax support to teach or otherwise further religion, in the school context, no such consensus existed with regard to secular social services. Although the next half-century (up until the end of World War II) saw almost no federal litigation on the subject, it is the case that at least sectarian affiliated social services continued to receive government funds.

The Early Modern Establishment Clause Case

The Supreme Court returned to the question of the propriety of spending tax funds on religion in *Everson v. Board of Education*,[27] a case challenging the provision of bussing to parochial school students. The Court upheld that on the theory that the aid benefited students, not schools. In *Everson*, the Court

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care. It still is likely not to be unconstitutional to fund sectarian hospitals, but the recent emergence of a gap between Catholic and non-religious hospitals does point out the danger of blindly citing precedents, especially older ones.

24 A few states (*i.e.*, Idaho) have reached a contrary result under state constitutional provisions.

25 *Bowen v. Kendrick*, 487 U.S. 589 (1988).

26 See *Lamont v. Woods*, 948 F.2d 825 (2nd Cir. 1991) (holding unconstitutional practice of permitting aid to foreign religious seminaries). Compare, Senator Jesse Helms' recent proposal to extend charitable choice to foreign aid.

27 330 U.S. 1(1947). The quote is found at pp. 16-17 of the opinion.

set forth a strict rule against financial subsidies to religious institutions. It was so understood by the dissenters, who argued that the majority had not gone far enough in enforcing its own rule.

However, a close reading of the crucial part of Justice Black's opinion discloses a latent ambiguity:

> The "establishment of religion" clause of the First Amendment means at least this: Neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion over another. *Neither can force nor influence a person to go to or to remain away from church against his will* or force him to profess belief or disbelief in any religion. *No person can be punished for entertaining or professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs, for church attendance or nonattendance.* No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion. Neither a state nor the Federal Government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups and vice versa. In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect "a wall of separation between Church and State." (Emphasis added; citations omitted.)

Did Justice Black mean to say that a refusal to fund a sectarian provider was required by the Constitution or that such exclusions were impermissible as a penalty for religious belief? The italicized language probably was intended to say only that a person could not be excluded from a government program because he adhered to a specific faith, not that the Establishment Clause required funding of religious activity on an equal basis with secular competitors. The language will, however, bear the latter meaning as well. In recent years, advocates of increased funding of religious activities of various sorts have invoked the sentence to support their arguments that it is unconstitutional to refuse to fund sectarian agencies, merely because they are religious. (This is not merely an argument that government *may* fund religious social services; it is an argument that it *must* do so.) That argument is not what Justice Black had in mind, but it is arguably what he wrote.

Church-state disputes in the courts were largely about aid to parochial schools from the end of World War II until the mid-1980s. The issue of aid to religious social service providers surfaced briefly in the debate over the 1964 Civil Rights Act. One of the most potent provisions of the Act was Title VI,[28] which banned racial discrimination by recipients of government aid. As originally drafted, the provision applied to religious as well as racial discrimination. The United States Catholic Conference, then struggling to obtain aid for

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28 42 U.S.C. § 2000d, *et seq.*

parochial schools, objected that the inclusion of religion in Title VI would make that aid impossible. Parochial schools then regularly engaged in religious discrimination in admissions. A general ban on religious discrimination by recipients of government funding would have forced parochial schools to choose between their religious mission and federal funding.

Jewish defense groups such as the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League insisted on the inclusion of religion in the statute. In the end, the Catholic Church prevailed, as much because Congress was content to leave the issue of the conditions under which government could fund sectarian institutions with all its constitutional overtones to the courts, as it was an explicit agreement with the Church that racial and religious discrimination ought not be equated.[29]

Title VI has nevertheless not been irrelevant to the provision of sectarian social services, even though few religious providers engage in racial discrimination for religious reasons (*cf.*, Bob Jones University). However, Title VI has been construed to bar not only intentional racial discrimination (*i.e.*, no blacks allowed, no interracial dating), but also prohibit neutral practices that have an adverse disparate impact on racial minorities, such as moving a hospital to (white) suburbia from (minority) central city. Since racial minorities are not equally distributed across the religious spectrum, a decision to limit admissions to faith-run nursing homes to members of a particular faith, permissible by virtue of the absence of religion from Title VI, for example, might have an adverse impact on minorities.

Over the years, but particularly during the Carter Administration, various agencies charged with enforcing Title VI filed complaints challenging the use of sectarian names which were thought to discourage minority applicants (*e.g.*, Jewish Home for the Aged) or even to kosher diets, on the ground that these are unfair to racial minorities living in the home. All of these claims were eventually dropped, although they were, on the law, not frivolous.

The Parochial School Aid Cases Cast a Shadow

The current debate over the legality of charitable choice, and the crazy quilt pattern of administrative practice with regard to the funding of sectarian providers, can only be understood against the background of the aid to parochial school aid cases decided between 1968 and 1982. Those cases assume a popular conception of the Catholic parochial schools as institutions which were pervasively sectarian.[30] That is, the Court approached these cases as if religion permeated every aspect of the school's educational program. It did not, as it might

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29 Some individual programs such as Head Start contain their own anti-discrimination provisions and some of these ban religious discrimination against participants. Whether these civil rights provisions are enforced against religious provider is an interesting question.

30 The pervasively sectarian model still holds true for most Orthodox Jewish day schools. It is also true for the Christian schools operated by evangelical churches of various denominations. Parochial school aid law, however, has historically been driven by the model of the Catholic school.

have, conceive of the parochial school as composed of distinct secular and sectarian components. Such an approach would have allowed the state to fund the secular portions of the school's program, but not its sectarian ones. The upshot of the Court's conception of the schools as pervaded with religious content was that any aid to the school necessarily subsidized religious instruction.

In 1965, Congress enacted the *Elementary and Secondary Assistance Act*, providing general federal aid to education. That measure required some aid to flow to parochial school students, but not their schools (the child-benefit theory). Three years later, the Supreme Court three years later upheld the loan of secular textbooks approved for use in the public schools to parochial school students.[31] The Court's opinion had two prongs: first, the aid went to students (the "child benefit theory") and not the schools, a transparent fiction since the schools chose the books, stored them, were responsible for their safe keeping and could not function without them. The other rationale was more substantial. The Court reasoned that since the texts had to be suitable for use in the secular public schools, there was no likelihood that they would be used in sectarian instruction. The state could thus be reasonably certain that it was not funding religious instruction.

