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# A Constructivist Inquiry of Church-State Relationships for Faith-Based Organizations

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# A Constructivist Inquiry of Church-State Relationships for Faith-Based Organizations

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by

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Abstract

A CONSTRUCTIVIST INQUIRY OF CHURCH-STATE RELATIONSHIPS FOR FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

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Faith-based initiatives have the potential to alter church-state relationships as they remove barriers to the public funding of human services in organizations that promote the role of values, beliefs, and other characteristics of faith. In seeking to "level the playing field" for these faith-based organizations, faith-based initiatives suggest moving away from past practices, where "religious" organizations utilized public funding for the delivery of "secular" human services, and toward the public funding support of organizations whose human service activities are based on faith in a more thoroughgoing manner.

This research inquires into meanings assigned to opportunities and risks related to the public funding of faith-based organizations, as articulated by a variety of stakeholders, from government officials to the leaders of faith-based organizations. The guiding research question, *What are the meanings of church-state relationships for faith-*

*based organizations?*, asks the leaders of faith-based organizations in one Virginia locality, as well as other local, state, and national stakeholders, about their understandings of various aspects of the church-state relationships that develop when faith-based organizations utilize public funds for the provision of human services.

The findings of this inquiry, presented in a narrative case study report, and the implications of this case study provide a richer understanding of the multiple meanings that faith-based organizations assign to relationships with government programs, government agencies, and the use of public funds. The multiple meanings of church-state relationships that are offered by diverse research participants provide valuable insights into the complex phenomenon of faith-basis organizations providing human services with government monies. The interpretations offered in this dissertation provide greater knowledge of the role of faith as a basis for publicly funded human services, and furthermore, this knowledge may find value in its recognition of the implications of faith-based, publicly funded human services.

# Chapter 1: An Introduction to the Inquiry

## I. Introduction

In January 2001, giving renewed public attention to the public policy context of faith-based initiatives, President George W. Bush issued Executive Orders (EO) to "establish" (EO 13199) and "instruct" (EO 13198) the White House Office for Faith-based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) and similar Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI) in the Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, Justice, and Education (White House, 2001a; 2001b). The purpose of the White House Office and the Centers was to identify and eliminate "barriers" to the participation of faith-based organizations in governmental human service programs (White House, 2001b; 2001c). The aim of the President's initiatives, therefore, was to promote equal opportunities for faith-based organizations, giving them a fair chance on "a level playing field" in the provision of publicly funded human services (White House, 2001a).

The President described these bold steps as a way to rally "America's armies of compassion" that comprise the valued efforts of local human service delivery systems (White House, 2001a). Congregations, religiously affiliated human service organizations, and other faith-based organizations may not identify themselves with military metaphors such as "armies" and they may not understand federal regulations as

"barriers to participation," but in recognizing their religious characteristics and the possible use of public funds, how do they understand their relationship to governmental entities? Do faith-based organizations experience barriers to equal opportunity for public-private partnerships (White House, 2001e), or might they recognize safeguards that protect both the providers and recipients of faith-based human services (Baptist Joint Committee, 2001c)? These issues relate to the guiding research question being introduced: What are the meanings of church-state relationships for faith-based organizations?

## II. Recognition of Multiple Perspectives

Recent faith-based initiatives have the potential to alter substantially the church-state landscape in America by removing barriers to the public funding of organizations that promote the role of values, beliefs, and other characteristics of faith (Davis & Hankins, 1999). In seeking to "level the playing field" for these faith-based organizations, faith-based initiatives suggest moving away from past practices, where "religious" organizations utilized federal funding for the delivery of "secular" human services, and toward the public support of organizations whose human service activities are based on faith in a more thoroughgoing manner. The initiatives seek to create new public-private partnerships that provide effective human services while removing the regulations that impede the religious character of service providers. This has led to a variety of responses from religious, political, professional, and other circles.

The National Association of Social Work (NASW) (2001) is among the groups who have expressed caution regarding faith-based initiatives that seek to change church-

state relationships (American Civil Liberties Union, 2001; Interfaith Alliance, 2001; United Methodist News Service, 2001). The Association issued a press release recognizing the long tradition of religious involvement in the planning and delivery of human services to people in need, but also highlighting the complexity of public-private relationships in providing services (NASW, 2001). In recognizing that relationships between public and private organizations are necessary among human service networks, NASW points to the value of "fundamental principles" that should guide these relationships in the planning and delivery of services. The statement seeks to protect against discriminatory practices in employment and in access to services. It also draws attention to issues of service delivery such as accountability, competent and qualified staffing, and maintaining government responsibility (NASW, 2001).

With the NASW statement similar to those of other professional groups, social workers offer a critical voice that provides an understanding different from President Bush on relationships between faith-based organizations and government entities (Baptist Joint Committee, 2001; Pew Forum, 2001b; Roundtable, 2002; United Methodist News Service, 2001). Various religious and denominational groups also contribute to the multiple perspectives on church-state relationships with some fearing governments will be establishing religion and others fearing governments will be limiting religion (Interfaith Alliance, 2001; Baptist Joint Committee, 2001; Winston, 2001). Based on the variety of understandings of church-state relationships expressed by these groups, this dissertation research inquires into meanings assigned to current opportunities and risks related to the public funding of faith-based human service organizations, as articulated by

a variety of stakeholders, from government officials to the leaders of faith-based organizations. While many voices have articulated their understandings on the issue, the leaders of faith-based organizations themselves have seldom had the opportunity to offer their perspective in the broader public policy debate over faith-based initiatives.

## III. Contextual Definitions and a Research Review

The complexity of responses to faith-based initiatives and the limited implementation of policies such as charitable choice suggest that organizations planning and delivering human services on the basis of faith understand their relationships with government entities in many different ways (Carlson-Thies, 1997a; Monsma, 1998; Sherman, 1997). Some faith-based organizations value the chance to utilize public monies in helping them achieve their service oriented goals, while others fear that government ties will interfere with the role of faith in providing a human service. This inquiry seeks to obtain a richer understanding of the multiple meanings that faith-based organizations assign to relationships with government programs and government agencies and to the use of public funds. These relationships will be understood in different ways and, as a result, there are terms that need to be clarified and other research findings that need to be mentioned.

The definitions I offer are tentative. They have been developed from a literature review as well as in conversation with faith-based organizational leaders and other stakeholders in the research process. Based on the recent usage of the term "faith-based organization," I use this term in the widest sense to describe organizations that, in some way, incorporate, relate to, are influenced by, or otherwise base their practices on matters

of faith, religion, or spirituality. Some organizations have names that are explicitly faith-based; for others, only a board member or a director would state that the organization is faith-based and the term is not used in the organization's name or mission. Whenever I make a reference to the broadest range of these organizations, I use the term "faith-based organization." Other terms, faith-related organization (Smith & Sossin, 2001), church-related organization (Netting, 1982, 1984), or religious organization (Jeavons, 1998) are certainly of value as they suggest subtle, but important differences among these organizations; and they may even be my preference, but in the current practice context, the identifier "faith-based" seems to be the most widely recognized and utilized among these organizations. I do distinguish between religious service organizations and congregations throughout the dissertation, but with the popular usage, even among the organizational leaders I have interviewed, I employ the term "faith-based organization" as a broad descriptor for all of these organizations.

Similarly, faith-based initiatives is a term used throughout the dissertation to describe public policies that relate to faith-based human service delivery or, more aptly, the public funding of faith-based organizations for the delivery of human services. Charitable Choice is one specific faith-based policy initiative that will be described in the next chapter.

Church-state relationships, or church-state partnerships, (Pew Forum, 2001c; Sider & Rolland, 2001; Walker, 2000; Wallis, 2001) are terms used occasionally by the faith-based organizational leaders that participate in the study and more by other people who are describing the variety of relationships between church and state, or in this case

between faith-based organizations and government entities. Public-private partnership is a broader term that describes relationships between government entities and private organizations, including for-profit and nonprofit organizations (Salamon, 1995). Church-state is used here to describe a specific set of public-private partnerships, those occurring between public and faith-based organizations.

"Separation of church and state" is a similarly used term to describe one interpretation of the First Amendment to our United States Constitution and a view frequently used to describe a historical and unique principle of American government which maintain a distinction between the state, our form of government in its federal, state, and local forms, and the church, inclusive of all religious bodies (Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, 2002). Most organizational leaders interviewed said that they believe in and support this principle and then proceeded to articulate their various understandings and practices of it.

"Human services" characterizes the programs and activities offered by organizations that serve people in the process of meeting human needs. I use the term throughout the dissertation, yet other participants referred to their work as faith-based human services, social services, services, social ministries, missions, or outreach. There may be some distinctions to be made between these words, but by and large they are used interchangeably by the research participants.

"Accountability" is one last term I will tentatively define because of its range of usage. Participants may use the word interchangeably with other words when referring to both financial accountability and programmatic accountability. In financial terms they

may be referring to financial reports, audits, budgets, and budgeting practices. Programmatically, they may have in mind evaluations, which can be both summative and formative. Here they may also discuss monitoring, outcomes, performance, or program results.

A literature review chapter further develops the meanings of some of these concepts, but because of the contextual nature of this research, rooted in the meanings articulated by faith-based organizations, I believe it can be helpful to begin with these introductory definitions of how I understand the usage of the terms and to provide a starting place for tracking how participants use them. Similarly, it may be helpful to provide an overview of some of the research findings from other localities as they are related to faith-based organizations and the use of public funds.

Few states have implemented faith-based initiatives in a thorough enough manner to allow for their formal evaluation (Sherman, 1997; 2001). The Roundtable on Religion and Social Policy reports the difficulty in even assessing how faith-based organizations use public funds because of the processes by which public entities at the federal, state, and local level provide grants and contracts for a variety of human services at multiple levels (Montiel, 2003). Research in California (Anderson, Orr, and Silverman, 2000), Mississippi (Bartkowski and Regis, 1999), New Jersey (Devita, Platnick, and Twombly, 1999), and Indiana (Polis Center, 2001; Reingold, Pirog, and Brady, 2000) has assessed the feasibility of whether faith-based organizations have the capacity to provide needed human services within their regions and has suggested a range of responses. Green and Sherman (2002) are among the few who have considered the nature of relationships

between faith-based organizations and governments. Their research covers 15 states but only considers a limited range of certain aspects of the relationships (e.g. financial) without much detail of the lived experiences of these relationships from the perspective of the faith-based organizations.

Research findings in other states do provide details of specific relationships and services, such as churches providing food relief in Mississippi (Bartkowski, 2001), small religiously affiliated human service providers of childcare in Illinois (Gronbjerg and Nelson, 1998), faith-based organizations providing welfare reform related mentoring services in Michigan (Kim, 2001), the historic relationships between churches and other organizations in their local human service delivery system in North Carolina (1994; 2000), and the evaluation and management of a variety of faith-based organizations in Indiana (Bielefeld, Littlepage, and Thelin, 2002; Kennedy and Beilefeld, 2002), but these do not provide the details of the complexity of the understandings of the relationships between faith-based organizations and public entities.

This research is not a comparison to the findings of other localities, nor is it an evaluation of faith-based initiatives in this locality. Rather, it is an interpretive research process that seeks to understand the meaning of the relationships that faith-based organizations have with public funding entities. Chapter two is a literature review that provides the development of my thought towards a researchable question. The literature review begins with an analysis of historical and contemporary efforts of religious and governmental involvement in human service provision. After recognizing that religious organizations have long related to the government in meeting human needs, the literature

review considers the distinctiveness of recent faith-based initiatives for church-state relationships and concludes with some of the working hypotheses that shaped the research question and methods.

## IV. Introduction to Theoretical Perspective and Research Methodology

The guiding research question for this dissertation asks leaders of faith-based organizations in one Virginia locality, as well as other state and local stakeholders, about their understandings of various aspects of church-state relationships when considering public funding for providing human services. In proposing this research, I felt that attention paid to the multiple meanings of church-state relationships that would be offered by diverse research participants could provide valuable insights into the complex phenomenon of faith-basis organizations providing human services with government monies. I hoped that these findings would provide greater knowledge of the role of faith as a basis for publicly funded human services, and furthermore, this knowledge would find value in recognizing the ethical implications of faith-based, publicly funded human services.

I begin chapter three with the presentation of a theory of pragmatism and an interpretive philosophy of science that is best articulated by Richard Rorty (1982; 1989). Rorty's pragmatic perspective describes a contextual process of knowledge-building and is relevant to a consideration of how faith-based organizations understand church-state relationships in their context. Based on this theoretical framework that lies within an interpretive social science paradigm, I decided that constructivist inquiry provides the

most appropriate methodology to a research question that attempts to appreciate fully the multiple meanings of diverse participants (Rodwell, 1998).

Constructivist methods are appropriate to implementing this research that considers the experiences of leaders of faith-based organizations and their understandings of partnerships with government. It is also a good fit in light of the body of knowledge related to the public funding of faith-based organizations. There is a need for further research into the experiences and activities of faith-based organizations that are involved in partnerships with government entities, and constructivist methodology attends to the meanings expressed as a result of the subjective experiences of faith-based organizational leaders and other stakeholders. Interest in the subjective role of participants' experiences, their insider perspectives and the values that shape their understandings led me to constructivist inquiry as the best method for conducting this research. Chapter three provides more detail on the focus, fit, and feasibility of employing this research methodology.

## V. Interpretations and Implications of the Data

The perspectives offered from research interviews with 42 leaders of faith-based organizations are presented in a narrative case study report in chapter four with the implications of the report in Chapter five. This case study report is discussed as a "thick description" of the research process. I have chosen to present this case study report in the narrative form of a story with eleven characters who are the leaders of faith-based organizations describing their experiences and understandings of church-state relationships. The interpretive methods of data analysis and reporting suggest the use of

a narrative case study report (Rodwell, 1998). While a case study report in a traditional reporting format is able to offer a thick description of the research findings, Denzin (1989) has suggested that the report also be a "thick interpretation" of the data by the researcher. As a result, the use of a story format best allows for the expression of multiple meanings and the subjectivity of the perspectives offered by the organizational leaders.

Constructivist research methods include a wide range of detailed criteria for rigor in the research process that are carried into the process of data analysis and the reporting of interpretations. These criteria for rigor, including a reflexive and methodological journal, peer review, and comprehensive member checks, serve to address any risks that may be associated with presenting he interpretations in a story format. In the final member check, the participants who read the case study report state that it is reflective of their lived experiences, and those who said so were able to find their voice in the story. In an attempt to balance further the *artistic* expression of my interpretations with the *scientific* expectations of a research process, themes that emerge in the data are discussed before the case study report and a list of lessons learned by the researcher follow the story.

At the introduction to the case study report I describe the responsibility of the reader to discern her or his own lessons. This is particularly important when employing constructivist methods because the insider perspective offered in a context-bound process limits the generalizability of the findings. If I have provided an adequately thick

description of the phenomenon, consumers of the research should be able to determine applicability to other settings.

Consumers of the research should also be able to discern other lessons that can be learned from the case study report. I return to the writings of Rorty (pragmatism), as well as those of Stanley Fish (reader response theory) (1982), to discuss how pragmatic meaning in an interpretive paradigm is a product of the reader and to invite readers of this research to determine the implications for their contexts. I invite you to enjoy the story that is the interpretative report of my research data and to offer your meanings and the lessons you learn from the characters that represent the experiences of the participants in my research.

## VI. Conclusion

It has now been more than two years since President Bush announced his plan to promote faith-based initiatives. With many voices offering a wide range of perspectives on the relationships between faith-based organizations and governmental entities, the research has the potential to be of great relevance. I believe it is important to consider meanings at the local level of the church-state relationships that faith-based organizations enter to provide publicly funded human services. At this time, new faith-based organizations are being created throughout Virginia, and with them understandings of possible relationships with the government are continually emerging. The NASW expresses caution to these organizations that must consider the complex issues of private-public partnerships, and as a social worker, I want to work continually with these

organizations, not to instruct them, but to share in their process of making sense of these issues.