Although *Allen* departed from the strict no-aid rule of *Everson*, the hope entertained by some that the Court would permit more direct and substantial aid to religious schools quickly faded. In *Lemon v. Kurtzman*,[32] the Court considered Pennsylvania and Rhode Island statutes authorizing the state to pay a portion of the salary of secular teachers in parochial schools. That decision set forth a three part test for evaluating the constitutionality of governmental acts under the Establishment Clause. The test, known as the *Lemon* test, requires that to be constitutional a practice must have: (1) a secular purpose; (2) a primary effect that is secular; and (3) not duly entangle government with religion.

The *Lemon* Court reasoned that the Constitution required that a state be *certain* that its funds were used only for secular instruction, and not religious instruction. Since the schools were pervasively sectarian, that is religious instruction permeated all aspects of the schools' activities, paying the salaries of secular teachers meant paying for sectarian instruction. The only way to avoid an improper subsidy would be intrusive state monitoring of everything happening in the schools.

Over the next few years, the Court threw out a variety of state efforts to help parochial schools. Those decisions proceeded on the same assumptions as did *Lemon*: that the Establishment Clause barred government subsidies for institutions engaged in religious instruction, indoctrination and worship; that in pervasively sectarian institutions it was not possible to separate the secular and the religious; and, the government could not rely on presumptions or good

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31   *Bd. of Education v. Allen*, 392 U.S. 236 (1968).

32   403 U.S. 21 (1971).

faith in assuring compliance with the Establishment Clause.

It was never entirely clear whether pervasive sectarianism was alone enough to invalidate government aid. *Bradfield v. Roberts* suggested that it was not (although perhaps a hospital is not a pervasively sectarian institution)[33] and that parochial schools are somehow different. But the Court once suggested (in 1971) that where a pervasively sectarian institution was asked by government to perform a secular task at government expense, the aid had the effect of aiding religion. In a case discussing the constitutionality of aid to sectarian affiliated colleges, the Court remarked:

> Aid may normally be thought to have a primary effect of advancing religion when it flows to an institution in which religion is so pervasive that substantial portions of its functions are subsumed in the religious mission or when it funds a specifically religious activity in an otherwise substantially secular setting.[34]

The case law made clear that parochial schools are pervasively sectarian. Presumably, houses of worship are as well. Nevertheless, churches all through the 1970s and '80s continued to get government money to run lunch programs and the like. Still, some government agencies refused to allow funds to flow directly to churches on the ground that they were pervasively sectarian and were thus debarred from aid under the parochial school aid cases. While the practice of the federal government was far from uniform, some agencies insisted that the churches set up independent corporations to receive funds, a requirement that still exists in some government regulations.

Thus, HUD regulations for the youth building program allows funds for construction of facilities to go to religious organizations only if the facility will be leased to a wholly secular organization, and if the property will not be reconveyed to the religious organization for the life of the property. However, the same regulations allow operating funds to go to pervasively sectarian organizations if they provide assurances that they will provide no religious instruction or worship or exert no other religious influences. They must also promise not to engage in religious discrimination in admission or hiring.[35]

On the other hand, HHS simply provides that churches may be assigned AmeriCorps participants, without special limitations on the activities they engage in.[36] It is hard to see rhyme or reason to the differences, except perhaps that they were written by different administrations, acting each time in

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33 Justice Brennan in his concurring opinion in the Bible reading case, *School District of Abington Twshp. v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203, 246 (1963), read *Bradfield* to hold that a religiously affiliated hospital was not pervasively sectarian.

34 *Hunt v. McNair*, 413 U.S. 734, 743 (1973).

35 24 C.F.R. 585.150 and *id*. at 406. The problem of discrimination in employment and admissions is addressed directly below. See also, 24 C.F.R. 570.200 (similar restrictions on Community Development Block Grant).

36 45 C.F.R. 2510.20.

response to the latest Supreme Court pronouncements.

From time to time, one runs across a news story in which government officials tell recipients of government funding that they must take down a religious symbol, or that they may not have a prayer before a government funded lunch program, or the like. Sometimes the decisions stick, sometimes they are rolled back in a storm of angry publicity. Sometimes religious institutions comply, sometimes they refuse additional federal funding. Most of the time, no one seems to pay much attention, so the rules say one thing and the recipients do something else again. Presumably, regulations banning or limiting aid to sectarian providers will be targeted for elimination by the Bush Administration.

The Court Begins to Change Course

More recently, a group of Justices have pushed the Court to adopt a different vision of the Establishment Clause. This movement, which is not complete, and has not succeeded yet in overturning past law, begins with a very different understanding of the Establishment Clause. This alternative interprets the Clause as an equal protection clause for religion. That is, the Clause prohibits government from favoring religion, but also does not forbid the government from funding sectarian endeavors on an equal basis with non-sectarian ones. Stronger versions of the equality argument prohibit the government from excluding religious providers from programs for which they would be eligible if they were secular.

To an uncertain extent, these Justices have coupled this equality based approach with an emphasis on the fact that private citizens, not government officials, decide which institutions receive government funds, thus minimizing the possibility of governmental favoritism toward, or hostility to, faith. Obviously, charitable choice will fair far better under this vision of the Establishment Clause than it would under the vision enunciated in *Everson*.

Several cases illustrate this movement. The first is *Mueller v. Allen*,[37] a case upholding a Minnesota tax deduction for parents who incur expenses in furthering the education of their children. Most of the benefit of this deduction flowed to parents of parochial school students. However, certain expenses which were, or could in theory be, incurred by public school parents were also deductible. One earlier decision (*PEARL v. Nyquist*)[38] had invalidated a tax credit substantially identical to the Minnesota deduction.

The Court found the deduction constitutional, first because the deduction was not limited to expenses incurred in obtaining a religious education. It was broadly available for educational expenses, an important indication, the Court said, that the program had a primary secular effect. Second, the Court pointed out that the benefit to religion came not as a result of a governmental decision to aid parochial schools, but the private decision of parents as to which

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37   413 U.S. 388 (1983).
38   413 U.S. 621 (1973).

school their children would attend. The private choice of parents was a "circuit breaker" between church and state and hence obviated Establishment Clause concerns.

A year later, the Court decided *Witters v. Washington*,[39] in which the state assisted the visually handicapped to obtain vocational training. Witters asked that he be permitted to use the funds at a religious seminary to train for ordination. The state refused, saying that to grant the aid would be to establish religion. A unanimous United States Supreme Court disagreed. The Court held that the program was not a sophisticated scheme for channeling money to seminaries, and the funding was sufficiently like a paycheck to be constitutionally tolerable. However, separate opinions for a majority of the Court said it was sufficient that Witters had a range of religious and secular vocational choices, and that the final choice of where the aid would be spent was his, not the state's.

In *Rosenberger v. Rector*,[40] the Court decided that a state university could allow student activity funds to pay the costs of printing a student religious magazine, as they paid for printing secular student magazines. Most of the opinion is devoted to freedom of speech. However, the Court also passed on the claim that a university subsidy would establish religion.