Some faith-based organizations in Virginia are currently applying for public funds; other organizations are considering the level of government involvement in their use of public money. Some are intent on maintaining their religious autonomy as they ask questions about public funded services, and others feel that any funding source will be helpful as they strive to achieve their mission. These organizations hear the voices of advocates actively promoting partnerships with government and others decrying the headaches that come with it. In all of these possibilities, the critical question is "what are the meanings of the church-state relationships for faith-based organizations?" This inquiry addresses this question as it obtains a richer comprehension of the complex phenomenon of church-state relationships, the meanings that faith-based organizations assign to the relationships they enter with government funding agencies, as well as the implications of these relationships.

# Chapter 2: A Review of the Literature

## I. An Historical Context of Faith-Based Human Services

An historical account of religious organizations that address human needs by providing assistance and a consideration of the historical relationships between religious organizations and governmental entities can provide insight into the contemporary development of these issues. There is a historical precedent for human welfare assistance that is based on relationships between religious organizations and government, but many of these antecedents differ from the organization practice currently being encouraged by faith-based initiatives.

### The Early History of Religion and Human Service Provision in the United States

Religions have offered care and support to their local communities throughout recorded history. In the United States, many of the earliest European settlers provided assistance to people in need under Judeo-Christian religious auspices or on the basis of these theological understandings. In the colonial period, the relationship between religion, governance, and human welfare was a complex, political matter for a diverse people in a new land handling a variety of needs (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999). Wineburg (2001, p. 30) writes that while church and state relationships in human service provision have expanded and contracted like an accordion, forms of assistance to people in need have always included both religious and public resources. The earliest days of

American history included elements of religion and government, church and state, in efforts to address human needs.

Colonial Christian churches were an important social institution, but were not seen as benevolent institutions (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999). While congregations provided minimal financial support to the so-called "deserving poor," the church as an institution greatly influenced early American governance and civic responses to need (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999). Much of seventeenth century America followed the English tradition of utilizing Poor Laws where local governments made decisions about the care of people in need. The church served less in the function of providing public assistance to people in need (in terms of food, money, clothing, and shelter) and more in the function of providing a belief system to shape decisions about welfare assistance. The words of the religious leader Cotton Mather demonstrate the tone of early American religious influence on municipal Poor Laws and support to the "deserving poor:" "If there be any idle persons among you, I beseech you, cure them of their idleness. Don't nourish 'em and harden 'em in that, but find employment for them" (cited in Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999, p. 115).

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, only a few colonies offered religious freedom to allow the free practice of diverse religious traditions. Not many religious groups were allowed to offer independent direct care and assistance, however the Quakers in Pennsylvania served people who were poor and in 1713 formalized this process in the Friends Almshouse. More common to the early American establishment system of religion, colonies provided institutional support for church activities. In

Massachusetts, the Boston Episcopal Society was established in 1724 to provide assistance to members of their denomination who were in need. These examples point to a departure from civil assistance and toward the development of religious non-governmental and nonprofit organizations that addressed the welfare needs of local communities (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999).

The revivalism and theology of the Great Awakening movement encouraged the formation of dissenting congregations and led to the creation of voluntary societies, such as the American Education Society, the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, and the American Home Missionary Society. These largely independent mission bodies provided ministries that included religious teachings, evangelism at home and abroad, and the relief of people who were poor, orphaned, or in prison (Walker, 1985). Such voluntary efforts challenged publicly supported ministry to the extent that Baptists made the voluntary support of congregational efforts by its members a matter of doctrine (Hall, 1995). As a result of these challenges to publicly established religious ministries, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Virginia passed statutes permitting new sects to organize and exempting their members from supporting state established religious practices and ministries (Hall, 1995).

In the early days of American independence, religious values continued to shape local teachings about caring for people in need. Whether local governments or developing voluntary organizations provided for welfare needs, religious social teachings influenced ideas about care and assistance. One common teaching was that support was only available to the people recognized as deserving of it, and then, only when other able-

bodied family and community members were not able to provide assistance (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999). At the same time that religious values shaped public understandings about social welfare, religion was also able to influence social reform and advocacy. Christian missionary efforts incorporated the promotion of women's and children's rights in society (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999).

With a public policy that promoted the separation of church and state, the absence of a state church led to the involvement of many diverse religious groups who maintained their own orphanages, hospitals, aid societies, and other welfare institutions in the early days of the United States (Trattner, 1999). It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century, that congregations began to offer assistance by providing human services to the poor, including education, training, and shelter for children and adults. Among the examples are Baptist churches in Philadelphia that provided sewing classes, night school, an orphanage, and an adult home (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999).

In the 1870's, regional and national conferences devoted to welfare began to take place, including the first meeting of charities and correction representatives in 1872, where over half of the participants recorded in the proceedings were church officials. The liberal theology of the late nineteenth century social gospel movement encouraged many Christians to be involved in caring for the needs of others as well as in social change efforts. The Salvation Army was influential in the work of the social gospel, particularly the teachings that religious people should be at work helping people in need without distinctions such as deservingness or worthiness of support (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999). Whereas early American Protestantism, shaped by revivalism, expressed

its social concerns through individual terms that emphasized charity and moral reform, the social gospel focused attention on social justice, including the systemic causes and responsibility for human need (Walker, 1985).

Many religious leaders saw their involvement in caring for others and in the promotion of social justice as parts of their religious efforts. Even when religiosity was not explicit, they felt they were participating "in the enlargement of God's activity" in the world (Marty, 1980, p. 465). Evangelical Protestant leaders were concerned that religious influence was less recognizable. Billy Sunday, a part of the next generation of evangelists, spoke most clearly for those who were concerned about "the secularization of social work" saying that "We've had enough of this godless social service nonsense" (p. 465). While the assistance that was offered to people in need had long been influenced by religious social teachings, a process of secularization allowed religion less authority in serving people's needs.

## The Secularization of Human Services

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have included the secularization of many facets of life, including the provision of care and assistance for people in need. Liberal Protestantism developed at the end of the nineteenth century embracing the methods of contemporary philosophy together with an emphasis on scientific reasoning. The development of human services in this period of American history can be shown to include both religious and secular leadership and ideological shaping.

The Charity Organization Society (COS) and Settlement House movements included Protestant leadership, but they also included vital community elements that were

more diverse and not necessarily religious. A plurality of ideological foundations, including community or local perspectives, and eventually ideas related to professional service provision, brought a balance to the religious base to addressing human needs. Moving beyond parochial roots, the Revered S. H. Gurteen attempted to join scientific and religious foundations in the services offered at the Buffalo COS that began in 1877 (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999; Day, 1999). The social Darwinist writings of Herbert Spencer also inspired the efforts of COS movement (Day, 1999). Mary Richmond is an example of someone whose secular contributions to the COS are often noted but whose religious convictions are said to be the background for her work (Coughlin, 1965). The Settlement House movement also combined distinct secular and religious roots showing how these roots may be intertwined. For example, the social gospel movement and scientific public health efforts were both integral to the early development of Settlement Houses as advocates for people living in poverty (Trattner, 1994; Day, 1999). Many COS's and settlement houses were either organized or staffed by religious groups such as the Salvation Army, the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Episcopal Churches (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999).

In 1930, F. E. Johnson (in Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999, p. 125) recognized elements of church work that were also being utilized in the new profession of social work. These included organizational offerings of a diversity of service activities addressing multiple needs, efforts for cooperation among agencies, the development of social attitudes on issues ranging from poverty to race relations to labor movements, and experimental efforts to address emerging needs. Secular and religious providers offered

similar services. Evangelism was still among the goals of some religious service organizations, but many others had secularized to the point of being indistinguishable from secular providers (Hall, 1990). Common among providers was an increased attention to a professional and scientific delivery of service activities that responded to human needs.

With secularization, religion seemed to play a lesser role in forming and informing human services. Various histories of service activities for people in need at the turn of the twentieth century mention religious and secular bases together without distinguishing between the ways these sources motivate the provision of services (Day, 1999; Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999; Hall, 1990). While there may have been a shift from a religious or theological foundation to broad-based foundations including secular components, a religious factor remained integral to human services based on the social gospel and seen in terms of volunteers, financial support, and structural affiliation. While secular sources became increasingly evident in the provision of services, Catholicism and Judaism were able increase their roles, diversifying the predominantly Protestant religious voice of human service provision (Day, 1999).

Throughout the twentieth century, increasingly diverse religious organizations demonstrated their continued influence by providing for almost half of the charitable dollars and volunteer hours in the voluntary sector (Marty, 1980). During this same period, the federal government became more involved than before in funding services and providing assistance, and religious organizations were able to address human needs and advocate for change by becoming increasingly connected with the growing American

public welfare system. Cnaan, Wineburg, and Boddie (1999) are not surprised that at the end of the second millennium in America, religious organizations are being recognized not only for their welfare-related contributions and advocacy efforts, but for their actual provision of services to address diverse human needs.

**The American Welfare System and Religious Organizations**

With the Progressive Movement of the early twentieth century and again with Roosevelt's election in 1932, government assumed more responsibility for social welfare. Religious and secular human service providers offered different motivations for private service delivery, but as the government funding of services began to take shape, differences in secular and religious human services were often obscured (Hall, 1990). With the Great Depression of the 1930's, many human services faced substantially increased demand and began to look to governmental sources for assistance. Hoover encouraged voluntary giving rather than government support, but with Roosevelt's election in 1932, large-scale government efforts in social welfare increased. From the Social Security Act of 1935 through the Johnson era War on Poverty, sources of funding shifted from what had been primarily local responsibility to federal programs which took on more responsibility for providing financial assistance and addressing human needs (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999; Day, 1999).

These efforts continually widened the distance from the religious base of the early American human service structure. While the religious elements of the human services foundation was removed in the growing governmental system, programs such as those offered during the "Great Society" of the 1960's utilized religious organizations to

provide community based welfare services (Canada, 2001). During this period, private nonprofit organizations, including religious organizations, were often used as the vehicles for providing federally funded services (Hall, 1990). Government oversight promoting effectiveness and efficiency led some private organizations to view federal funding with disdain, but many continued to utilize this "tainted" money (Jeavons, 1994). Some organizations become increasingly dependent upon public funds, with government resources contributing to as much as eighty percent of their budgets (Coughlin, 1965; Monsma, 1996b; Netting, 1982). Religious organizations considered the money as tainted not only because of the financial accountability, but also because of the pressures they faced to distinguish their secular services from their sacred purpose (Jeavons, 1994; Monsma, 1996b). Though not every organization used his phrasing, William Booth's justification of "tainted money [being] washed clean in God's service" seemed commonplace (Winston, 2001, p. 1). Religious organizations continually provided human services addressing a variety of needs and they have often been able to expand their services as a result of government involvement (Monsma, 1996b).

In the 1980's, the American welfare system began to reverse: the Reagan and Bush administrations began to limit the governmental role in delivering human services (Jansson, 1993). The devolution of the federal welfare system began to occur as responsibility for human services shifted again to state and local levels. With this, religious organizations were given renewed attention as necessary and invaluable providers of human services and they began to be more and more involved in social service delivery (Wineburg, 2001). In these recent decades, federal services have been

delivered through grants and contracts with private organizations at the local level, yet severe budget cuts have forced these local organizations to do more with less, and to balance their use of public and private funds (Hall, 1990).

Currently, public-private partnerships dominate the American welfare system, yet federal sources of funding for welfare programs continue to be reduced. While there may be less money available for religious organizations, the government appears to expect them to do more than ever in providing social services at the local level (Carlon-Thies & Skillen, 1996; Wineburg, 2001). Within this market system of private federalism, policies and practices that promote human service delivery by religious organizations, commonly known as faith-based initiatives, have come to dominate the public policy discourse of the last few years. The charitable choice provisions of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) (1996) provide an early example of a faith-based initiative that encourages religious organizations to partner with public agencies. It has been suggested that the forces at work behind this legislation go beyond privatization of welfare with a return to an era where religion is at the center of the delivery of social services (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999; Carlson-Thies & Skillen, 1996). It is to the distinctiveness of these recent faith-based policy initiatives that I now turn my attention.

## II. The Distinctiveness of Faith-Based Initiatives for Church-State Relationships

Current faith-based initiatives seek to involve religious organizations in the provision of human services in ways that alter established principles that guide church-state relationships (Davis & Hankins, 1999). The charitable choice provisions of the 1996 welfare reform legislation, the first in a series of what have become known as faith-based initiatives, alter the previous practices of human services delivery through new federal statutory language that specifically addresses the opportunities for participation by religious organizations. As noted above, private organizations, including religious ones, have long worked with and partnered with government entities, including the utilization of public funding for human service provision. "What is new about charitable choice," according to Richard Foltin of the American Jewish Committee, "is that it seeks to permit houses of worship and other pervasively religious institutions to receive taxpayer dollars for programs that are not discrete and institutionally separate from the core religion preaching activities of these institutions" (Pew Forum, 2001a, p. 10). Recent faith-based initiatives alter public-private relationships, and specifically church-state relationships, by allowing organizations with an explicit faith-basis to be eligible for public funding in their provision of human services.

Charitable choice legislation was first introduced in section 104 of PRWORA (1996) with funding opportunities available to organizations providing Welfare-to-Work and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programs. Charitable choice was also included in the Health and Human Services Reauthorization Act (1998) with money applied to community services and block grants, the Children's Health Act (2000)

applied to drug treatment programs of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act (2000) applied to drug abuse treatment and prevention programs. These policies, along with the recently proposed Community Solutions Act (H.R. 7, 2001) and the Charity, Aid, Recovery and Empowerment Act (S. 272, 2003) that seek to expand Charitable Choice and a series of Executive Orders to remove barriers to the public funding of religious organizations (White House, 2001c, 2002c), broaden the scope and extent of relationships between public funding entities and religious providers of human services.

Each of these policies moves beyond previous practices that allowed for federally funded human service delivery by religious organizations toward the encouragement of human service planning and delivery by religious providers in a way that some argue may open the door to government advancement of religion (Etindi, 1998; Wineburg, 2001). At the same time, religious organizations have shown a commitment throughout history to the delivery of human services to people in need. As a result, some argue that religious organizations should have equal access to federal funds, not without regard for their explicit religiosity, but because of the value that faith brings to the services offered. “In Good Faith,” a document drafted by diverse contributors and published by the American Jewish Committee (2001) states that "religious organizations and government can work together in productive ways to bring about the greater good of society." Current faith-based policies being made into law have the potential to change the relationships of religious organizations and governmental entities. Is this an attempt to provide a unique and distinctive way toward this greater good?

In this section, I offer three elements that demonstrate how faith-based initiatives make a distinct contribution to what it means for religious organizations to utilize public funds in the provision of human services. First, I present a faith-based ideology that lies behind charitable choice legislation. This basis of faith was evident in the charitable choice provisions of welfare reform and in the religious leadership that shaped the legislation. The second element consists of the recent processes for shaping public policy practiced by the Supreme Court, Congress, and the Executive Office that serve to remove barriers to the participation of faith-based organizations in government-funded human service programs. The third element, the articulation of what seem to be new doctrines of church and state, is allied with increased opportunities for faith-based organizations to receive public funds. Several dimensions of church-state issues emerge and evolve as faith-based organizations relate to government entities in new ways. This section concludes with a discussion of a research question that is relevant to understanding the complex and changing meanings of church-state relationships for faith-based organizations in one locale.

## The Faith Basis of Charitable Choice Legislation

In recent years, there has been a renewed recognition of the values, beliefs, and the moral influence of religious organizations. They have been increasingly recognized for the theological and spiritual foundations they provide, as well as for their social and material resources used in addressing human needs. Religious organizations (including congregations, nationally affiliated institutions, and freestanding organizations) account for almost two-thirds of the contributions to nonprofit human service organizations

(Castelli & McCarthy, 1997). These same religious organizations provide a large number of human services, consisting of emergency food, shelter, and clothing, and counseling related to family concerns, employment, substance abuse, and mental health (Castelli & McCarthy, 1997). When considering the reformation of the American welfare system that began in the 1990's, the question is asked: What better organization is there to bring change to a person's life so that he or she might become self-sufficient than a religious organization? This sentiment concerning the role of faith in personal transformation is at the heart of charitable choice initiatives, and even welfare reform itself, particularly when national leaders suggest that the government is not responsible for bringing about the individual changes in people's lives that seems to be so greatly desired (Carlson-Thies & Skillen, 1996; Etindi, 1998; Pew Forum, 2001a).