> The Court held it would not, pointing out that it was not dealing with an ordinary tax but a student fee. It also pointed to the wide range of magazines the university was funding and the fact that the university had not on its own decided to fund a religious magazine, but would be responding to student requests. Somewhat incongruously, the Court added: It is…true that if the State pays a church's bills it is subsidizing it, and we must guard against this abuse. That is not a danger here, based on the considerations we have advanced and for the additional reason that the student publication is not a religious institution, at least in the usual sense of that term as used in our case law….

In addition to these decisions, several parochial school aid cases have been decided since *Mueller*. The cases are most notable for relaxing the Court's skepticism about the ability of pervasively sectarian institutions to use even secular aid for secular purposes.[41] In addition to overturning several of the farthest reaches of the Court's earlier aid to parochial school cases, these decisions emphasize the importance of the fact that the aid to parochial schools was equal to the aid given public schools, and that, because the programs in question were apportioned on a per capita basis, the aid flowed to the religious schools as a result of the private choice of parents. However, the Court also

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39 474 U.S. 481 (1986).
40 515 U.S. 819 (1999).
41 *Agostini v. Felton*, 521 U.S. 203 (1997); *Zobrest v. Catalina Foothills*, 509 U.S. 1 (1993).

indicated that it was relevant that the contested aid (i.e., remedial instruction by public employees, or a sign language interpreter) was intrinsically secular.

The transition between the older no-aid conception of the Constitution and the new equal treatment-range of choice-private choice model has not come easily, nor is it complete. The Supreme Court's latest school aid decision neatly illustrates the divide on the Court. *Mitchell v. Helms* [42] was a challenge to a federal program that gave per capita grants to students, whether attending parochial or public schools, for secular equipment such as computers and library books. The government was obligated to insure that the materials were used only for secular purposes. Prior decisions would have permitted the library book loans, but not the computers. A majority of the Court permitted both forms of aid. There was no majority for any single rationale.

Four Justices,[43] in an opinion by Justice Thomas, would have substituted the private choice-equal treatment rationale across the board. They would have dispensed entirely with the "pervasively sectarian" rubric, a category Justice Thomas deemed demeaning and attributable to 19th century anti-Catholic bigotry. The opinion is not clear as to whether it made a difference that the aid was in the form of secular computers and library books or whether direct cash grants would also have been permissible. Justice Thomas did allow that where the element of private choice was missing—that is, if the government decided which institutions would receive aid—the Establishment Clause might be violated because of the possibility that government would engage in favoritism in selecting beneficiaries. That caveat seems to undermine that much of charitable choice not dependent on vouchers.

Three Justices [44] dissented and would have banned the contested aid. The deciding votes were those of Justices O'Connor and Justice Breyer. While they agreed that the earlier decisions should be overruled insofar as they banned the aid in question, they announced their disagreement with the standard announced by the plurality opinion of Justice Thomas. Justice O'Connor wrote:

> Thus, I agree with Justice Souter's conclusion that our "most recent use of 'neutrality' to refer to generality or evenhandedness of distribution…is relevant in judging whether a benefit scheme so characterized should be seen as aiding a sectarian school's religious mission, but this neutrality is not alone sufficient to qualify the aid as constitutional."…I also disagree with the plurality's conclusion that actual diversion of government aid to religious indoctrination is consistent with the Establishment Clause….Although "[o]ur cases have permitted some government funding of secular functions performed by sectarian organizations," our decisions "provide no

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42   120 S.Ct. 2530 (2000).

43   Chief Justice Rehnquist; Justices Scalia, Kennedy and Thomas.

44   Justices Souter, Stevens and Ginsburg. The opinion was written by Justice Souter.

precedent for the use of public funds to finance religious activities."
(Citations omitted.)

One obvious difference between Justice Thomas and O'Connor is that school vouchers are plainly constitutional for Justice Thomas, but not at all so for Justice O'Connor. Charitable choice programs are equally in the gap between the two, at least charitable choice programs that award money on a per capita basis and not flat sums to religious institutions.

Chastity and Charitable Choice

The relationship between these two lines of cases are at the heart of the debate over charitable choice. There is, however, one relatively recent Supreme Court case which more directly touches on that issue–*Bowen v. Kendrick*.[45] At issue there was the constitutionality of the *Adolescent Family Life Act* (irreverently known as the "Chastity Act"). Enacted during the administration of President Reagan, the Act provided grants to a wide variety of private groups, specifically including religious ones, to teach sexual abstinence. On behalf of itself, the American Jewish Congress,[46] and several taxpayers, the ACLU challenged this statute and its administration. Plaintiffs contending that funding religious institutions in an area as laden with religious values as sex was inevitably (in legal terms, "on its face") unconstitutional, and that as administered ("as applied") the Chastity Act had the effect of advancing religion because actual religious instruction was taking place at government expense.

Citing *Bradfield v. Roberts*, *supra*, the Court (by a 5 to 4 vote) rejected the facial claim. It reasoned that there might be some religious affiliated institutions which would offer secular courses advocating chastity.[47] That possibility was sufficient to defeat the claim that in every instance the Act was unconstitutional.

Although the Court conjured up some formal defects in the fact finding by the District Court, it agreed that if the government were funding abstinence courses which had religious content, or pervasively sectarian institutions, those grants would be unconstitutional:

> In particular, it will be open to appellees on remand to show that AFLA aid is flowing to grantees that can be considered "pervasively sectarian religious institutions, such as we have held parochial schools to be…. As our previous discussion has indicated,…it is not enough to show that the recipient of a challenged grant is affiliated with a religious institution or that it is "religiously inspired."

> The District Court should also consider on remand whether in particular cases AFLA aid has been used to fund "specifically religious activit[ies] in an otherwise substantially secular setting."…Here it would be relevant to determine, for example, whether the Secretary

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45   487 U.S. 589 (1988).

46   The writer participated in the litigation of the case on behalf of plaintiffs.

47   The Court assumed that abstinence was not a uniquely religious doctrine.

> has permitted AFLA grantees to use materials that have an explic-
> itly religious content or are designed to inculcate the views of a par-
> ticular religious faith. (Citations omitted.)

Four dissenters thought the Act unconstitutional as written (on its face).

If *Bowen* is still good law, it is hard to see how much of charitable choice will survive constitutional attack. *Bowen* has not been overruled, nor does any subsequent opinion directly question it. However, the Court has placed greater reliance on the equal treatment rationale in the years since *Bowen*. As noted in *Mitchell*, Justice Thomas did question the continued viability of the restriction on aid to pervasively sectarian agencies, calling it a hangover of 19th century anti-Catholicism. A majority of Justices pointedly did not go along.