The Role of Religion in Welfare Reform

There has been an intensified political engagement by religious leaders in the past few decades to promote the role of religion in addressing human service needs (Hall, 1998). Mainline Protestants often participate in the policy discourse related to welfare, but these denominations have not been the primary voices calling for faith-based personal responsibility and self-sufficiency. Rather, independent religious conservatives and evangelicals are the "moral majority" calling for reform. This process has involved not only prominent, public religious leaders, like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, but also groups with a commitment to social justice such as the Center for Public Justice including James Skillen (1996), Stanley Carlson-Thies (1996; 1997b) and Amy Sherman (1995;

1997a; 1997b), and Evangelicals for Social Action including Jim Wallis (2001), Ron Sider, and Heidi Rolland Unruh (1998; Sider & Rolland, 2001; Sider & Unruh, 1999).

Marvin Olasky (1992) is among those who have called for a religious function in the devolution of the federal welfare system. The return of power to local service delivery must include the response of religious actors for, according to Olasky, personal transformation triggered by public assistance rather than religious salvation is worthless (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999). With the publication of his book, The Tragedy of American Compassion (Olasky, 1992), Christian conservatives rediscovered their role as the moral architects of welfare reform describing poverty as a moral flaw within an individual. William Bennett, Newt Gingrich, Ariana Huffington and others praised the religious vision of government reform and moral transformation called for in Olasky's writings (Hall, 1998).

The concept "compassionate conservatism," made popular by Olasky (1992), serves as a guiding principle for President Bush's political philosophy, and as a result, his faith-based initiatives; however, the legislative agenda and the emphasis on faith in the provision of human services did not begin with Bush. Then-Senator, John Ashcroft (R-MO) introduced legislation in 1995 with the backing of a diverse coalition who had already begun advocating for decreased governmental responsibility for human services and for an increased role among local faith-based and community organizations in the planning and delivery of human services (Carlson-Thies & Skillen, 1996). A faith-based ideology that promoted the role of faith-based organizations in the devolution process contributed to the charitable choice provisions of welfare reform. The first line of the

1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, encouraging the sanctity of marriage, bears witness to faith-based ideals, as does the conservative morality implicit in the title of this welfare reform legislation that calls individuals to take responsibility for seeking work opportunities.

Religious organizations are being called upon to assist with the reformation of the welfare system and the creation of self-sufficient individuals. The organizations most prominently being considered for providing human services are not the organizations that already receive government financial support, like Catholic Charities and Methodist Family Services, because these organizations are perceived by the White House OFBCI as being too bureaucratic and entrenched in the traditional system of welfare (White House, 2001e). The government is beginning to call upon a new and diverse group of more explicitly faith-based organizations to show the role that faith plays in addressing human needs. These range from African-American megachurches to religious community development corporations to small, independent neighborhood organizations. Some of the leaders of these groups, along with representatives from the religious right, have made a great effort to join policymakers and participate in the shaping of this reformation that seeks to move the role of faith to the center of policy debates and the new service delivery system (Wallis, 2001).

The Basis of Faith in Human Service Provision

There has been a recent proliferation of use in the term “faith-based” in reference to charitable choice policies and human service programs that lead to changes in individual values and behavior. This public discourse includes the efforts of lawmakers

and religious leaders alike to promote the moral benefits of religious human service (Carlson-Thies & Skillen, 1996; Segal, 1999). Some people recognize that religious people and organizations address matters of social justice in their programs; others seem to be more attentive to a morality-based religious programming that is able to motivate people toward personal responsibility and self-sufficiency (Wineburg, 2001).

Is it possible for publicly funded faith-based human services to be carried out in a way that addresses human needs and is based on faith? And, furthermore, is it possible to promote faith-based services without strengthening proselytization or discrimination efforts on one side and without bureaucratic weakening of the faith-basis on the other? Religiously affiliated organizations have been able to receive federal funds for the provision of services as long as the religious influence of the organization was limited. A part of the difference in the language of charitable choice and other recent faith-based initiatives is that pervasively religious organizations may compete for government human service funding, not by disregarding their religious nature, but with a high regard for this faith basis (Segal, 1999; White House, 2001E). Specifically, the legislation states that public funding may go to faith-based organizations being faithful, religious organizations being religious, which is precisely what the public can expect from them, and precisely what the shapers of the legislation do expect from them.

Government officials say that charitable choice legislation does not provide for the public funding of the faith activities and practices of faith-based organizations, such as worship, education, and evangelism (Sherman, 2001; White House OFBCI, 2001). However, an important issue to be considered is the ambiguous distinction between faith-

based practices and the provision of faith-based services. The effectiveness of faith-based human service programs might be found in the high levels of commitment and compassion resultant from values, beliefs, and voluntary action, but translating these faith-based attributes into a purely secular human service delivery effort without the presence of the motivating theological or spiritual factors would be a daunting task (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999; Jeavons, 1994). And, if the religious factors are to be retained in social service programming, doing this in such a way that they do not impinge on the religious liberties of beneficiaries, potential employees, other providers, and the government will also be a challenge.

Charles Henderson (2001) of Cross Currents, an organization promoting interdisciplinary work in philosophy and religion, commented on the nature of faith as being such that "the religious element is woven seamlessly into the warp and woof" of a religious organization's human service activities (p.1). This has been particularly true in some organizations receiving public funds. Jobs Partnership, a charitable choice funded program in Texas is under litigation in the Federal District Court in Austin because of the program's use of the Bible and its curriculum that teaches participants "to find employment through a relationship with Jesus Christ" (Henderson, 2001, p.1). The emphasis on faith in programs like the Jobs Partnership may lead to the changes desired by proponents of charitable choice, but many critics remain concerned about the faith-basis of publicly funded programs (Davis & Hankins, 1999; Walker, 2001).

This organizational example demonstrates that the role of values, beliefs, and other characteristics of faith encompass the whole makeup of many faith-based

organizations such that the religious activity and the human service programming are indistinguishable. A faith-based ideology, made evident in recent public policy initiatives, suggests moving away from past practices of publicly funding religious organizations so that organizations whose practices are based on faith in a more pervasive manner may become more eligible for government monies (White House, 2001e). The next section details efforts to shape faith-based policy initiatives in order to remove barriers seen to prevent the public funding of religious organizations.

**The Process of Removing Barriers**

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof…." We have seen relationships between church and state throughout the history of social service in the United States, but in accordance with the First Amendment, some separation between church and state entities has usually been clear.

This has recently begun to change. President Bush promoted faith-based initiatives as his first domestic policy issue. His efforts along with policy proposals in Congress seek to remove barriers that prevent the public funding of faith-based organizations. Some of the regulations that the White House considers barriers relate to past U. S. Supreme Court rulings on the First Amendment and to cabinet level government agencies' interpretations of these Court rulings (White House, 2001e), while others are issues of policy implementation and the need for further legislation (Carlson-Thies, 1997b; Sherman, 1997a). In all of these political efforts, there are emerging

possibilities for the public funding of faith-based human services, and as a result, changes in relationships between church and state.

Jurisprudence on Church-State Relationships

The Court has consistently ruled that the "establishment clause" does not bar government from contracting with religious organizations for the planning and delivery of human services as long as the funds are not used for primarily religious activities (Castelli & McCarthy, 1997; Esbeck, 1996). Most Supreme Court decisions related to church-state issues address free speech or government support of parochial schools, yet these decisions provide principles relevant to the government funded human service activities of faith-based organizations. The Supreme Court had maintained similar interpretations of this First Amendment issue for nearly fifty years, but recent decisions suggest changes in the Court's interpretation of church-state relationships.

Three basic principles have been used in recent years to help articulate ways that the First Amendment relates to faith-based organizations and their use of government monies. "No aid to religion" is a principle established in the 1947 *Everson v. Board of Education* case where the Supreme Court ruled that no government aid be given in support of religion (Monsma, 1996a). The *Everson* decision also created a second principle, "the sacred-secular distinction," stating that public funding may flow to the secular activities of an organization, but not the religious activities (Monsma, 1996a). Supporting the second principle, a third legal principle is the "pervasively sectarian" standard. An organization has been said to be "pervasively sectarian" if there is an intertwining of its sacred and secular activities such that public funds would inevitably

aid religion (*Hunt v. McNair*, 413 U. S., 1973). In 1971, as these principles were being established and utilized in subsequent decisions, the *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (403 U.S. at 602) ruling set forth the "Lemon Test." The Lemon Test consists of three rules for deciding when a statute can involve religion: a statute must have a secular purpose; the primary effect of a statute may neither advance nor inhibit religion; and, the statute must not foster an excessive entanglement with religion.

These principles have been used for many years, but have been obscure and controversial when considering the church-state relationships of human service organizations (Kuzma, 2000). For example, Stronks (1996) identifies a legal tightrope walk for organizations that identify themselves as faith-based. If a faith-based organization identifies its religiosity it receives exemption from government regulation, but may not be eligible for public funding. If an organization downplays its religious identity, it loses the exemption, but gains opportunities for funding.

Is such a decision between funding and freedom coercive for faith-based organizations? Some organizations feel that current rulings limit their religious autonomy to exercise freely. Others feel that this kind of trade-off prevents the government from establishing religious activities (Monsma, 1996a; Stronk, 1996). Some faith-based organizations feel vulnerable to governmental pressures to secularize their programs (Sider & Unruh, 1999), and others who remain religious feel that federal rules harm or destroy religious experiences and burden their programs (Wilson, 1999). Past Supreme Court rulings have created what Sider and Unruh (1999, p. 3) identify as an "ambiguous state of affairs for public-private cooperation" with a "climate of mistrust

and misunderstanding" for religious human service organizations that are confused about what is permissible. Making sense of church-state relationships appears to be complex and daunting task, though important for faith-based organizations when considering these rulings.

The 2000 Supreme Court decision in *Mitchell v. Helms* offered some suggestion for new directions in church-state jurisprudence in that aid to both secular and religious schools are said not to present a constitutional problem. This decision rejected past rulings that bar aid to "pervasively sectarian" organizations asserting that such a proscription is hostile to religion (Boothby, 2001; Walker, 2000). Faith-based initiatives seek to provide public funds to organizations with explicit practices of faith, and the *Mitchell* ruling serves to prevent such faith-based organizations from being labeled by government funding entities as pervasively sectarian. Otherwise, *Mitchell* has had limited impact on faith-based initiatives since four members of the Court, a plurality rather than a majority, presented the opinion. The implementation of faith-based initiatives that seek to provide funding to all human service organizations and to all religions generally may provide a test case to broaden the Court's plurality opinion in *Mitchell*. This division of the Court on this decision provides a national example of the differing perspectives that exist regarding church-state partnerships.

One more recent case related to schools, but with relevance for faith-based initiatives, particularly voucher programs, is the 2002 *Simmons-Harris vs. Zelman* case. In June, a 5-4 Supreme Court vote decided that a Cleveland voucher program did not violate the Establishment Clause of the Second Amendment. The majority opinion

weakened the wall of separation between church and state stating that this school voucher program is constitutional because it is "neutral" and public funds flow to religious schools only as the result of the "private choice" of parents (Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, 2002; People for the American Way, 2002). Currently, public child care monies operate in the form of a parental choice program that allows government money to go to religious organizations if parents choose such an organization. These programs, backed by the *Simmons-Harris* ruling, may pave the way for other voucher programs that allow program participants to choose faith-based organizations for other needed human services.

The Supreme Court has not considered a charitable choice case, but President Bush has been using the White House OFBCI and the CFBCI to seek another way for religious organizations to maintain their religious identity, to be shielded from government regulations, and to utilize government funding (White House, 2001e). Church-state relationships are being further altered under President Bush's faith-based policy initiatives.

President Bush's Initiative

The executive branch of the federal government is playing a major role in distinguishing recent faith-based initiatives from prior policies and practices. Not only is the Supreme Court considering the possibility of publicly funding faith-based organizations, but the President of the United States has also been promoting church-state partnerships. President Bill Clinton signed into law the 1996 Welfare Reform bill that included charitable choice legislation, but little was done to emphasize this section of the

legislation. By the 2000 presidential election, Republican and Democratic candidates were touting their support of charitable choice stating that faith-based human service delivery would aid in the continuing practice of devolving the federal government. Two weeks before his inauguration, President Bush met with religious leaders in Austin asking them theological questions about justice and the nation's soul (Wallis, 2001). Two weeks after the inauguration, Bush began acting on campaign promises through two Executive Orders: one to create a White House Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) (EO 13199) (with "community" being added after plans for the office were underway (Pew Forum, 2001a)) and the other to remove barriers that prevent religious groups from partnering with government agencies (EO 13198) (White House, 2001b, 2001c). At the midpoint of his first term, Bush issued two more Executive Orders promoting the equal protection of faith-based and community organizations (EO 13279) (White House, 2002c) and extending the responsibilities of Federal Department Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (EO 13280) (White House, 2002d).

Amy Sherman (2001), advocate of faith-based services from the Hudson Institute Welfare Policy Center and the Center for Public Justice, describes how federal government "officials have begun reaching out intentionally and assertively" to faith-based organizations for help in serving people in need. President Bush demonstrated his assertiveness on the issue with the Executive Order to create a White House Office rather than pursuing the matter through policy proposals in Congress (White House, 2001b). In a second Executive Order, Bush directed the departments of Justice, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Labor, and Education to open Executive

Department Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to aid in the removal of regulatory barriers and other obstacles to the faith-based provision of services (White House, 2001c). Bush announced that he would follow the first two Executive Orders with legislative initiatives to Congress encouraging religious groups to apply for federally funded after-school programs, drug treatment counseling, meal assistance, and other activities. Bush followed in 2002 with an Executive Order (EO 13279) directing all federal agencies "to follow the principle of equal treatment" in funding human service programs (White House, 2002b). The fourth Executive Order (EO 13280) then added the Department of Agriculture and the Agency for International Development to the list of Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (White House, 2002d). He again urged Congress to follow suit with legislation to support his initiatives.

In acting on the first Executive Order (EO 13198) in 2001, President Bush appointed John DiIulio to be director of the OFBCI. DiIulio described the goal of the OFBCI as protecting the religious characteristics of organizations as well as the religious liberty of the program participants. DiIulio, while professor of politics and public affairs at Princeton University, said that he was opposed to welfare reform. However, as director of the Partnership for Research on Religion and At-Risk Youth (PRRAY) he said that he favored the charitable choice portion of welfare reform and that a "God-centered and problem-focused approach" was needed to address the needs of Americans (Wallis 1997, p. 1). President Bush (White House, 2001a) claimed, "faith-based programs have proven their power to save and change lives," but after critics raised questions about empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of faith-based programs, DiIulio (2001)

stepped in saying, "there are no suitably scientific studies that prove the efficacy or cost effectiveness of faith-based approaches to social ills, or support the success claims of certain well-known national faith-based programs." While empirical research is limited concerning the effectiveness of faith-based services, it would seem anecdotal evidence has been sufficient to maintain the President's push for public funding of faith-based organizations (2001g).

Six months after the creation of the White House OFBCI, DiIulio resigned from his position. He cited family needs as his reason and defended a notion that he never intended to work for the Executive Branch for very long (Milbank, 2001). Critics raised the issues of public dissatisfaction with the Bush initiatives as alternative explanation for his resignation (Milbank, 2001; Becker, 2001).

Jim Towey replaced DiIulio as the director for the OFBCI in February 2002. Towey, a Democrat and Roman Catholic, comes to the OFBCI at a time when it is already being restructured. While DiIulio's position was one that had direct contact with President Bush, Towey, and the OFBCI, will be placed within a new Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, where Towey will participate along with first five CFBCI secretaries and Steve Goldsmith, the Chairman for the Corporation of National and Community Service. The Council will be chaired by USA Freedom Corps Director John Bridgeland (White House, 2002a).

The initiative Bush (White House, 2001a) is taking in "promoting the agenda of poverty alleviation" is praised by many Americans, but the country remains divided on the details of the President's faith-based program for achieving this goal (Pew Forum,

2001c). After the president issued his policy agenda, the Pew Forum for Religion and the Public Life (2001c) conducted a survey reporting that three-quarters of Americans support allowing faith-based organizations to apply for government funding to provide human services, yet they also continue to raise important questions concerning different understandings of church-state relationships. The American public is most concerned with hiring practices, as seventy-eight percent of Americans stating that federally funded religious organizations should not be able to discriminate in hiring (p. 11). Sixty-eight percent are concerned that government will be too involved with religious matters of organizations and sixty percent are concerned that religious organizations will demand participants to join in religious practices (pp. 9-10). Fifty-two percent fear that public funding for faith-based programs would interfere with church-state separation. Many questions are being raised, yet President Bush reassures American's that the government will not promote religion but address people's needs, and not fund religious activities but social service programs (White House, 2001a; White House OFBCI, 2001).

Congressional Responses

Despite widespread public questions and criticisms of the OFBCI and faith-based initiatives (Pew Forum, 2001a; 2001c), Representatives Hall (D, OH) and Watts (R, OK), along with House Speaker Hastert (R, IL) supported President Bush's faith-based initiative to expand charitable choice and introduced the "Community Solutions Act" (H.R. 7) to Congress in March 2001. This bill, described as "President Bush's Faith-Based Initiative," would have allowed funding for a broader range of services than previous legislation. Title II, in particular, known as the "Charitable Choice Act of 2001"

would have expanded these provisions to include housing, juvenile justice, senior citizen services, hunger relief, and domestic violence programming.

In an attempt to respect the religious autonomy of faith-based organizations, the Community Solutions Act would have allowed publicly funded agencies to maintain an exemption in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 so that they might able to discriminate in hiring based on religion. Charitable choice legislation allows this form of discrimination by organizations that provide federally funded human services (American Civil Liberties Union, 2001; Scott, 2001). The Community Solutions Act also included language that would have overridden state and local anti-discrimination laws in order to further support faith-based organizational autonomy.

The Community Solutions Act passed the House in August 2001. Senators Lieberman (D-CT) and Santorum (R, PA) introduced a Senate version of the legislation, the Charity, Aid, Recovery and Empowerment Act of 2002 (CARE Act, S. 1924), which focused on charitable giving tax incentives, but did not expand charitable choice (Office of Management and Budget Watch, 2001). The bill did propose funding for a Compassion Capital Fund that was implemented in 2002 and it proposed equal treatment for any private grant receiving organization. The CARE act did not receive a floor vote in 2002, in part because of opposition to interpretations of the bill that would have allowed for faith-based organizations to engage in proselytizing program participants and discriminate in hiring.

The CARE Act was reintroduced in January 2003 (S. 272) by Senator Santorum as a follow-up to the most recent of President Bush's Executive Orders (EO 13279) that

prevents organizations from being “discriminated against on the basis of religion” (White House, 2002c). The protective language of Title VIII of the CARE Act reflected the Executive Order and sought to provide “equal treatment to nongovernmental providers” (S. 272, Title VIII), but was not quite as thorough as charitable choice legislation in its “nondiscrimination against religious organizations” (PRWORA, 1996). Just before going to vote in the Senate in March 2003, Santorum removed Title VIII leaving the charitable giving incentives, the increased funding of the Social Services Block Grant, and the Compassion Capital Fund and making the proposed legislation a better match with proposals likely to pass in the House of Representatives (Farris, 2003).

Leveling the Playing Field through an Office and Cabinet Centers

In August 2001, The White House OFBCI and five CFBCI’s concluded an initial audit of regulatory barriers that limit the inclusion of faith-based services in federal programs. The audit report, entitled Unlevel Playing Field, includes preliminary comments from the CFBCI encouraging federal officials who offer grants in these cabinet agencies to provide “equal treatment to organizations with an obvious religious character” (White House, 2001e, p. 11). The report strives to promote the public funding of organizations with an explicitly religious character, stating that these faith-based organizations have been subject to federal barriers and have not been able to play on a level playing field.

Details of the report describe a "widespread bias" which discourages the participation of faith-based organizations in federal human service programs (White House, 2001e, p. 2). The report suggests that the intention of charitable choice legislation

in the 1996 Welfare Reform Act was to remove barriers that prevent the public funding of faith-based organizations, but the legislation has been “almost entirely ignored.” This is the case in the Department of Health and Human Services’ welfare-related programs, as well as throughout federally funded programs (White House, 2001e, p. 2). Faith-based organizations have not been able to utilize public funds to the extent desired by some government and religious leaders, so the OFBCI recommends that further barriers must be identified and removed.

To this end, the OFBCI (2001e, p. 12) makes a distinction between organizations that have been able to receive public money and those that have been denied public funding. The report identifies “religiously affiliated organizations” as those larger, more bureaucratic agencies that have a structural relationship to and support from a sponsoring religious body. These organizations have long been able to receive federal funds while smaller and more explicitly faith-based organizations have been excluded from funding. In the past, federal officials have categorized these faith-based organizations as “pervasively sectarian” or “primarily religious,” but these terms and other restrictions on religious activities are among the barriers to be removed in promoting the funding of faith-based organizations. The understanding of "faith-based organization" as expressed by the White House OFBCI (2001e) looks past the work of religiously affiliated organizations, those long-standing human service organizations, stating that they have not demonstrated their efficiency or efficacy in addressing human needs, and instead turns to organizations that are said to act on their faith in delivering services, organizations that in the past have been recognized as “too religious” (p. 12; Monsma & Soper, 1998).

The Washington Post stated that the White House OFBCI report provides "an insurance policy in case Congress weakens President Bush's faith-based legislation" (Allen, 2001). If the Senate does not pass the Charitable Choice Expansion Act portion of H. R. 7, then the White House audit may be able to help with further implementation of existing charitable choice legislation that has largely been ignored and to begin a process for removing barriers in the five cabinet departments. Jonathan Rauch, of the Brookings Institute (2001, p. 15), suggests President Bush and the OFBCI will use "administrative action to do new rulemaking" and thereby accomplish his agenda item of leveling the playing field for faith-based organizations. "The moral of the report," according to Rauch (Brookings, 2001, p. 18), is that legislation is important but that what is done inside the cabinet agencies to change their regulations and practices will be equally important for promoting the funding of faith-based organizations by the five cabinet departments. The OFBCI audit report will not only help to promote the President's faith-based initiative, but it can serve to keep the issue at the forefront of the President's agenda in other ways.

In a statement announcing the release of the White House Office report, President Bush commented that he is looking forward to working with the White House Office and Centers through legislation, administrative action, and education to address inequities in funding opportunities for faith-based organizations. He reinforced the need to remove "obstacles that stand in the way of a more compassionate America" (White House, 2001d, p. 1). This effort serves to devolve the role of the federal government in service delivery to the state and local level while at the same time promoting the role of faith-

based organizations as more appropriate avenues for addressing people's needs. President Bush has said that he will continue to provide the initiative in encouraging this faith-based cornerstone of his presidency (White House, 2001d; 2001f; 2001g).

Among the first actions taken by one of the CFBCI's in an effort to level the playing fields was the creation and distribution of funds by the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) "Compassion Capital Fund." The Compassion Capital Fund (CCF) was designed to help faith-based and community groups build capacity and improve their ability to provide social services to those in need. HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson called the CCF the "leading edge" of President Bush's faith-based initiatives "to help faith- and community-based organizations get a fair and equal opportunity to compete for HHS funds" (HHS, 2002). In October 2002, HHS awarded more than $24 million of CCF monies to 21 "intermediary organizations," which will in turn help smaller organizations operate and manage their programs effectively, access funding from varied sources, develop and train staff, expand the types and reach of social services programs in their communities, and replicate promising programs. Technical assistance will be available for free to faith-based organizations interested in this support. The intermediary organizations that were awarded the funding will issue sub-awards to faith-based organizations to support start-up costs, operations or expansion of programs. Priority for sub-awards will be given to programs that address homelessness, hunger, the needs of at-risk children, transition from welfare to work and those in need of intensive rehabilitation such as addicts or prisoners. The Compassion Capital program states that these funds will support only technical assistance and non-religious social services. HHS

has also used the Compassion Capital Fund to create a National Resource Center in Vienna, VA, which will assist the intermediary organizations and other community-serving groups access the tools and information they need to be effective, and to support research on successful faith-based and community organization practices (HHS 2002).

In December 2002, President Bush issued two new Executive Orders on his faith-based initiative. One continues the effort to level the playing field (EO 13279) (White House, 2002c) and one creates two more CFBCI's that will be located within the Department of Agriculture and the Agency for International Development (EO 13280) (White House, 2002d). These actions continue to demonstrate that the President's faith-based initiative can be implemented in ways other than the legislative process. To date, the OFBCI and CFBCI's have been serving as mechanisms to distribute the effects of this agenda more broadly across human service arenas. With the activities of these offices, the White House does not hold the only forum for promoting faith-based initiatives. The OFBCI and the now seven CFBCI's are seeking to level the playing field for faith-based organizations and there are similar efforts at the state level. The Commonwealth of Virginia provides a model to further the effects of faith-based initiatives. In turning to a review of state level activities in Virginia, including the activities of a Liaison and Network for faith-based initiatives in the Virginia Department of Social Services, the effects of the White House mandates can be seen at the local level.

Faith-Based Initiatives in Virginia

The Commonwealth of Virginia is among the few states that have taken steps to implement the Charitable Choice portion of PRWORA. Virginia has also gone a step

further, in ways that reflect the Bush initiatives, by creating a state level liaison for faith-based and community initiatives in the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) (VDSS, 2002). As early as 1995, then Governor George Allen hosted the Governor's Summit on Community Responses to Welfare Reform, which was centered on faith-based organizations (VA HD No. 103, 1999). In 1999, the Virginia General Assembly formed the Special Task Force Studying the Ways Faith-Based Community Service Groups May Provide Assistance to Meet Social Needs, headed by Lt. Gov. John Hager, to assess ways faith-based organizations address social needs and provide human services (VA HJR 764, 1999). The Special Task Force was to survey regulations that are obstacles to the participation of faith-based organizations and to recommend ways Virginia can provide faith-based organizations the opportunity to participate more fully in the delivery of needed services (VA HJR 764, 1999).

Among the Special Task Force recommendations was the creation of a liaison network to coordinate the efforts of faith-based organizations that desire to provide social services (VA HD No. 103, 1999). It was suggested that the liaison network could provide outreach to faith-based organizations as well as technical and organizational skills related to regulations and requirements, act as a problem solver, establish best practices, and establish an oversight process measuring change and success. The Special Task Force also recommended a review of state agency language in rules and regulations that might bar the participation of faith-based organizations. A third recommendation was to provide funding for food banks to defray distribution costs charged to faith-based organizations supplying food. The Special Task Force recommended an evaluation of

voucher programs for the purchase of services so that clients may be free to choose from approved faith-based organizations. The fifth recommendation encouraged an expansion of tax incentives on contributions to faith-based organizations participating in the Virginia Neighborhood Assistance Program. The final recommendation promoted further examination by the Special Task Force of opportunities to use charitable choice provisions.

In considering the Special Task Force recommendations for relationships between Virginia's state and local governmental agencies and faith-based organizations, it is important to recognize that Virginia has a long and complex history of working with faith-based organizations in addressing social needs as well as maintaining a line of separation between religious organizations and public entities. The issues considered at the state level reflect those at the national level. The Virginia Constitution includes "free exercise" and "no establishment" clauses, similar to those of the United States Constitution (Article 1.16). The Virginia Constitution, however, also includes a section that prohibits funding of religious organizations (Article IV.16). Representatives from government and religious entities who comprised the Special Task Force recognized the role religious organizations have played in the delivery of services at the local level in Virginia and they recognize that these state laws are interpreted in a variety of ways. They considered the history of partnerships between some religious organizations and state funding entities, as well as the limitations placed on other religious organizations (VA HD No. 103, 1999).

Article I of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia guarantees the free exercise of religion and prohibits state and local governments from becoming overly involved in religious affairs. This section highlights recent interpretation and application of church-state relationships in Virginia. Ashley Taylor, former Deputy Attorney General, presented these and other legal principles related to the involvement of faith-based organizations in a memorandum to the Special Task Force. Taylor presented interpretations of constitutional issues, most of which related to education in religious institutions rather than the provision of social services (Taylor, 1999, p. 6).

In a discussion of relevant models of social service programs, Taylor discusses two types of programs that involve the use of government funds by religious organizations having nonreligious purposes. The first is the "Client Pick" type, similar to vouchers, where money is appropriated to a secular function and individuals are allowed to choose the institution that will provide the service. Client pick funding thereby is permitted to go to religious organizations performing non-religious functions. Examples of this type of program include Medicaid reimbursements to religiously owned hospitals or Social Services childcare payments to religious daycare centers. The second type of program is the "Agency Pick" with no religious purpose or effect. Here, the government directly contracts with or provides a grant to a religious organization for a secular function. An example is the Department of Social Services' Office of Newcomer Services which contracts with religious organizations to provide refugee resettlement services.

The Lieutenant Governor's office recognizes that the Commonwealth has an abundance of "Agency Pick" relationships with faith-based organizations providing services to people in need. The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Division of Family Services works with faith-based organizations in the placement of minority children in adoptive homes under the "One Church, One Child" program. The Virginia DSS contracts with congregations to provide child care services with the Child Care Development Fund. Five religious organizations provide refugee resettlement initial reception and placement services utilizing funds from contracts with the Virginia DSS Office of Newcomer Services. Community Action Agencies across the state work with hundreds of faith-based organizations, including congregations, which provide services and space for Head Start and other programs. More than two dozen faith-based organizations participate in the VDSS Office of Community Services' Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit Program where their projects are able to receive an allocation of tax credits that may be used as an incentive to businesses for donations (VA HD No. 103, 1999).

The recommendations of the Special Task Force have led to significant changes in promoting new public-private partnerships in Virginia. Based on their recommendations, the General Assembly created a network of liaisons to encourage the partnerships between public and faith-based organizations in 2000 (VA HJR 289, 2000). In August 2000, Jane Brown was appointed State Liaison for Virginia's community and faith-based initiative. Similarly, a network of 121 liaisons in local departments of social services and

26 liaisons in community action agencies has been created and trained to assist faith-based organizations in linking with public funding entities.

The 2001 General Assembly enacted Chapter 774 into the Virginia Acts of Assembly in accordance with the 1996 Welfare Reform Act to include Charitable Choice provisions in the state's procurement statute. The amended Code of Virginia Public Procurement Act relates to procurement contracts with "certain religious organizations" (Sec. 11-35.1), authorizing public bodies to enter into contracts with a faith-based organization as with any other nongovernmental organization and without restricting the religious character of the organization or diminishing the religious freedom of the organization (Sec. 11-35.1.C). The Act seeks to ensure that public bodies do not discriminate against faith-based organizations and that faith-based organizations do not discriminate against recipients of services on the basis of religion or religious beliefs or practices, as well as race, color, gender, or national origin (Sec. 11-35.1.D-E). The Act also provides for equivalent services from an alternative provider (Sec. 11-35.1.F).

Other amendments to the Procurement Act continue to be offered in Virginia as a way to encourage the implementation of charitable choice and to level the playing field for faith-based organizations. As these changes are made at the state and local level, it is evident that there are many forces at work to remove barriers between government funds and religious providers of human services and forge new directions in church-state relationships. The separation of church and state has been presented as a principle of charitable choice because the legislation, while promoting the public funding of faith-based human services, prevents the public funding of inherently religious activities

(Stanley Carlson-Thies, 1997a). However, the faith-based initiatives offered in Congress and by President Bush may go beyond the creation of a "level playing field" for religious organizations to the design of a new church-state landscape (Davis & Hankins, 1999; Hall, 1998). It is to the possibility of a new doctrine of church and state that I now turn.