The United States Department of Justice subsequent to *Mitchell* took the position that aid to pervasively sectarian institutions was banned by the Constitution. In signing the charitable choice provision of the Children's Health Act of 2000, President Clinton accepted that position and ordered the Act be so administered. (California, too, limits charitable choice to non-perva-sively sectarian institutions.) One imagines that the Bush Administration will have a substantially different view.

Challenges to charitable choice are pending already,[48] and more are sure to come. The pending lawsuits challenge a variety of aspects of charitable choice, although none has yet progressed to the point of a district court ruling, let alone a ruling of the courts of appeal. These challenge most aspects of char-itable choice, except for the voucher provisions. However, it may be that the constitutionality of charitable choice, at least in broad strokes, will be decided not in one of these cases, but by a pending challenge to the Cleveland vouch-er case.[49] The legal issues are similar: does the fact that aid is broadly available and distributed by private choice make it constitutional, even if a lion's share of the funding goes to pervasively sectarian institutions?

The Autonomy of Religious Institutions

The President's Executive Orders on faith-based initiatives call for elimi-nating "unnecessary legislative, regulatory and other bureaucratic barriers that impede effective faith-based and other community efforts to solve social prob-lems." Existing charitable choice law similarly provides that private faith-based groups receiving government contracts "shall retain their independence from [government], including such organization's control over the definition, devel-opment, practice and expression of its religious beliefs." The scope of these provisions is uncertain. Do they mean only that the government may not insist

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48 The four pending lawsuits are ably described in an article in the *National Law Journal* of January 9, 2001. The present writer is counsel in two of these suits in which the American Jewish Congress is plaintiff.

49 A panel of the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals invalidated Cleveland's voucher program in December, 2000. In March, after the entire circuit court declined to reconsider the case, the state of Ohio appealed the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. In July, the Bush administra-tion asked the Court to take up the case and uphold the program.

that the church offering an AIDS program cannot be forced to change its theological position on extramarital or same gender sex, or do these provisions grant religious and community providers a trump card against complying with otherwise applicable regulations which are theologically or philosophically distasteful?

Consider a child care provider who believes as a matter of biblical interpretation that sparing the rod spoils the child, and uses corporal punishment in violation of state regulations for child care providers.[50] Or, what if religious-based providers of AIDS services refuse on religious grounds to provide instruction about condom use? What about a church group that refuses to screen participants for immigration status? What about a day-care program which requires schools to encourage self-confidence, but the faith-based provider believes that self-confidence instilled in a child is sinful? What of requirements that counselors in drug programs be professionally certified or use specified psychological techniques anathema to a faith based provider?

These and other conflicts between facially neutral program requirements and the religious beliefs of providers are likely to be recurring features of charitable choice programs. The statutory language quoted above does not resolve any of these disputes cleanly. The problem is made more complex because a different section of the Executive Order requires government to assure that faith-based services are high quality, a command that will often be at war with the preservation of the autonomy of providers.

The constitutional concerns which arise from this are twofold: One, whether the Free Exercise Clause of the Constitution imposes some limit on the ability of government to regulate religiously motivated conduct without some special showing of need: and two, even if it does, whether those constraints apply when the government is purchasing services. To use one of the examples cited above, does the Free Exercise Clause impose a limit on the government's ability to dictate the curriculum of a preschool program; even if the government may not forbid unfunded preschools to teach to a different set of values than the government's, may it insist on paying only for services consistent with its view of what is desirable?

Until 1990, the Free Exercise Clause was interpreted to require a twofold inquiry when a government regulation substantially burdened a religious practice: did the regulation further a compelling interest (an interest of the highest order) and was it the least burdensome method of advancing that interest?[51] If this were still the law, religious institutions in theory would have a legal basis for challenging regulations which interfered with their implementation of G-

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50 See *State v. Corpus Christi People's Baptist Church*, 683 SW2d 692(1984); *Roloff Evangelistic Enterprises v State*, 556 S.W.2d 856(Tex Civ. App. Austin 1978); *State v. Heart Ministries* ,227 Kan. 244, 607 P.2d 1052 (1980) (corporal punishment). The Kansas Court approved a no corporal punishment policy, but allowed parents to consent to moderate corporal punishment.

51 See *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205 (1972).

d's word. How often they would prevail is a different question, since courts tended to defer to state claims of need. The availability of legal recourse nevertheless gave religious institutions a fulcrum with which to negotiate mutually acceptable resolutions.

In 1990, the Supreme Court changed the rule. In *Employment Division v. Smith*, 494 U.S. 872 (1990), the Court dispensed with any requirement for special justification of governmental burdens on religious practice. So long as a regulation was neutral and generally applicable, it was valid no matter what burden it imposed on religious practice.[52] A subsequent Supreme Court decision makes it clear that a statute can be targeted at a religious practice even if it does not mention religion, if surrounding circumstance's make it clear that the only target of the legislation is religious practice.

Congress passed legislation designed to fill the gap left by the Court, the *Religious Freedom Restoration Act*,[53] but the Supreme Court subsequently held that the Act was beyond Congress' power to enact, at least as applied to states. Some states have passed their own religious freedom acts. These are largely untested. Both federal and state regulations often have their own religious exemptions built in, and these are not directly affected by the *Smith* decision.

Even assuming some level of constitutional or statutory protection for religious liberty, it does not follow that the government cannot insist on whatever program conditions it deems appropriate when it purchases or subsidizes services. Here, one plunges into one of the murkier areas of constitutional law. On the one hand, the Court has insisted that the government cannot attach unconstitutional conditions (i.e., no grants to people who have criticized the government) to privileges it extends to citizens, including the privilege of contracting with the government. On the other hand, the Court has given the government wide latitude to impose conditions on contracts and grants it could not impose in a regulatory capacity. The government need not fund abortion or abortion counseling, but it may not ban abortions or abortion counseling. (These same principles were in conflict in the controversy over funding of the National Endowment for the Arts).

These legal uncertainties have led to several reports of faith-based groups reluctant to accept government funds for fear that the receipt of such funds will compromise their independence, if not immediately, then later. It may also generate pressure for laws granting greater autonomy to religious institutions, laws that will engender opposition from competing secular organizations and from groups worried that broad exemptions from regulatory requirements will

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52 The *Smith* Court 'retained' an exception for hybrid rights, where a claim for religious liberty is combined with another constitutional claim, such as the right of parents to direct the upbringing of their children. The lower courts are badly divided on whether the Court was really serious about this category, and if so, how strong the other claim must be to create a hybrid claim. Presumably, it need not be strong enough to prevail in its own right, or otherwise the Free Exercise Clause claim is superfluous.