## A New Doctrine of Church and State

Multiple meanings exist among policymakers and advocates, Supreme Court justices, leaders of faith-based organizations, and the American public alike, of how church and state may relate to one another in the faith-based provision of human services. The principle urged by Thomas Jefferson, of "a wall of separation between church and state" is being restructured as new church-state interpretations emerge. As these understandings continue to develop, the words Martin Marty (1980) heard uttered by a Lutheran minister in the 1960's continue to find new meaning: "I know that this may violate your sense of devotion to the traditional doctrine of the separation of church and state, but in that case I advise you to go out and get a new traditional doctrine of church and state" (p. 466).

Diverse coalitions of religious and political leaders, involved on many sides of various church-state issues, are striving to retain the autonomy and mission of religious organizations, the respect and diversity of the state, and the liberty and quality of service provision to the people served by both religious organizations and the government (American Civil Liberties Union, 2001; American Jewish Committee, 2001; Baptist Joint Committee, 2001; Carlson-Thies, 1997b; Etindi, 1998). In these efforts, there may be evidence of a church and state "paradigm shift" (Brookings, 2001, p. 12). Carlson-Thies

(Brookings, 2001) describes the issues raised by faith-based initiatives as an "evolving church-state doctrine" (p. 15). While there may not be a single plan for a widespread change in new church-state doctrine, faith-based initiatives do promote new relationships between church and state, between faith-based organizations and governmental funding entities.

With these organizational relationships, the implications of church-state relationships are continually under debate. Most groups agree that a local, secular service alternative provider of a service of equal value should be available and readily accessible to beneficiaries (American Jewish Committee, 2001), but this item was removed from the recent Community Solutions Act (H. R. 7, 2001). There is also shared belief that, in providing government-funded human services, religious organizations should not discriminate on the basis of religion or the religious beliefs of those served (American Jewish Committee, 2001; Pew Forum, 2001c). But again, H. R. 7 maintains a 1964 Civil Rights Act exemption for religious organizations so that they are able to discriminate in hiring on the basis of religion. It is commonly agreed that the government should be able to audit publicly funded programs to assure intended purposes are being achieved, although some governmental accounting practices are labeled "barriers" (American Jewish Committee, 2001; Canada, 2001; White House, 2001a; 2001e). Separation between religious activity and public funded service has been encouraged and maintained through efforts such as the incorporation of a nonprofit human service organization (IRS 501.c.3) that is distinguishable and distinct from the supporting religious body. While most parties encourage this practice, charitable choice no longer asks for the creation of a

secular and separate incorporated organization in order to receive government funds (Brookings, 2001).

Faith-based initiatives contribute to the evolving nature of American church and state doctrine by focusing attention on several dimensions of the relationships between faith-based organizations and governmental funding entities. Among these dimensions are the role of religious activities, the possibility of employment discrimination, and fiscal and programmatic accountability for faith-based human services. My working hypotheses are in the following discussions of these different dimensions, along which there can be heard multiple meanings of church-state relationships. The implications of the proposed research are seen in these working hypotheses.

The Dimension of Religious Activities in Human Service

Faith-based initiatives provide a greater level of religious autonomy to faith-based organizations than had previously been available to them in their partnerships with government (Monsma, 1996a). Barry Hankins of the J. M. Dawson of Church-State Studies at Baylor University argued that charitable choice legislation would render the term "pervasively sectarian" invalid, allowing faith-based organizations to contract with government regardless of how sectarian or religious the organizations are (Davis & Hankins, 1999, p. 1). According to Stanley Carlson-Thies (1997a), charitable choice is written precisely for the purpose of protecting the religious integrity and the character of the religious organizations that are willing to accept government money to provide human services.

One aspect concerning faith-based organizational autonomy has to do with the meaning and purpose of religious activities and practices such as worship, instruction, and proselytization. The distinction between these religious activities and the services offered by some faith-based organizations is unclear. For example, asking a person to join a religion and even enticing a person to join in worship would be prohibited, but the use of religious principles and values in service provision may be a practice that charitable choice allows.

Organizations may not use public funds for religious activities or practices, but while providing funded social services they may display religious art, icons, scripture, and other symbols, and use an explicitly religious name (Etindi, 1998). Also, the government cannot interfere with the definition, development, practice, and expression of an organization's religious beliefs so long as the organization is not requiring beneficiaries to take part in the religious practices (Etindi, 1998).

The Supreme Court's use of a "Secular-Sacred Distinction" (*Everson v. Board of Education*, 1947) attempted to distinguish religious activities from government-funded activities. Accordingly, public funding may be made available to the *secular* activities of an organization, but not the *sacred* activities. This has meant that when private religious organizations utilize government funds, the organizations must dichotomize religious and secular tasks related to providing human services. At issue for many faith-based organizations is the reality that such a secular-sacred dichotomy does not exist as the organizations strive to provide treatment of spiritual and practical needs together for an individual (Jeavons, 1994; Monsma, 1996a; Stronks, 1996).

The Dimension of Employment Discrimination

Another dimension of church-state relationships for faith-based organizations involves their hiring practices. Receipt of federal funds by a religious organization has traditionally made the organization subject to laws that prohibit discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, and disability (Esbeck, 1996). The Supreme Court may have to judge whether or not religious organizations are able to make employment decisions on the basis of religion if an employee is paid by or will work in a federally funded program (American Jewish Committee, 2001). Currently, charitable choice legislation extends a hiring exemption to religious organizations. Julie Segal (1999, p. 26), writing for Americans United for Separation of Church and State, is critical of this exemption being extended to publicly funded programs, but she recognizes that, "charitable choice without allowing employment discrimination is not charitable choice." The White House OFBCI affirms faith-based organizations' right to discriminatory hiring in religious and non-religious service activities stating that they have an "established right to take religion into account in employment decisions" (White House, 2001e, p. 15).

While religious organizations may be able to receive federal funds and still discriminate on the basis of religion, Congressman Bobby Scott (D-VA) fears that decisions based on gender, sexual orientation, race, age, and other factors can be defended as religious decisions (Scott, 2001; Theresa Tilling-Thompson, Congressional Assistant, personal communication, March 2001). For example, if Southern Baptists require an ordained pastor to be the administrator for congregation based human services,

a woman will not be hired to perform this function. Similarly, publicly funded agencies have fired men and women who are gay and lesbian, not solely as a matter of sexual orientation, but as a matter of religious belief on the issue (Press, 2001).

Jim Wallis, of Call to Renewal (at a 20 March 2001, Capitol breakfast), states that the quality and effectiveness of faith-based services demand that these organizations be able to hire the person who is a best fit for the type of service being offered, even if this means discriminating against a person because of religion. This exemption may allow any hiring or firing practice to be protected as an issue of religious autonomy (Monsma, 1996a). Monsma (1996a) states that the ability of a faith-based organization to make employment decisions, even if using public funds, is a matter of religious autonomy related to the organization's right of self-definition. Expressed in these terms, organizational rights may be placed at odds with civil rights in a way that could be problematic for church-state partnerships.

The Dimension of Accountability

Another church-state issue that charitable choice raises and that is often evident in the fears of faith-based organizations considering public funding relates to accountability. Fiscal policies, such as not maintaining separate accounts for private and public funds in a religious organization, can present financial accounting challenges for both the government and the organization. Religious organizations are not required to incorporate, register for tax exempt status, or file annual reports with government authorities, so while receiving government funds and being subject to some government

restrictions, they may safely be able to utilize several regulatory-free shelters not accessible to other organizations.

If an organization receives federal funds it will have to demonstrate efficacy of service outcomes and may be subject to a governmental financial audit. Religious organizations, particularly congregations and small organizations, fear accountability practices related to financial and programmatic results (Brookings, 2001). Some faith-based organizations have been resistant to formative evaluations and unwilling to modify their operations for fear this might interfere with the role of faith in the services provided (Canada, 2001). These organizations are also weary of government regulations and recommendations that could be understood as interfering with their service mission and activities, describing the fear behind the notion of public money as "tainted" (Jeavons, 1994). Public grants have reporting requirements for measures of program outcomes, but it is yet to be determined how faith-based organizations will be able to demonstrate their effectiveness (DiIulio, 2001).

Proponents of charitable choice see faith-based organizations as better able to enhance community responsiveness to human needs more flexible in addressing these needs. As a result, faith-based organizations are said to be more efficient and effective in how they use public funds to provide quality services (Monsma, 1996b). J. Brent Walker (2001) of the Baptist Joint Committee for Public Affairs agrees that faith is a powerful force and that faith-based organizations do good work, but says that faith-based initiatives do almost nothing to help the poor or advance the work of faith-based organizations. The publicly funded, faith-based organization is "beholden to government

priorities and direction," and they become "centers of government benefits and services, [required] to terminate certain benefits, report on individuals, and otherwise police the system" (Baptist Joint Committee & Interfaith Alliance Foundation, 2001, p. 4). The result of these government efforts may be competing visions of who determines accountability and effectiveness of services.

Do faith-based organizations believe that increased access to public funds helps them achieve their mission? Do they understand their partnerships with government as being helpful to the people served by the organization, as well as to the organization itself? While it is important for faith-based organizations to remain free from government interference, ensuring quality outcomes should also be of concern not only for the sake of financial and programmatic accountability, but also for reasons related to the rights, health, and welfare of clients served by these organizations (Hall, 2001; NASW, 2001). Faith-based organizations, including congregations, appear increasingly interested in partnering with government, but only so long as the financial relationship is healthy to the government, the organization, and the people being served (Dudley, 2001).

The issues raised by church-state relationships suggest that accountability standards for faith-based human services are a critical issue where consensus is difficult to find, particularly if the assumptions of effectiveness for faith-based organizations differ from those of other service organizations. Jeavons (1994) describes different standards of effectiveness in organizations whose efforts are a part of a broader religious function that seeks to affirm moral values beyond completion of programmatic tasks. The different notions of accounting for outcomes in the provision of faith-based human

services place this concern among the dimensions that suggest the complexity of understanding the church-state relationships for faith-based organizations.

## Research Question and Working Hypotheses

Some of the advocates of faith-based organizations and the human services they provide are working to maintain a wall of separation between church and state; others are equally committed to promoting increased church-state partnerships for addressing social problems (American Jewish Committee, 2001). Most of the church-state discussions in the literature move beyond the dichotomous categories of mere separation or partnership to a multifarious phenomenon of church-state relationships. A pertinent issue has emerged for faith-based organizations (ranging from congregations newly interested in service delivery to traditional religious affiliated organizations), as well as other stakeholders (including denominational bodies, funding sources, and advocacy groups), which has been the main research question for this dissertation: What are the meanings of church-state relationships for faith-based organizations?

Among the elements that I assumed to be a part of the multiple meanings of church-state relationships for faith-based organizations are the following working hypotheses taken from the above discussion: faith-based organizations have a variety of different understandings of the role of religious activities in providing human services; they place different values on the ability to discriminate in hiring; and, they have different perspectives on the purpose of financial and programmatic accountability.

The perspectives of various stakeholders contributed to these hypotheses, but the voices of faith-based organizations were less clear. The implications and understandings

held by faith-based organizations themselves made further research into the diversity of perspectives on church-state relationships a valuable area of inquiry. I hope that this research focused on faith-based organizations in one locality in Virginia will contribute both to knowledge concerning the role of faith as a potential basis for publicly funded human services and to the ethical implications of this knowledge. The research may be shown to have relevance for faith-based organizations in other localities, and for a variety of stakeholders, who must interpret, implement, and experience the consequences of faith-based initiatives. I now turn my attention to the philosophical assumptions of the methodology I have chosen and a detailed presentation of the methods as implemented in this research.

# Chapter 3: The Use of Constructivist Methods for Interpretive Research

## I. Determining the Appropriate Paradigm, Theory, and Methods

Multiple and complex perspectives on church-state relationships emerge with increased attempts to promote faith-based organizational involvement in publicly funded human service programs. Based on the above review of the literature, it appeared to me that organizational leaders and policymakers, advocates and critics, and other stakeholders should be asked to offer idiographic and contextual understandings of different elements in these church-state relationships. This inquiry has not sought to offer objective descriptions of what church-state relationships are or what they should be, but rather it presents the interplay of multiple meanings expressed as a result of the subjective experiences of faith-based organizations and other stakeholders. Interest in the subjective role of participants' experiences, their insider perspectives and the values that shape their understandings led this research beyond traditional forms of inquiry into an interpretive paradigm. Interpretive research provides a paradigmatically distinct alternative to mainstream scientific methodology and research purposes because of its goal of understanding rather than describing or generalizing (Rodwell, 1998). Attempts to discern the multiple understandings of a phenomenon, such as the church-state relationships of faith-based organizations, provided an appropriate interpretive paradigm research question.

In this chapter, I present a theoretical perspective drawn from the writings of Richard Rorty. In demonstrating that this theory is appropriate for guiding the research process, I discuss the focus, fit, feasibility of the research question for the use of constructivist inquiry as an appropriate interpretive alternative research methodology. I conclude with elements of the research design that were utilized in this largely emergent process.

## Interpretive Paradigm Theory and Research

When utilizing an alternative approach to inquiry, a researcher should discuss theory in a way consistent with the paradigm. In traditional research and in many dissertations, the role of theory is to shape assumptions and provide knowledge about the content of the topic of inquiry. As such, research serves to help further develop or test theory (Rubin & Babbie, 1999). Connections between theory and research often include discussions of predictability, precision design and methodology, and a goal of generalization. These issues related to theory development and testing are not relevant to interpretive research, such as constructivist inquiry, where the theory and knowledge should be grounded in the data as it emerges. The role of theory in proposing this research is not to provide knowledge about the content of church-state relationships for the purpose of further development or testing. Without such a theory shaping the content of the inquiry or guiding the research design, what is the role of theory in interpretive dissertation research? What will be the role of theory in this interpretive inquiry?

In this dissertation, a theory of pragmatism is used in relation to the process of the research rather than the content. The most appropriate theoretical approach for

interpretive research is one that recognizes the emergent hermeneutic process of discerning multiple meanings, idiographic understandings, and the role of values and context in the process of knowledge construction. As a researcher, I realize that I have personal values, assumptions, and personal understandings of the topic, and while theory is often used to frame the topic and help the researcher remain objective, in this intersubjective process of co-construction, my understandings are offered alongside those of other participants, so that theory relates less to what I know to be "true," and more to my process of knowing. Working hypotheses along with the criteria for rigor, presented in detail below, helped me to frame, or bound, my subjective views, but in the mutual interaction of this shared inquirer-participant relationship, my assumptions did contribute to the knowledge being developed. Consistent with these and other assumptions of theory in an interpretive paradigm, the writings on pragmatism by Richard Rorty provide a framework that supported the subjective process of understanding multiple realities.

Rorty's Pragmatism as a Theoretical Approach to Understanding

The writings of Richard Rorty are among the most recent in the philosophical heritage of American pragmatism. American pragmatism was developed at the beginning of the twentieth century in the writings of William James, John Dewey, and Charles Pierce. In a matter of decades this philosophical approach that recognized the relationship between research methodology and ethics was ignored as a philosophy of science as logical empiricism became the dominant approach to knowledge-building (Diesing, 1991). Dewey (1922) asserted that an epistemology should be able to provide knowledge useful for solving complex social problems. Dewey and James argued that

eternal truths are not relevant, but rather that an idea is true if it is able to be used in remedying a problematic situation (Diesing, 1991).

As a part of the heritage of pragmatism, Rorty's writings focus less on foundations for what is known to be true, and more on the consequences of what is experienced as true among a group of people (Rorty, 1982). Rorty's pragmatism, or neopragmatism, as it is often discussed, extends this theoretical position for our postmodern world emphasizing hermeneutics over epistemology. Rorty's pragmatism can be better articulated in terms of its interpretive nature, the connection between epistemology and ontology where what is said to be known as real (ontology) is interdependent with the situation of knowing (epistemology) (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Rorty's pragmatic theory of knowledge will help to articulate the assumptions of an interpretive paradigm within a philosophy of science and will lead to a discussion of a methodology that is relevant to the research question of this dissertation.

Most of Rorty's writings have presented a framework that is critical of the dominant epistemological perspective in the social sciences where knowledge is considered to represent or correspond to objective reality. Rorty (1979) is not interested in a new and improved theory of knowledge, but rather, he advocates a philosophy without epistemology, without a one-best-way of knowing. In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty (1979) questions the ability of the human mind to be a great mirror that purely measures and rationally represents reality (epistemology), as well as notion of a reality that is really "out there" (ontology). His approach to knowledge is often described

as “antirepresentationalism” or “antifoundationalism,” meaning that knowledge does not represent reality, nor does it provide a universal foundation for what counts as truth.

Rorty rejects traditional scientific approaches to inquiry as ways of knowing where truth is said to correspond to objective reality. Inquiry, from Rorty’s perspective, has less to do with finding universally valid and generalizable representations of objective reality, and more to do with the pragmatic processes of “solidarity”. He says that it makes less sense to “regard truth as a goal of inquiry. The purpose of inquiry is to achieve agreement among human beings about what to do” (Rorty, 1999, p. xxv).

Rorty (1989; 1991) uses the term "solidarity" to discuss the pragmatic purpose of cooperative human inquiry. His approach strives to understand what is useful for people to believe, moving inquiry from objectivity to intersubjective solidarity. The resultant goal is in seeking “noncoerced consensus within the community in which we participate” (1991, p. 22). Because of the emphasis on solidarity, Rorty encourages freedom and openness to encounters with others so that inquiry becomes "the attainment of an unforced agreement with tolerant disagreement" (1991, p. 41).

He favors intersubjective interpretations of experiences because these pragmatic understandings are able to promote hope among people working together; they may possibly even help to create a better future (Rorty, 1999). His pragmatism, then, suggests a shift from the question, “Is our knowledge of things adequate to the way things really are?” to “Are our ways of describing things, of relating them to other things so as to make them fulfill our needs more adequately, as good as possible? Or, can we do better? Can our future be made better than our present?” (Rorty, 1999, p. 72).

In seeking pragmatic solidarity, Rorty recognizes the historical and contextual situatedness of local knowledge. He promotes a value-laden process of knowing where local assumptions shape how people understand their experiences. As an alternative to relativism, Rorty claims that local knowledge claims are “ethnocentric” in that the researcher has “to accept the fact that we start from where we are" (1991, p. 29). Rorty reframes the concept “ethnocentric,” suggesting that people who hold firm to their beliefs and values should only be criticized for taking the beliefs and values of their own community too seriously (Rorty, 1991). With less emphasis on seeking objectivity in truth claims, knowledge is recognized as “a compliment paid to the beliefs which we think so well justified that, for the moment, further justification is not needed.” (1991, p. 24). Similarly, he states that there is “nothing to be said about truth or rationality apart from descriptions of the familiar procedures of justification which a given society--ours--uses in one or another area of inquiry" (p. 23). He argues that while there nothing to be said about truth, there is a lot to be said about the local justification of various sorts of beliefs (Rorty, 1998).

Rorty has identified his philosophical or theoretical assumptions using the term “irony” to suggest that the way something is understood today may differ from how it could be understood tomorrow. He encourages “radical and continuing doubts about one’s final vocabulary” (1989, p. 72). The words we use to describe knowledge are contingent upon our context. We should be willing to allow for changes in our understandings. One result of the ironist position is the greater emphasis on “creating” rather than “finding,” and on efforts toward making a change rather than discovering

facts (Rorty, 1989). This suggests not only that local assumptions shape what is known to be true, but that because of multiple and often competing truth claims, our understandings of truth change. We play an active role in shaping our beliefs, values, and knowledge in ways that help these things make sense.

It is this pragmatic approach to understanding that has served as the theoretical framework for the process of this dissertative inquiry. Consistent with my understanding of Rorty, in this research, I considered multiple truths shaped by local values and beliefs, I placed less emphasis on seeking truth, and more on the consequences of what people experience as true, and throughout the process I sought to understand issues of agreement and disagreement as different realities were expressed. Each of these elements of Rorty's writings proved to be relevant to the process of understanding the multiple meanings of church-state relationships for faith-based organizations.

Throughout this research, I imagined I would encounter people who believed that "the separation of church and state" is a constitutional concept that must be protected for the sake of government, faith-based organizations, and beneficiaries of services. I also anticipated people whose understanding of faith would suggest that religious principles provide the best foundation for publicly-funded human services. The issue, then, was not to know which way is best or which way is the true way toward effective service delivery or effective church-state relationships. The issue was not a matter of presenting the most appropriate understanding of a relationship between a faith-based organization and government. What was at issue, rather, was an attempt to have participants join me in the authentic and thorough construction of diverse understandings of the relationships

between faith-based organizations and government entities and in consideration of the implications of these understandings.

At the beginning of the consciousness raising process that was integral to the inquiry, I hoped to understand the pragmatic nature of the inquiry: that faith-based organizations would be able to incorporate their own knowledge and utilize the views and values of others in relating to government funding entities to provide human services. My goal in this dissertation has been personally to understand and to encourage the development of understandings in others of the multiple realities of how faith-based organizations relate to government entities in the provision of human services.

Focus, Fit, and Feasibility of Research Question

Because of this goal and the theoretical and paradigmatic assumptions, the research question found an appropriate focus and fit in constructivist inquiry. It was also feasible to implement. I will discuss the decision to utilize constructivist methods by answering questions related to the focus, fit, and feasibility of the research. These considerations helped to determine if constructivist inquiry was able to offer a methodology that was appropriate to the emerging question related to faith-based organizations understandings of church-state relationships.

Focus. The focus of this research question asks about various "'ins' and 'outs' of a phenomenon of interest" (Rodwell, 1998, p. 38). To the extent that I proposed a study of various elements of church-state relationships, such as the risks and opportunities of faith-based organizations partnering with government, the focus of this dissertation was determined to be "pure" research. As pure research, I sought to explore different values

and views of faith-based organizations and other organizations and individuals that were stakeholders in faith-based initiatives.

While this inquiry began as pure research of how faith-based organizations and other stakeholders understand the phenomenon of church-state relationships, it was known that policy implications were likely to emerge since faith-based policy initiatives contribute to the multiple understandings of the phenomenon. It is helpful to consider the processes by which constructivist research inquires into the purpose and values of policies (policy-in-intent), issues of policy and program effectiveness (policy-in-implementation), and experiences of policy results (policy-in-experience) (Guba, 1985). Elements of policy-in-intent were evidenced in this study when considering the recent emphasis on faith-based organizations and the proliferation of faith-based initiatives in recent years. While faith-based initiatives are often discussed, there has been limited utilization of charitable choice opportunities by faith-based organizations, which leads to issues of policy-in-implementation. With local opportunities for faith-based organizations to access public funding, there are elements of policy-in-experience to be assessed. These policy implications emerged when asking about the phenomenon of faith-based organizations seeking to understand complex church-state relationships, but the focus remained phenomenological, and as such was conducted as a process of pure research.

Fit. The issue of fit is central to the earlier discussion of paradigm and theory. In determining the fit of this research question for constructivist methods, *multiple realities* were expected as numerous stakeholders were likely to provide various responses to how

faith-based organizations may relate to government entities. There were opportunities for thorough interaction among participants in considering this question, particularly as faith-based organizations raised so many of their own questions about what it means to receive and utilize public funding. Based on prior ethnography, organizational decision-makers, policymakers, and other stakeholders in this process throughout the Richmond area were known to be able to present multiple perspectives on church-state relationships.

Not only were the multiple constructions to be explored, but the *subjective interaction* of individual meanings also needed to be assured to make constructivist methods an appropriate fit. My views and those of participants were expected to continually interact as data was being collected. The hermeneutic circle, a central mechanism for the construction of meaning in constructivist research (Rodwell, 1998), involved gathering participants with different understandings and allowing for interaction, mutual shaping, and influence of their ideas. This dialectic interaction contributed to new insights and understandings that have developed. To make this research an appropriate fit for constructivist methods, it was my responsibility to promote interaction among participants and recognize the diversity in the multiple realities of church-state relationships. I did this by discussing data that was collected in one interview with other participants in the following interviews. This allowed each participant to have the opportunity to present their own understandings and interact with the understandings of others. Furthermore, the analysis of data resulted in the case study report, a narrative co-construction that further demonstrates the interplay of each participant's subjective meaning and my own. Member checks have also taken place

where I shared the meanings being constructed with other participants, seeking their response to assure that their perspectives were included. Further methodological detail of these processes for promoting subjectivity is provided below.

Another issue relevant to the fit of the research question involves the role of *context*. It is interesting to note that this question of how faith-based organizations understand church-state relationships is being asked in the location where Thomas Jefferson suggested the value of a wall for separating church and state. While the location is the same, the context of central Virginia is very different in the twenty-first century. The research question provided an attempt to understand church-state partnerships in this region of Virginia in an era when national public policies challenge Jefferson's "wall of separation." While Virginia has not implemented charitable choice to the extent desired by framers of the legislation (Carlson-Thies, 1997b; Sherman, 1997), this state has encouraged faith-based organizations to apply for federal grants (Canada, 2001). As a result, the question is bound within a context where many faith-based organizations and other stakeholders in central Virginia are expressing an interest in the public funding of human services and are at a place to discuss these church-state relationships.

In each of these questions of fit, the role of *values* can be seen as central to the phenomenon of church-state relationships. The government value on human services offered by faith-based providers and the faith-based organization value on the opportunities available with government money are two central elements where the inquiry is value-laden. My social work values emphasizing justice and diversity also

shape the construction of meaning. As such, the participants and I join together to offer our perspectives on the church-state phenomenon, providing an appropriate value-laden fit for constructivist inquiry.

Feasibility. The research was determined to be feasible as demonstrated by the access that I had to the variety of participants needed for the inclusion of multiple perspectives and by efforts that I took to address the low levels of risk in the research process. I conducted prior ethnography concerning these issues prior to the focused exploration of the data collection process. In this, I identified gatekeepers for the research process that were willing to grant access to the people and information needed for the inquiry. The gatekeepers also pointed the way to other stakeholders who were able to further the knowledge and maximize the variation of participants. The Virginia Department of Social Services Community Connections program has a government appointed Liaison Office for Community and Faith-Based Initiatives that expressed interest in participating as a stakeholder and gatekeeper. As a gatekeeper this office nominated leaders within faith-based organizations, policymakers, and other organizational leaders with stakeholding interests as participants. A local women's ministry organization, including a woman who has conducted previous research on faith-based organizations, and a large local Christian denominational office that works with a variety of faith-based organizations receiving public funds or considering the use of public funds, were also included as gatekeepers. In discussions with these individuals, the inquiry was shown to be not only feasible, but it also seemed to be necessary for

allowing diverse faith-based organizations opportunities to struggle with questions as to how they might relate to government entities and what these partnerships might entail.

In proposing this research, there were several minimal risks to be considered. The multiple understandings of how church and state partnerships are experienced and the questions of what these relationships mean may have raised political issues for people involved in both religious and governmental organizations. The potential for conflict was considered to be a possibility due to the multiple understandings of the problem at hand. These issues were never made manifest in a way that would have prevented the possibility of honest communication regarding the issues. The inquiry did not have direct effects that would have been detrimental to human functioning.

I also considered other, more political risks in assessing feasibility: Would leaders of faith-based organizations fear that by discussing their hesitancy in entering church-state relationships they would limit their possibilities for funding? Would stakeholders who value the participation of faith-based organizations offer the reciprocal fear that by stating concerns relevant to the participation or capability of faith-based organizations they will distance these organizations from seeking public funds?

While the participants did not articulate these concerns, I tried to be sensitive to these issues when establishing the feasibility of the inquiry. These challenges were not considered great risks because of prior ethnography that demonstrated the expressed desire of organizations to engage in dialogue on the topic. Gatekeeper organizations were also asked to be attentive to these issues when suggesting participants and as the researcher, I inquired about and discussed any political risks that may be relevant to the

process. I considered the notion that these issues related to funding and programming may cause participants to be cautious in their participation, but I encouraged equality in the interaction of participant contributions to the questions being asked and protected, to the greatest extent possible, the confidentiality of participants. My education and experience credentials as both a minister and social worker helped to make me a qualified and competent person to handle any issues that did emerge in relation to these risks. As a result of these cautions, no one who was asked to participate refused to do so because of ethical or political concerns. The few people who chose not to participate did so because of personal time constraints.

All participants were able to respond with integrity to the questions being considered and could do so in a way that did not cause harm or the potential for harm. As researcher, from the beginning of the process, I informed participants of details of the process as well as its emergent nature. I pointed out new questions were being included and changes to the research design, such as the use of phone interviews for follow-up questions. The intersubjective process of the research seemed to foster power sharing and mutual respect for the multiple meanings being expressed. I sought to encourage the honest presentation of perspectives and assure participants that no stakeholder group offers the "true" perspective in this process. I believe that the teaching/learning nature of the inquiry will continue to lead to changes in understandings of church-state relationships, and that as a result, participants will continue to experience the benefit of consciousness-raising (Rodwell, 1998). The discussion of methods and the

interpretations provide further details of how these issues were addressed and how they were understood.

## Constructivist Methodology for Understanding Church-State Relationships

Constructivist inquiry provides a method of interpretive research that has been able to respect multiple meanings of church-state relationships. Constructivist inquiry recognizes that these subjective understandings are based on people's experiences and the context in which these experiences are lived out. Constructivist methods are disciplined and rigorous in the knowledge-building process; they are at the same time emergent and relevant to the construction of participants' meanings and changes in these meanings. While the constructivist methodological process for understanding multiple meanings is largely emergent, it began with recognition of three phases to which I attended. The emergent nature of the research design was based on the experiential process of the researcher and participants so that each phase was implemented, although the exact content of each phase was not known ahead of time. Phase one was a period of orientation and overview, phase two was the focused exploration of the research question, and phase three was a comprehensive member check. Constructivist methods for this research project are discussed according to these phases.

### Phase I: Orientation and Overview

Prior Knowledge. The first phase of orientation and overview began with the initial bounding of the problem (Rodwell, 1998). The bounding of the problem was based on a review of the literature of faith-based policy initiative discussions and organization practice issues. The literature review included materials that shaped my

understanding of the issues pertinent to faith-based initiatives. This review, as well as prior ethnography among stakeholders in government and in faith-based organizations, shaped conceptual issues into working hypotheses and then foreshadowed questions that were used to guide data collection. Based on the working hypotheses in the final section of the literature review, the following foreshadowed questions emerged as relevant in considering how faith-based organizations understand the meanings of their church-state relationships.

- Religious Activities and Human Services: What role does faith play in the provision of human services? Should the organization distinguish religious activities (worship, instruction, and proselytization) from human service activities, or may faith be the basis for human services in a more integral way? How do elements of faith and of human service relate to each other in the organization's identity? Is the organization concerned with being able to maintain a faith-based identity?
- Employment: To what extent does faith play a role in the organization's employment decisions? Should the use of public funding in the organization's human service program shape the use of faith as a hiring criterion?
- Fiscal and Program Accountability: Is the organization concerned about being held accountable for government funding? Does the use of public funding shape accounting practices? Financial management? Does the use of public funding shape program evaluation? How does faith relate to program effectiveness? How does public funding relate to program effectiveness? Have elements or practices

of faith changed as a result of public funding? Is there the potential for changes of faith elements in the organization? Is there a fear of these changes?