53 42 U.S.C. 20000bb, *et seq.*

endanger the welfare of program beneficiaries. Some exemptions may even be challenged as unconstitutional favoritism toward religion. Particularly likely to be challenged on that ground are provisions of the law which allow faith-based providers to both accept government funds and discriminate on the basis of religion in hiring. It is difficult to predict the funds for fear that the receipt of such funds will compromise their independence, if not immediately, then later. It may also generate pressure for laws granting greater autonomy to likelihood success of such challenges.

Issues to Keep An Eye on

Several years ago, the Congress enacted a bill to fund child care. That act provides that direct aid may not go to schools teaching religion. However, it also authorizes the use of vouchers to purchase child care, even at sectarian institutions. The Act has never been challenged, nor to the best of my knowledge has anyone studied the administration of the Act. An investigation of this program would be illuminating.

If it is true that religious charities do a better job because of their spiritual component, would it not follow that states should encourage a wide range of religious choices so all citizens could benefit from them? My impression is that this is not happening. Is this because of decisions by public officials to favor dominant faiths, because smaller faiths cannot afford to set up social programs, or yet something else?

Is there any evidence for the repeated claim that sectarian providers do a better job than secular ones? (Query: Would, or should, this make a legal difference?)

Are churches unwilling despite the charitable choice law and the protections to their autonomy to rely on government money because they fear regulation? There is anecdotal evidence to support this thesis.

Are recipients of charitable choice funds actually engaging in religious discrimination in hiring as the Act permits? Again, some anecdotal evidence suggests that some recipients of government funds are reluctant to do so; others plainly are not. What is happening on the ground?

Will the new Office for Faith Based Affairs attempt to undo all regulation inconsistent with charitable choice thinking, or will it await congressional action? Will it insist on affirmative action for faith groups to make up for years of discrimination? (California has done just that. The American Jewish Congress is challenging that aspect of California's plan.)

What are the states doing about the "pervasively sectarian" problem?

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Articles on the Debate over
Charitable Choice
by Members of the
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Yes to Charitable Choice

by Dennis R. Hoover
Resident Fellow, The Greenberg Center

Charitable choice, a set of rules that encourage "faith-based organizations" (FBOs) to participate in government-funded welfare programs, was once an obscure player in the drama of welfare reform. But no longer. In campaign 2000 charitable choice is playing opposite the two leading men, George W. Bush and Al Gore. Both have been falling all over themselves to praise FBOs as providers of social services, and the party conventions will feature more of the same.

Bush was the first of a small number of governors to aggressively implement charitable choice. When he emerged on the national scene, many progressives shrugged off his pursuit of FBOs, saying in effect "we don't have a dog in that hunt." But Gore soon stunned the left by out-triangulating the great triangulator. In a speech at a Salvation Army drug rehabilitation center on May 24 last year, Gore embraced charitable choice and took the left to task for "hollow secularism" and "self-perpetuating" welfare bureaucracies, a maneuver some likened to Clinton's rebuke of Sister Souljah. Indeed, senior Gore adviser Elaine Kamarck indiscreetly blurted, "The Democratic Party is going to take back God this time."

Some critics see charitable choice as a stalking horse for stripping social services of public support. Others draw a straight line from Bush's association with Marvin Olasky, author of the Gingrichite favorite *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, to charitable choice. Critics have also traded on fear of the Christian Right. After Gore's speech, Elliot Mincberg of People for the American Way said, "I'm sure Gore is sincere about his faith, but why embrace the agenda of the Christian Coalition?" But charitable choice is not a creature of the right wing: Olasky himself has criticized charitable choice precisely because it does not comport with his vision of a purely voluntary approach to welfare. Under charitable choice, if welfare services are opened up to any private providers, FBOs must be allowed to apply—but public money will be spent regardless.

Philosophically, charitable choice is linked not to the religious right but to a new religious center, a confluence mainly of Roman Catholic, black Protestant, and moderate to left evangelical streams. This emerging alignment features, among others, the Call to Renewal, led by *Sojourners* editor Jim Wallis and allied groups like Catholic Charities, the Ten-Point Coalition (a church-based inner-city program led by Boston's Eugene Rivers) and the Center for

Public Justice (a moderate evangelical group in the Reformed "principled plu-ralism" tradition). Such groups may possess conservative theological and moral sensibilities, but they bring to the table a powerful social ethic that demands care for the poor, and not just through charity.

Charitable choice thus presents an unusual opportunity: a broad cross-sec-tion of groups has found terms under which it wants to spend public money on the poor. And polls suggest that three-quarters of the public approve of giving federal funds to service-providing FBOs. What's more, charitable choice does not privilege conservative Christianity, because it is rooted in the constitution-al paradigm of "substantive neutrality" (no favoritism for secularism over reli-gion, religion over secularism, or for one religion over another). Before the 1996 welfare law, FBOs were ineligible for funding if their programs had reli-gious components and they hired only co-religionists. Since then, charitable choice has aimed to level the playing field for all FBOs, Buddhist to Baptist. It provides protections for their religious identity but does not itself grant special exemptions from government accountability and performance standards.

Furthermore, the government is required to make equivalent secular pro-grams available to welfare beneficiaries who don't want a religious program, while FBOs are barred from religious discrimination against clients and from making religious activities mandatory. In addition, just as secular nonprofits that receive federal grants are required to demonstrate that public funds do not pay for their political speech (such as issue advocacy), FBOs must demonstrate that public funds do not pay for religious speech (specifically, "sectarian wor-ship, instruction, or proselytization").

Some church-state watchdog groups have rushed to defend a high wall of separation and are warning religious organizations that there are never shekels without shackles. Questions are also being asked about how to insure that FBOs don't abuse the system, since good-faith compliance can't always be assumed. Still, the legislative momentum behind charitable choice is over-whelming. At least ten bills before Congress would expand it, including the "new markets" package announced in May by House Speaker Dennis Hastert and President Clinton. Opponents are trolling for a test case, but the odds are against success in the courts, given that recent Supreme Court rulings seem to be tacking toward the substantive-neutrality vision.

To be sure, critics raise a number of legitimate concerns, and it would be naïve to assume that simply being religious makes a program competent. But there has never been and never will be a completely fail-safe government con-tract or grant. Whether the worry is publicly funded politicking (a longstand-ing right-wing bugbear), publicly funded proselytizing or some other worst-case scenario, all sides need to take a sober look at the whole nonprofit sector and forgo special pleading.

The left would do well to think beyond this year's presidential posturing and consider the long-term politics of social services. A strong and diverse

FBO community, more engaged than ever in public-private partnerships that serve the poor, may be a strong ally in defending federal funding when the good economic times stop rolling. Progressives can't afford to ignore realistic opportunities to help poor people and should instead concentrate on exercising constructive vigilance as charitable choice moves forward. Doing so advances social justice and a robustly impartial pluralism in the relationship between religion and public life.