These interview questions evolved as participants shaped the interview process, including the appropriateness and importance of the questions being asked. By the end of the research, the first section of questions on religious activities in human service delivery remained largely the same. Because many participants chose to discuss the items in the second and third sections together, these sections were combined. Participants introduced items that became a third section of questions related to different degrees of responsibility for social welfare and social justice.

The questions in the amended final two sections are as follows:

- Government Expectations re: Employment, Fiscal Accountability and Program Evaluation: To what extent does faith play a role in the organization's employment decisions? Should the use of public funding in the organization's human service program shape the use of faith as a hiring criterion? Is the organization concerned about being held accountable for government funding? Does the use of public funding shape accounting practices? Does the use of public funding shape program evaluation? Does faith relate to program effectiveness? Have elements or practices of faith changed as a result of public funding? Is there the potential for changes of faith-based elements in the organization? Is there a fear of these changes?

- Social Responsibility: Whose responsibility is it to provide human services that foster the common good in a community? Who is responsible for providing for the common good? What do you believe are appropriate ways for faith-based organizations and government entities to relate to each other when meeting needs? How should faith-based organizations work with each other? Must religious organizations choose between a pastoral and prophetic role? Does public funding shape the freedom of the organization to be a social critic? Does public funding shape practices related to political advocacy?

Natural Setting. Constructivist research occurs in a setting that is natural to the phenomenon under consideration because reality cannot be understood outside of its context (Rodwell, 1998). This research question has involved faith-based organizations and relevant stakeholders in a metropolitan region in central Virginia. This region was chosen for its size, which helps foster maximum variation in faith-based organizations. Central Virginia provides a variety of stakeholders, including those holding perspectives related to public policy dimensions of church-state relationships.

Interviews took place in the context of the participants, such as congregations, human service organizations, and the Department of Social Services, as well as other organizational settings. I strove to assure that the context contributed to the constructions of the meanings being expressed by being attentive to the natural setting and elements of the setting that were relevant to the focus of the research (e.g. the use and prevalence of religious symbols, including language, in faith-based organizations). This included

observation and participation in events relevant to the organization, such as service programs, worship, religious activities, and board meetings. Each participant was asked to interact in a way that demonstrated the value of the context being considered. This meant, in some cases, that I participated in religious activities and observed service activities. In visiting the sites of the organizations, I felt that I was able to gain a fuller understanding of the issues under consideration.

Criteria for Rigor. The criteria for rigor in the research, which are explained in detail below, were considered in this early phase of constructivist research (Rodwell, 1998). I attempted to promote trustworthiness and authenticity in the research process beginning in the first phase through genuine interaction with participants.

Reflexivity, which involves being aware of one's knowing processes, is valued in constructivist inquiry as it allows the researcher to be attentive to use of self and the role of emotions, values, and reactions (Rodwell, 1998). I maintained a reflexive journal that includes thoughts and feelings, values and beliefs relevant to emerging issues, and problems that are related to faith-based initiatives and organization practice (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Methodological decisions related to the emerging design were maintained in a similar form through a methodological journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These items encourage mindfulness of the process in ways that encourage trustworthiness and authenticity.

Peer Debriefing. A group of colleagues knowledgeable of constructivist methods and the topic of inquiry have been included in ongoing discussions that encourage critical thinking and attentiveness to ethical and methodological issues (Rodwell, 1998). The

peer reviewers have provided critical feedback regarding decisions of research design, data collection, data analysis, and elements of rigor. They have great levels of knowledge and experience in understanding the role of subjectivity in qualitative research. They are also knowledgeable of matters of faith and public policy that have helped in debriefing my subjective knowledge on the issues as well as those that have arisen from the participants.

Sampling. One of the methodological issues of research design in phase one is that of sampling. Purposive sampling recognizes the evolving nature of the design and allows for identifying participants that help create maximum variation in understandings of the topic being addressed (Rodwell, 1998). Without an emphasis on generalizability, this sampling plan allowed for a depth of knowledge into each organization and individual participant involved (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). A purposive sample was conducted that involved selecting the maximum variety of multiple stakeholders who were able to discuss the church-state relationships of faith-based organizations (Patton, 1980).

The maximum variation became evident in the participation of formal and informal leaders of faith-based organizations and other stakeholders. The variety of participants was selected according to stakeholder groups. The stakeholder groups that emerged in the process grew from the following groups established at the beginning of the process: congregations that provide human services, religiously affiliated organizations, small faith-based organizations, organizations that offer support to faith-based organizations, and organizations relevant to faith-based policies. The only change

to stakeholder groups that occurred in the research process is that organizations offering support to faith-based organizations and organizations relevant to faith-based organizations were merged into one group as there were not enough of these groups and not enough distinction among the groups to warrant separate categories. Seeking further organizations to fit these categories would have also distracted from the faith-based organizations themselves which were the primary characteristic of the other stakeholder groups.

Gatekeepers, identified in the above discussion of feasibility, helped me to identify participants who were able to express matters related to their interpretation of church-state relationships. Participants from stakeholder organizations were selected who had decision-making ability related to matters of funding and programming, as well as the ability to express their interpretation of issues related faith-based organizations partnering with government. Executive directors, pastors, presidents of governing boards, and deacons are among participant titles chosen from faith-based organizations because of their involvement in making decisions related to how the organization relates to the government.

Participants were continually nominated throughout the research as yet another way to assure emergence and bounding in the process. I remained open to the possibility of other stakeholders as I was seeking a full array of meanings in the emergent process of the research. Snowball sampling (McCall & Simmons, 1969) best describes this method of sampling that was used when participants are asked to nominate other stakeholders whose views and values may differ from their own.

The emergent sample of multiple stakeholders within stakeholder groups included people and organizations that could experience and articulate a wide variety of understandings of faith-based organizations' relationships with government entities. Within each of the four categories of stakeholder groups, between five and eleven organizations were identified. This allowed the final number of stakeholders to be thirty-one organizations and forty-two individual participants (See Table 1). Without prematurely terminating the data collection process, redundancy in meaning was made clear in the responses being offered by the participants. The last few participants were selected to assure maximum variation even though redundancy had been achieved.

| **Stakeholder Groups** | **Number of Organizations** | **Number of Participants** |
|---|---|---|
| Group 1: Organizations that Offer Support to FBO's (includes Gatekeepers) | 5 | 7 |
| Group 2: Congregations that Provide Human Services | 10 | 13 |
| Group 3: Religiously Affiliated Organizations | 5 | 8 |
| Group 4: Small FBO's | 11 | 14 |

Table 1: Details of Stakeholder Groups

The first Stakeholder Group consisted of Organizations that offer support to faith-based organizations. In this group are the three Gatekeepers discussed earlier, individuals from the Virginia Liaison Office for Community and Faith-Based Initiatives, a Baptist

women's ministry organization, and a local Catholic Office. Also included are two statewide ecumenical organizations. One is an interfaith policy advocacy organization and the other provides congregational services. This last organization also provides several million dollars in publicly funded direct human services across the state.

The second Stakeholder Group is comprised of congregations, most of which provide direct human services and, as a result, may now be eligible for public funding. None of these congregations directly receive publicly money for human services, but a few of these congregations have established separate nonprofit organizations to receive funds for human service programs and activities. These congregations are diverse, representing three of the world's most prominent religions, and representing distinct regions and populations within this local context. They are racially and economically diverse, with leadership from different ages, genders, and educational experiences. Within their respective religions, they are diverse representing conservative, traditional, and liberal approaches to the practice of their beliefs.

Stakeholder group three consists of several large religiously affiliated organizations, most of which have extensive experience in partnering with public entities and use several million dollars each year in government funds (from local, state, and federal sources). These groups also represent diverse religious traditions and serve a variety of human needs with populations ranging from childcare to older adults, and social needs from mental health to housing. While these groups are commonly identified as faith-based due to their names, the organizations struggle with this term as a descriptor

of their identity; one organization, with the name of a religion in its name, prefers to be known as a community-based organization.

The fourth Stakeholder Group, consisting of small religious nonprofits, includes a wide range of faith-based human service organizations. Most of these organizations are Christian in their origins. This is largely due to the organizations that founded them. Some have developed out of congregations, others from larger service organizations, and most of the larger religious congregations and organizations in central Virginia are Christian. As these smaller nonprofits have developed, some have decided not to maintain a faith-based identity or a religious name.

More details on these organizations and their experiences are provided in the Case Study that follows this chapter.

Ethical Considerations. Research ethics calls for minimizing the risks to participation and assuring that participants are informed in their consent to be a part of the research process (See Appendix A for a Research Subject Information and Consent Form). There are degrees of the confidentiality for participants that should be considered in constructivist inquiry (Rodwell, 1998). The process of meaning construction, including the development of knowledge in what will be described below as a hermeneutic circle, suggests that it may be possible for participants to identify other participants. While identifying information, such as the names of participants are not used in this research, the organizational context of participants may be determined, meaning that strict confidentiality cannot be assured. I have tried to protect the identity of data sources throughout the process. This means that any attempts to determine the

identity of participants, as well as any "he said, she said" conversations have been limited. These considerations have been clearly discussed with participants and are available to them in the Research Subject Information and Consent Form that they signed and that were designed in accordance with the Virginia Commonwealth University Institutional Review Board.

Phase II: Focused Exploration

In moving from the phase of orientation and overview it is important to recognize that the second phase of exploration emerges from the earlier elements of the research experience. The second phase of the constructivist inquiry is the actual focused exploration into the multiple understandings of church-state relationships for faith-based organizations. In this phase, I discuss elements of data collection, as well as interpretation and analysis.

Use of the Human Instrument. In the research process, data gathering occurred with the inquirer being the primary data collection instrument (Rodwell, 1998). This allowed for adaptability in recognizing, sorting, and honoring the plurality of meanings. Unstructured interviews were conducted to collect data because of the flexibility and responsiveness that they allow for the human instrument. From my education and experience in interviewing, I was able to serve as an appropriate human instrument in conducting the interviews. I have studied qualitative research methods and participated in qualitative research interviews as well as clinical interviews where I learned to seek clarification, correction, and amplification and to be sensitive to personal and contextual cues that provide meaning. These personal and professional skills aided in my

exploration of expressed meanings as well as tacit knowledge that is not easily put into words.

Qualitative Methods. Interviewing, observing, and the recording of verbal and nonverbal communication are the processes most capable of being sensitive to the transaction between the inquirer and other participants in the research process. These qualitative methods are also most capable of capturing the multiple realities being discussed (Rodwell, 1998). The best method for utilizing these processes is the in-depth open-ended interview that serves as a dialogic conversation between the researcher and participant (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

The researcher recorded data and field notes by hand during interviews and while observing the participants' contexts. Immediately after the interview and after leaving the setting, I revisited the field notes and create expanded field notes. I then typed the expanded field notes as soon as possible after the interview, always within twenty-four hours. A simple word processing format was originally used to allow the lines of the expanded field notes to be numbered. The data analysis software package, Atlas.ti was used to create units that could be easily identified and that could be easily traced to the original transcripts in a way that facilitated the process of inductive data analysis and assisted in the audit of the research process and product. Atlas.ti also made the printing of units onto index cards an easier process.

Hermeneutic Circle. The hermeneutic circle, described above, aids in the dialectic process of meaning construction and is achieved when data is collected from a wide variety of stakeholders. The purposive sampling plan included asking participants

to identify other participants with views and values that differ from their own. When these stakeholders discussed differences in perspective, the contrasting perspectives would often lead to increasingly greater understanding, which demonstrated the dialectic nature of the hermeneutic process. This is made evident in the Case Study that follows.

A hermeneutic circle is a circular process of information sharing that allows for the development of meaning utilizing and building on data from interviews, documents, literature, observations, working hypothesis, and other information and resources. As researcher, I have been responsible for this cycling of information that shapes the construction of meanings related to the research question. This has meant acting as both a teacher and learner in the co-construction of meanings by taking information from one interview to the next and back again. I have had to continually see myself as a collaborator in order to assure a quality hermeneutic process of mutual understanding and a quality co-constructed product (Rodwell, 1998).

Inductive Data Analysis. Data analysis is integral to the whole of the emergent design. The participants and I began analyzing their understandings of the inquiry's topic through informal reflection from the beginning stages of the research. A formal and systematic process of inductive analysis utilizes the data that was recorded in the expanded field notes, moving from the specific data to more broad and general themes of understanding that reflect the emergence of the multiple realities being expressed (Rodwell, 1998).

Through the use of constant comparison, a method of grounded theory research described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), analysis of the data included unitizing and

categorizing. I unitized the data using Atlas.ti which allowed me to take the expanded field notes and create from them the smallest and most specific units of information. These units consisted of words, phrases, or sentences, or paragraphs, as long as each unit was able to stand alone and cannot be further broken down. Each unit was printed on index cards and coded in Atlas.ti in such a way that assures the data unit can be tracked to the original source.

Unitizing led to categorizing, a content analysis process that includes developing categories of data. Categorizing included the two subprocesses of sorting and lumping (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Sorting allowed the comparing of data units so that themes can be considered. Lumping is the actual bringing together of units based on similarities. Lumps of cards were categorized and tentatively labeled while constantly comparing the cards with other units and other lumps. A miscellaneous pile was created, but most cards as possible moved into lumped categories (six percent remained in a miscellaneous category). Decision rules were developed for how to place units into categories. There was no overlap in the categories as they were nonredundant and exclusive.

The data units were revisited after categories were established to determine if the decision rules for placing the unit in the lumped category were still appropriate. Units were moved, categories added, redefined, and eliminated, and relationships between categories emerged until eight categories were developed along with multiple subcategories that will be evident in the Case Study where a grounded theory of meaning has been constructed.

Phase III: Comprehensive Member Check

Phase three in the research includes the creation of a draft of a case study report and member checks that allow outcomes to be negotiated. An outside person was asked to conduct an audit to assess the rigor of the process and product in this last phase.

Case Study Report. A report on the meanings of church-state relationships of faith-based organizations, expressed by participants in faith-based organizations, other stakeholders, and including my own interpretations, is found in the case study report in the form of a detailed narrative. This narrative is described as a "thick description" of the entire research process (Geertz, in Rodwell, 1998, p. 60; Zeller, 1987). The case study report tells the story of the diverse meanings expressed by the participants and changes that may have developed in their understandings (Rodwell, 1998). It is firmly grounded in the data such that every assertion made in the story may be linked to the collected data. Similarly, all data that has been collected is included in the story to assure that the multiple meanings of participants are adequately portrayed.

To demonstrate the appropriateness of the case study report with constructivist assumptions, the report does not establish causality, but rather it illustrates the mutual shaping of views and values relevant to the topic. The report conveys an emic understanding of church-state relationships, a genuinely insider perspective of the complexity of the phenomenon. The particular details offered in the report can be shown to be unique to the participants and distinctive of their context. This context-bound, idiographic interpretation is preferred to the generalization of details in a nomothetic, or lawlike approach (Rodwell, 1998).

As such, applications of the complex and subjective interpretations of faith are not to be broadly applied to other contexts. If I have provided an adequately thick description of the phenomenon, consumers of the research will be able to best determine applicability to other organizations and settings.

Negotiated Outcomes. The meanings in the report are those of the participants, and the construction of their meaning expressed in the case study report can be considered an appropriate interpretation of the participants' meanings (Rodwell, 1998). In a final member check, 18 participants representing the maximum variation of each stakeholder group were asked to be a part of this negotiation of meaning. Twelve participants were able to review the case study report in order to discern their satisfaction with the story that portrays their meanings. The case study report has been reviewed by these participants to assure the inquirer is adequately expressing their construction of reality. Maximum variation of participants from the different stakeholder groups helped to assure that the diversity of meaning was also evident in the case study report.