The danger is that by sitting on their hands, progressives will unwittingly aid those far-right conservatives who would embrace charitable choice now only to abandon it later in favor of an imagined utopia of private welfare. The stakes for the poor are too high to allow charitable choice to be used as a bridge to the nineteenth century.

Old Alliance, New Ground Rules

by Mark Silk
Director, The Greenberg Center

For those who remember the urban policy of the 1960s, President Bush's new Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives seems like déja vu all over again.

Searching for a bottom-up approach to rescuing impoverished urban neighborhoods, the architects of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society seized upon black churches as their local partners. Before long, church-controlled nonprofits were springing up in cities across the nation, using federal funds to supply job training and counseling, build affordable housing and otherwise promote community development.

Some of these enterprises, as Republicans at the time happily pointed out, were marred by fraud, waste, and mismanagement. But they built upon the traditional commitment of American congregations generally, and the black church in particular, to provide for the needs of their members and the community at large. And they were consistent with the character of much social service provision in postwar America—namely, that government collected the money while contracting with nonprofit agencies to provide the services.

These days, many service-providing nonprofits are, in fact, "faith-based." The largest, Lutheran Services in America, receives 39 percent of its $ 7 billion annual budget from government sources. For Catholic Charities and the Salvation Army, two other major players, the numbers also are substantial: 62 percent of $ 2.3 billion and 18 percent of $ 2.1 billion respectively.

In return for their nearly $ 4.5 billion in government contracts, the three undertake a host of services: care for children and the elderly, settlement of new immigrants, construction of affordable housing, you name it. With agencies throughout the country (Catholic Charities, for example, comprises 1,400 independently incorporated entities), they constitute an integral part of the nation's service delivery system. So it was ill-informed, to say the least, of President Bush to declare at the National Prayer Breakfast earlier this month, "Government cannot be replaced by charities, but it can welcome them as partners instead of resenting them as rivals."

If the government already routinely funds faith-based nonprofits now, what's different about the president's initiative? When he talks about "mobilizing the armies of compassion," he seems to have religious congregations in mind. There, the picture is more complex.

The 1998 National Congregations Study, a geographically and denomi-

nationally representative survey conducted by University of Arizona sociologist Mark Chaves, found that most of the country's 300,000 congregations do engage in some form of social service—but only 3 percent of congregations run programs funded by government. Most of that assistance is short-term or emergency intervention, such as collecting food for the hungry, helping staff a homeless shelter or spending a day building a Habitat for Humanity house. According to the study, respondents from 28 percent of predominantly white congregations and a whopping 65 percent of predominantly African American ones said they would be interested in applying for such federal funding. Even accounting for many second thoughts, this suggests that there are indeed troops out there waiting to mobilize.

In line with the charitable choice provision of the 1996 welfare reform law, the president's initiative aims to make it easier for them to do so by no longer requiring them to set up separate nonprofits or otherwise cease being "pervasively sectarian." To be sure, churches are not supposed to use government funds to pay for proselytizing or to condition the government-funded services they provide on active participation in religious activities. But neither must they take the crucifixes off the wall or do anything else to hide their spiritual light under a bushel—precisely because their religious identities and motives, in the president's view, will contribute to the success of their efforts.

Bush's belief in what religion can do in this regard is clearly related to his personal faith journey. In 1999 during a presidential primary debate in Des Moines he explained that Jesus was his favorite political philosopher because "he changed my heart." While that might have seemed philosophically vacuous to many, it expressed the traditional evangelical Protestant theology of social betterment: The way to make people, and thereby society, better is to change their hearts by bringing them to Jesus.

When asked after the election to name the highlights of his presidential campaign, Bush cited a visit to the Teen Challenge center in Colfax, Iowa. Teen Challenge International identifies itself as "a Christian nonprofit addiction treatment ministry with 130 centers (2,885 beds) in the United States." The Teen Challenge program makes bringing addicts to Jesus the sine qua non of recovery. While permitting the government to underwrite such a program would make a travesty of the First Amendment, the president may well be thinking along these lines.

But it is one thing to use taxpayers' dollars to fund a Teen Challenge center and another to support a homeless shelter where there is a regular but optional Bible study group. In fact, most faith communities do not share evangelicals' theological understanding of what they do, or why they do it. Mother Teresa didn't seek to bring Hindus into the Catholic Church; classic Catholic social teaching says that the poor should be helped independent of proselytizing. The same holds true for the mainline Protestant churches,

whose members are far more engaged in social ministries than their evangelical brethren. If Bush has difficulty seeing beyond the evangelical model, the rest of us shouldn't make the same mistake.

Poor Americans are going to need all the help they can get. The federal government may have ended Aid to Families with Dependent Children in 1996, but it didn't do away with poverty. For those who have been on welfare continuously since then, the 60-month federal clock runs out this year, and while some states have taken steps to maintain coverage, thousands of Americans are going to find themselves dropped automatically from public assistance. As for the current economic slowdown, it will unquestionably place greater strains on social services.

The strains are already showing. According to Sharon Daly, vice president for social policy of Catholic Charities USA, in 2000 there was a 23 percent increase in the amount of food and shelter her organization gave out through its member agencies, and that fell far short of what was requested, mostly by the working poor. A recent survey by Lutheran Services shows that some of its programs have had to be discontinued because of lack of funding, and that nearly half have extensive waiting lists.

Will there be sufficient funds to meet the needs? Thus far, White House officials associated with the new initiative have talked mostly about encouraging more private charitable giving. In saying the initiative will involve billions of dollars, they appear to mean only that charitable choice provisions will be written into all relevant federal social service programs at whatever level they happen to be funded.

And there's a hitch. Enabling religious congregations to create new social services with government funds without increasing the total amount available will mean, by the law of zero sum, that existing providers, including experienced faith-based providers, will get less. The result will be some disruption of the current system at a minimum. New players will have to spend time figuring out how to run their programs, and there will inevitably be those that do badly or fall by the wayside.

In any event, states and localities will have to choose from among all who apply, and studies have not yet been done to determine whether faith-based providers do the job any better than secular ones. There are areas where the faith-based have proven themselves solid performers. These include providing affordable housing for the elderly, day care and after-school care, and tutoring and mentoring for teenagers, all of which may be funded through the current federal welfare program, Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF). If the president's faith-basistas don't want to be working for the Herbert Hoover of the 21st century, there may well come a time when they start talking about the need to "fully fund" their new initiative, perhaps by increasing the appropriation for TANF when it comes up for reauthorization next year.

At the end of the day, the initiative may be important not for changing the social service landscape of America, but for creating the political coalition necessary for Congress to appropriate enough money to support at least minimally those Americans who are most in need. If, in the name of faith, this ends up looking a lot like welfare as we knew it, don't tell anyone.

Faith-based Update: Bipartisan Breakdown

by Dennis R. Hoover

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On July 10, the *Washington Post* set the day's news agenda with Dana Milbank's front-page report that the Salvation Army had agreed to support President Bush's charitable choice initiative in exchange for a rule exempting faith-based organizations from state and local policies banning discrimination against gays.

Based on a leaked internal Army document, the story forced the administration into a swift and undignified retreat. By nightfall, the White House had announced not only that there had been no such agreement, but that any regulatory change to that effect was unnecessary and no longer under consideration.

It was the latest pothole in what has been the bumpiest of roads for an initiative that was supposed to be the Bush domestic policy's answer to motherhood and apple pie.

Initially, news coverage of the President's initiative tended to give the plan the benefit of the doubt, and the balance of editorial opinion was cautiously positive. Politicians on both sides of the aisle had previously voted in favor of charitable choice rules. And the appointment of University of Pennsylvania professor John DiIulio was evidence of its bipartisan lineage.

"My message to my fellow Democrats is this: I'm not in this administration because I feel like being Republican," DiIulio told Rebecca Carr of the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*. "I'm in this administration because like Vice President Gore, like Senator Lieberman and like most Democrats in the House who have voted for this previously, I believe this is the way to get poor people and people in need the services they need."

Moreover, many important religious groups supported the initiative—including some strange bedfellows (see table). The policy's crossover appeal offered the possibility of a new religious center to replace the "culture war" politics of religious right vs. religious left. Emblem of compassionate conservatism, bipartisanship, and "bringing the country together," it is no wonder that charitable choice was rolled out by the new administration in its second week on the job.

But by March the honeymoon was over, and the centrist antecedents of charitable choice were quickly forgotten. By the time the White House got around to trying to stop the bleeding in May and June, there was so much partisan blood in the water that the initiative's survival was very much in doubt.

Trouble started on the right, even before the initiative was introduced as

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The New Religious Center and the Faith-based Initiative

	Mostly supportive	Somewhat supportive	Neutral	Somewhat opposed	Mostly opposed
Religious traditions and denominations					
Mainline Protestants					
American Baptist				x	
United Church of Christ					x
Episcopal		x			
Presbyterian (USA)		x			
United Methodist		x			
White Evangelicals					
right-wing				x	
center-right to progressive	x				
Roman Catholics	x				
Black Protestants	x				
Hispanic Protestants	x				
Jews					
Reform and Conservative					x
Orthodox	x				
Muslims		x			
Nation of Islam					x
Mormons			x		
Unitarians					x

Source: Author's assessment based on press accounts, denominational statements, and survey data. For another breakdown of religious traditions, see www.beliefnet.com/index/index_405.html.

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legislation. In early March Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson wrote a *USA Today* op-ed suggesting that the whole initiative be converted into a tax credit scheme; and Jerry Falwell, the other aging pillar of the religious right, went on record in a Beliefnet.com interview with his own collection of worries.

This was a big story. Deborah Caldwell and Steven Waldman of Beliefnet.com cut straight to the heart of the matter: "Bush forced to the surface the anxieties of these conservative leaders. How? By being a strong pluralist." Falwell and Robertson wanted to exclude programs run by religious groups they consider fringe or cultic (such as Scientologists and Hare Krishnas), whereas charitable choice is open to all qualified faith-based organizations (FBOs).

Caldwell and Waldman explored the possibility that a Bush face-off with the Christian Right was to his benefit. It could yield a "Sister Souljah" moment for Bush, Michael Cromartie, director of evangelical studies at the Ethics and Public Policy Institute, told Beliefnet.com. "This is a good chance for Bush to tutor the religious right about what religious freedom means in this country."

Critics from the left quickly joined the fray. When a House Judiciary subcommittee held hearings on the issue in April, chair Steve Chabot (R-OH) noted that all the returning members had previously voted for charitable choice. But Democrats immediately signaled their change of tune. "Religion has never needed government, and it doesn't need it now," declared Jerry

Nadler (D-NY), according to the AP. With opposition to the initiative now full-throated and on the march, journalists gravitated to a theme of "initiative in trouble" (see sidebar), often noting with surprise that it was being attacked from the right as well as the left.

The defections on the right (which ought to have been expected) were nothing compared to what was happening elsewhere on the political spectrum. Through the early spring it was hard to find anyone outside of the African American clergy to say something nice about charitable choice. On March 21 Oklahoma Republican J.C. Watts and Ohio Democrat Tony Hall announced their co-sponsored Community Solutions Act, which attempted to embody all of Bush's initiative (including his package of tax incentives for charitable giving). They did so with every expectation of quickly picking up more Democratic support. But for months Hall stood alone.

When Bush visited a Catholic hunger center in Cleveland on May 24 to tout his plan, Hall was there, but fellow Ohio representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones turned a cold shoulder, telling the *Akron Beacon Journal*, "It's definitely a partisan issue, because George Bush is playing to the conservative Christian Right…It's payback." Hall admitted to the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*'s Elizabeth Auster and Susan Ruiz Patto that, "I've been surprised. I thought it would be embraced quickly."

Journalists monitoring the initiative's declining fortunes took note of two racially charged subplots involving Boston's sharp-tongued Pentecostal pastor Eugene Rivers. DiIulio set the stage for the first in a March 7 address to the National Association of Evangelicals that obliquely blasted Robertson and Falwell: "With all due respect and in good fellowship, predominantly white, ex-urban evangelical and national para-church leaders should be careful not to presume to speak for any persons other than themselves." (The speech prompted Lou Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition to call for DiIulio to be replaced.)

In case the distinction between "white ex-urban" and black urban was lost on some listeners, Rivers quickly made it plain. As Mary Leonard reported in the March 17 *Boston Globe*, Rivers declared, "The white fundamentalists thought the faith-based office would finance their sectarian programs…and they are infuriated because John DiIulio wants resources to go to people who are poor, black, and brown." Huffed Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention, "Like Johnny Cochran with a clerical collar, Rev. Rivers plays the race card."

Then there was the April 25 "faith-based summit" organized by congressional Republicans. Attended by some 400 black religious leaders, the meeting prompted complaints from critics who saw the event as a crude Republican attempt to buy off black opposition. Elizabeth Becker reported in the May 24 *New York Times* that some Democrats were concerned that "Republicans are using the program to woo black voters, giving money to black inner-city

churches in what they see as an increasingly partisan program."

In an interview with Beliefnet.com's Holly J. Lebowitz, Rivers responded: "My sense is that they [Republicans] are no more trying to get the support of black people than the Democrats. In other words, are they indifferent to any residual political benefits? Of course not." Rivers told CBS Morning News May 21 that it would be a "stupid thing" for black Democrats to casually dismiss the initiative. "We are simply in a situation where the other white guy won. Now we've got to deal with it."

Critics' allegations about partisan motivations were of much less consequence than the charge that charitable choice amounts to tax-funded religious discrimination in employment. Charitable choice attempts a constitutional balancing act, permitting FBOs to hire by religion while empowering clients to decline services from religious providers. Religious hiring exemptions historically have been more controversial when the form of government assistance is direct (contracts/grants) than when it is, like the GI Bill and analogous programs, indirect (vouchers). Most opponents rallied around the discrimination argument, regardless of the form of aid.

A day before the start of the congressional summit for black leaders, a group called the Coalition Against Religious Discrimination announced that it had collected 850 signatures from religious leaders opposing charitable choice. "This legislation is intended to permit some fundamentalist organization to put a sign on the door saying, 'No Jews Need Apply,' surmised Barry Lynn of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, according to several reports.

Watts called the hiring issue a red herring—"Planned Parenthood receives federal funds, but do we raise Cain because they don't hire Alan Keyes?" Nevertheless, on the Senate side, the hiring discrimination issue was the principal reason why charitable choice expansion was not even introduced as legislation.

The Senate point man on the initiative was Republican Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania. Santorum wanted (and, after Senate control switched to Democrats, needed) bipartisan backing. So he looked to Connecticut Senator Joe Lieberman, who initially positioned himself as a supporter, posing with Bush for faith-based photo-ops in January. But it soon became clear that he was interested in charitable choice lite, and wouldn't support legislation until various issues, especially hiring discrimination, were addressed to his (or his party's) satisfaction.

Santorum decided to introduce only the tax incentives part of the initiative (popular with virtually everyone), and wait on charitable choice. On the other side of the Capitol, a few days before the full House Judiciary Committee was to take up the Watts-Hall bill, committee chair James Sensenbrenner told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* that there were still "legal problems." "It's basically up to the administration to get it together if they want it passed."

For its part, the White House put it out that the problem started when Congress failed to draft a bill that mirrored existing charitable choice law. "Some White House officials say House conservatives overreached when they were writing the bill, giving too much leeway to churches," reported Mike Allen in the June 25 *Washington Post*. So the scaling back was done. On June 20, DiIulio told Laura Meckler, who covered the issue closely for the AP, "A number of really excellent modifications have been suggested." By June 26 a deal had been struck with House Republicans, and Judiciary passed it on a party line vote June 28.

Some of the changes simply clarified and beefed up provisions that were always part of charitable choice as originally conceived, such as the requirement that religious activities be optional for service recipients, and the requirement that public funds not be commingled with private. A measure in the original Watts-Hall bill allowing religious groups who are denied funding to sue the government for damages hit the cutting room floor. And on the crucial issue of hiring, new language said FBOs could consider religion in hiring but not "religious practices"—a phrase critics thought too easily justified other kinds of discrimination.

Lieberman continued to play hard to get. "An aide said today that while the senator considered the new changes in the House helpful, he was still withholding support," reported Elizabeth Becker in the June 28 *New York Times*.

Part of the administration's problem with rounding up support had to do with inattention. As Allen reported in the June 25 *Washington Post*, White House officials acknowledged that they had allowed the faith-based initiative to founder while they were preoccupied with passing the tax cut.

But the problem ran deeper. The expansion of charitable choice had been proposed without any increase in public funds. This threatened the bottom line for key religious groups already involved in government-funded social services (e.g., Catholic Charities, Lutheran Family Services, the Salvation Army). The math was not fuzzy: As originally proposed in the House, every dollar granted to a new FBO was, in effect, one dollar less for present grantees.

In his May 20 commencement address at Notre Dame University, Bush implicitly acknowledged the problem. With a nod to Dorothy Day and praise for the tradition of Catholic social teaching, Bush pledged that his next budget request would include increases for housing and drug treatment programs. Journalists covered Bush's Notre Dame speech as part of a political overture to Catholic voters (which it was), but it was also a significant (and largely unnoticed) development in the charitable choice story.

In late May, with the tax cut bill on the verge of final passage, the religious center made its presence felt again. As the *Boston Globe*'s Mary Leonard reported, "A religious coalition headed by the group Call to Renewal directly linked the tax plan to the group's continued support for another key element of Bush's agenda, his faith-based initiative."

Conservative Republicans had been looking to eliminate refundable tax credits for low income families in order to help make room for rate cuts, but the coalition—which included the Congress of National Black Churches, the United States Catholic Conference, Evangelicals for Social Action, World Vision, and the Christian Community Development Association—lobbied for it to be retained. (It was.)

Even when the Catholic Bishops offered their support for the initiative June 14, Cardinal Roger Mahoney of Los Angeles hastened to lament that Bush's original proposal to establish a Compassion Capital Fund was not included in the House bill, noting, "More competition over the same or fewer resources is not the answer. Indeed a commitment to increase federal resources…would strengthen the proposal and assist its supporters." Further lamentations followed the House Ways and Means Committee's evisceration of Bush's tax incentive proposal for the charitable giving of non-itemizers (reduced to $6.3 billion from the proposed $84 billion over 10 years). "We support it in principle, but the amount is so small it's almost funny," Sharon Daly of Catholic Charities told the *Washington Post*.
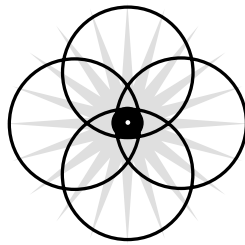
And then came the Salvation Army flap in July. After the story broke, journalists began preparing to write charitable choice's obit. The *Washington Post*'s second-day story concluded that, "Despite the administration's swift response to the controversy, the president's effort to fund religious charities—one of his core legislative initiatives—may have suffered lasting damage." "Faith-based Proposal May be Left at Altar," announced the *Houston Chronicle*.

Such warnings may ultimately prove to be premature. On July 19, the House passed the bill with a smattering of bipartisan support (15 Democratic yeas), though only after hints were given that the hiring issue would be up for further negotiation in conference with the Senate.

With Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle signaling that his body would set the anti-discrimination bar very high, the White House had its work cut out for it.

The Leonard E. Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life was established at Trinity College in 1996 to advance knowledge and understanding of the varied roles that religious movements, institutions, and ideas play in the contemporary world; to explore challenges posed by religious pluralism and tensions between religious and secular values; and to examine the influence of religion on politics, culture, family life, gender roles, and other issues in the United States and elsewhere in the world.

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