Criteria of Rigor

While relevance is a matter of greater concern than rigor in constructivist inquiry, assuring quality was a factor throughout the process (Erlandson et al, 1993). Trustworthiness and authenticity are two sets of criteria for rigor in constructivist inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness is largely analogous to issues of reliability and validity in traditional research paradigms. Authenticity, established with particular relevance to the assumptions of constructivism, focuses on the interactive quality of the inquiry process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Trustworthiness. To assure a quality product, four criteria were utilized to establish and assess trustworthiness (Rodwell, 1998). *Credibility* seeks to assure that research findings accurately reflect participants' constructions of meaning. Time and resources utilized during this inquiry were sufficient for prolonged engagement and persistent observation assuring a fullness of depth in data collection, a level of trust between inquirer and participants, and a depth of understanding by the inquirer that reduced distortion in meaning as much as possible. Comparing data sources in a process of triangulation also led to a more full understanding of the multiple realities being constructed. A methodological journal and reflexive journal were used to record results of triangulation. Peer debriefing, mentioned earlier, included the asking of critical questions regarding the accurate reflection of participants' meanings. Journal notes from peer reviewers were available during the audit to reflect this process related to credibility. Member checks took place throughout the process and with the final report, I sought reactions from participants. This also served to confirm the accuracy of meaning being used in the case study and being reviewed in the credibility audit.

*Dependability* and *confirmability* can also be determined in a final audit of the research process. Dependability assures that the emergent decisions made in relation to research design and methodology are documented. A methodological journal and peer debriefing were used to record and justify these changes as they occurred in the inquiry process. The tracing of results in the case study report to the collected data, the issue of confirmability, can be managed with the reflexive journal. Triangulation and member

checking support confirmability, and again, the audit will allow data reconstruction to assess both of these elements of trustworthiness.

The reader of the report helps to determine levels of *transferability*, the final element of trustworthiness. If the report is thick enough (Zeller, 1987) to help consumers of the research determine relevance for their context, and if the meanings demonstrate the exploration of new ground, then the meanings offered here may be relevant to the meanings of another context, although this is not a primary goal of the writer in this context-dependent inquiry process. It is up to the readers to assess this criterion as they determine the value and usefulness of the report.

Authenticity. Authenticity, a criterion of rigor unique to constructivism, has been considered throughout the inquiry process. This criterion, attending to the quality and integrity of the process, has been achieved through the recognition of five dimensions of authenticity: fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity. These dimensions of authenticity were discussed with participants in various phases of the inquiry. Authenticity has as its focus the potential for change that comes with the construction of meaning and the participants were asked the extent to which the levels were achieved. It is in a consideration of authenticity that the research maintains rigor as well as relevance, and promotes ethical and reciprocal interaction among the researcher and participants.

The authentic quality of this inquiry can be judged by the extent to which participants have:

- An evenhanded representation of all views (fairness);

- Increased awareness of the complexity of their experiences and the social environment (ontological authenticity);
- Increased understanding of and respect for the constructions of others and their impact on other participants (educative authenticity);
- A changed situation or a changed experience within the context (catalytic authenticity);
- A redistribution of power among the participants and stakeholders in the process to act or bring about change (tactical authenticity) (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Rodwell & Woody, 1994).

Table 2 below includes some techniques that aid in making decisions related to achieving authenticity in the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Rodwell & Woody, 1994). These techniques provided a process for the researcher and participants to reflect upon the quality of the process of meaning development.

In the member check meetings with various participants, each person expressed fairness in the process as they appreciated the issues under consideration and expressed their diverse perspectives. In consideration of ontological authenticity, participants comment that I encouraged critical thinking about the process and reflection upon alternative perspectives. Participants were able to hear the multiple meanings and to some extent they were able to develop an understanding of these differences of perspective. Organizational leaders recognized how experiences shape organization practice and this process of understanding encouraged them to respect alternative views in new ways, thus achieving a level of educative authenticity. There was little expression

of change beyond this level, but as participants continue to reflect and engage in their organization practice, changes in the levels of authenticity may continue to emerge.

| **Aspect of Authenticity** | **Techniques** |
|---|---|
| Fairness | Have I identified stakeholders in the context who value the issues raised by church-state relationships of faith-based organizations?<br>Have I gathered fully informed consent from all participants and discussed degrees of confidentiality?<br>Have I solicited from participants understandings that are relevant to the context?<br>Have I discussed ongoing negotiations that may be made in relation to the emergent design of the research process? |
| Ontological Authenticity | Have I reflected upon alternative views offered by participants?<br>Have I provided feedback to participants to increase alternative understandings of church-state relationships?<br>Have I encouraged a questioning of assumptions and critical reflection upon personal experiences related to church-state relationships?<br>Have I maintained an audit trail of individual constructions during the process? |
| Educative Authenticity | Have I gathered information regarding differences in constructions of meaning?<br>Have I gathered evidence of developing understanding or appreciation of alternative views?<br>Have I gathered evidence of respect for different constructions? |
| Catalytic Authenticity | Have I gathered information about interest in acting on the developing meanings?<br>Have I gathered evidence of willingness to be involved in activities related to change?<br>Have I gathered evidence of transformation in constructed meanings and experiences in the context?<br>Have I reviewed resolutions that evolve from negotiations?<br>Have I conducted follow-up to assess the extent of change or action? |
| Tactical Authenticity | Have I assured that all participants are equal in the process?<br>Have I treated all participants with respect and honesty?<br>Have I avoided imposition of values or conscious manipulation?<br>Have I gathered testimony about the degree of power among participants to act?<br>Have I conducted follow-up to assess the degree of participation of each person involved? |

Table 2: Techniques for Achieving Authenticity

Audit. The audit process is relevant to research rigor as it allows an outside source to examine the process of data collection and analysis. Patty Morris, a Ph. D. candidate with me, conducted the audit for the inquiry process. She has taken the Constructivist Research elective course and is conducting her own interpretive research dissertation project. Her audit responsibility included examining the process that I have conducted in an attempt to verify the quality and rigor of the inquiry. She assessed methodological processes, the data collected, and the analysis of the data leading to meaning construction in the case study report in a Credibility Audit, Confirmability Audit, and Dependability. This formal examination of the details of the research process and product assured that the level of rigor used throughout the inquiry was appropriate and that the product reflects the process (Rodwell, 1998). From this audit, I have learned the value of careful attention to detail in keeping records for a constructivist inquiry. The discussion of implications in Chapter Five includes details of this lesson and others learned from the research process and the auditor's report of the process. The auditor's report is included as Appendix B.

# Chapter 4: Interpretations

## I. Introducing the Case Study Report

The case study report presented here is a "thick description" of how leaders of faith-based organizations, as well as a few other stakeholders, understand and experience the meaning of partnering with government entities for the provision of human services (Geertz, 1973). The case study reflects the views expressed by research participants in faith-based organizations and other stakeholder organizations, as well as my own interpretations. This case study is a narrative in six Acts that tells the story of the diverse meanings of the participants and changes that may have developed in their understandings during the research process.

### The Case Study as a Thick Description

The narrative format of this case study is used to maintain a subjectivist point of view rather than an objectification of the data. The *artistic* dimensions of this storytelling format are balanced with *scientific* statements at the beginning to introduce themes that emerged from the data and at the end to summarize the "lessons learned" in the research process. The introduction below of (a.) the participants and the characters that have emerged from them and (b.) the themes that have emerged from interviews with the participants (see both Figure 1 and Act I below) helps prepare the reader for the case study. The first Act, while part of the case study, also plays a role in preparing the reader

for the case study. In Act I, I use a cast of characters to introduce the research themes and to aid the reader in transitioning from a functionalist explanation of the themes to an interpretive understanding of them. This first Act also serves as a demonstration of the hermeneutic circle as it reflects an articulation of the themes that the participants and I negotiated together.[1]

When the reader gets to the case study narrative, she or he should find there a "thick description" of what the participants have expressed in interviews with the researcher. Because the researcher is a co-constructor with the other participants, the reader should also find in this case study a "thick interpretation" (Denzin, 1989) of the data by the researcher.

How thick is a "thick description" supposed to be? To assess the case study for its overall thickness, several criteria have been considered (Rodwell, 1998; Zeller, 1987). The first three are discussions of the research sites, the issues being investigated, and lessons learned (Rodwell, 1998). First, the site of the research should be described. The policy context for faith-based initiatives in Central Virginia was offered in Chapter Three. In the case study, I present specific faith-based organizations, their contexts, and the experiences of several faith-based organizational leaders in terms of these initiatives. The case study utilizes several of these organizations as settings for the narrative. A picture of these organizations (research sites) and the experiences of their leadership

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[1] Throughout the case study endnotes are used to reference the participant via Atlas.ti primary documents (the qualitative interview transcripts). Act I has no footnotes because the section began as a metainterpretation of the research process. The characters' perspectives in Act I do refer back to the data since this part of the case study is based on themes that emerged from the data as demonstrated in Figure 1.

develop in the narrative. While these settings are not representative of all faith-based organizations in Virginia, they offer some of the variability that was evident in the sample.

Another criterion for thickness used to assess this case study is a discussion of the problem or issue being investigated. Act I sets the stage for the case study and presents the themes that will be discussed throughout the other five Acts. Acts Two through Six articulate various dimensions of the experiences of faith-based organizational leaders in Virginia that have considered partnering or have partnered with government entities for the public funding of human services. "Findings" in the traditional research sense of the word can be found in these parts of the case study.

The third criterion to assess "thickness" includes the lessons learned in the process of inquiry. These lessons are summarized at the conclusion of the case study and broader details of the implications of these lessons will be offered in Chapter Five. These lessons suggest the implications of the research for educators and policy practitioners and provide directions for future research. They are not generalizable lessons, but may be found to have meaning for readers in other locales.

There are other questions that have been posed to help the researcher and readers consider if the thick description is thick enough (Zeller, 1987). These include: Does the case study report have power and elegance? Precision and grace? Playfulness and creativity? Does it challenge readers, recognizing that there are multiple readers of the story with varied backgrounds and experiences? Does it have a degree of tentativeness that allows for negotiation? Is it well crafted? And, does it demonstrate an

egalitarianism that should be central to constructivist research methods? This egalitarian approach is also important to the pragmatism of Richard Rorty that was said to be guiding the process toward solidarity of interpretation rather than objectivity in findings (See Chapter Three).

The researcher writing the report, as well as peer reviewers, auditors, research participants and other readers all share the responsibility of assessing the case study according to these criteria. As I consider the above questions, I return to Richard Rorty's pragmatism, the theoretical perspective that led me to this research methodology and that contributes to the literary format of this narrative case study report. Richard Fyffe (1996) notes that Rorty's pragmatism is "intellectually akin to literary theories of the open text" (p.1). Rorty often cites literary theorist Stanley Fish as someone whose literary approach to the communal expression of local truths is congruent with Rorty's own notions of pragmatism and solidarity. With this perspective in mind, I evaluate the thickness of this case study by responding to a shift in epistemological, scientific reasoning to pragmatism and hermeneutics. Rorty proposes this move with a shift in the questions we ask, from: "Is our knowledge of things adequate to the way things really are?" toward: "Are our ways of describing things, of relating them to other things so as to make them fulfill our needs more adequately, as good as possible? Or, can we do better? Can our future be made better than our present?" (Rorty, 1999, p. 72). The narrative format used in this case study report allows for a pragmatic response and lends itself toward solidarity as it offers several "as good as possible" ways to "fulfill our needs," each of which may lead to opportunities for better futures.

**Theoretical Support for Narrative Format**

To state more clearly how the expression of pragmatic local truths relates to assessing a thick description, I turn to Stanley Fish's Reader-Response Theory which supports the view that individual and communities of readers assess the value of a text, such as the case study report (Fish, 1980; Tompkins, 1980). Fish asserts that narrative texts have no final or ultimate meaning in themselves; he also argues that authors of narrative texts do not hold the meaning of a text. Rather, it is in the responses of implied and actual readers of the narrative where meanings are created. Just as the processes of data collection and analysis were interpretive in nature, so now the process of reporting and assessing findings is a hermeneutic process.

The implied readers are those whom the author/researcher had in mind when writing the case study. My implied readers are the participants and other leaders of faith-based organizations, including social workers and other human service professionals interested in faith-based services (even if not involved in them). Other implied readers are the stakeholders in the practices of faith-based organizations, including policymakers and advocates, and scholars and researchers, and even the people served by the organizations who have been left out of the conversation. The findings are not necessarily generalizable to a broad range of readers, so the actual readers are the persons who will decide the value of the case study (Rodwell, 1998). The actual readers of this case study report are yet to be known, but should at least include research participants who participate in memberchecks and the dissertation committee. Because there are multiple readers of a case study report, there will be multiple assessments of its meaning and its

value. With each reader's response, an assessment of the thickness of the case study will be determined.

Reader-response theory also seems to support the process of member checks and peer review as a way to assess rigor in the process and the quality of the report. The criteria of rigor for constructivist research that were used in the research process and the writing of the case study report offer a response to these questions posed by Rorty. In asking participants if the case study report may be deemed trustworthy and if it authentically represents their participation and their perspective, I am able to assess the thickness of this report. In the member check process, the 12 participants who read the case study appreciated the creative format, confirmed that their perspective was offered and that the various issues and perspectives had been addressed. A few participants seemed to struggle with some of the interpretations of others. For example, one reader's response was disbelief that a faith-based organization could pray with program participants while receiving public money. Another participant was impressed with the level of accountability that leaders desired for their programs.

To help the readers further respond to the case study, I now turn to introduce the report with a description of the research participants and the subsequent characters that were developed from their responses. Following a discussion of the characters, I present a diagram and discussion of the themes that emerged from my analysis of the data. These themes are expanded in the different Acts that comprise the story that is the case study report.

**Participants and Characters**

The research interviews took place in faith-based organizations in a large in Central Virginia. This urban region, with a population of several hundred thousand, is an appropriate setting for this research. Religion plays a major role in the experiences of many people in this context. There are well over 1,000 congregations in the region, and many more than 150 faith-based human service organizations other than the congregations that provide services (Christian Ministries United, 2002).

The leaders of the faith-based organizations chosen for this research primarily represent stakeholder Groups Two, Three, and Four as they were earlier mentioned in the discussion of the sample (see Table 1 in Chapter 3). These groups include congregations that provide human services, traditional religiously affiliated organizations, and small religious nonprofits. From the thirty-five participants found in these three stakeholder groups (not including the seven gatekeepers), I introduce eleven characters that attempt to represent all of the perspectives offered. While each of the total of forty-two participants in the research has a unique voice that can stand alone, the case study serves as a tool that captures their voices and focuses them into the eleven characters. This occurs in a way that still allows every participant to be heard. The participants who joined in the member check assure us that their voices are heard in these bricolage characters and the audit assures that only six percent of the data units were "miscellaneous" and, therefore, not included.

Stakeholder Group One, comprised of organizations that offer support to faith-based organizations, provides one character for our story and this person represents the

Virginia Department of Social Services Liaison Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Stakeholder Group Two provides four leaders for our story from congregations that provide human services; three of these congregations offer services directly and one has created a separate nonprofit service organization. One of these congregations is Muslim and the others are Christian, with some differences among the churches represented in terms of denomination, size, services offered, leader characteristics and location. From Stakeholder Group Three, religiously affiliated organizations, are two leaders for the story. One is the Rabbi from a local Synagogue who is a board member at a large Jewish nonprofit service organization and the other is the Executive Director at a large nonprofit service organization with ties to one of the region's largest Protestant denomination. Four characters are from small faith-based organizations, Stakeholder Group Four. Two of these organizations are linked to Christian congregations, the third is more independent, but with Christian leadership, and the fourth is also independent but with relationships to a variety of religious organizations in the area.

| Stakeholder Groups | Number of Organizations | Number of Participants | Number of Characters Represented in the Case Study |
|---|---|---|---|
| Group 1: Organizations that Offer Support to FBO's (includes Gatekeepers) | 5 | 7 | 1 |
| Group 2: Congregations that Provide Human Services | 10 | 13 | 4 |
| Group 3: Religiously Affiliated Organizations | 5 | 8 | 2 |
| Group 4: Small FBO's | 11 | 18 | 4 |

Table 3: Details of Stakeholder Groups with Number of Characters from each Group to be included in the Case Study Report.

I use the character names listed below to protect the confidentiality of the participants. The interpretive processes of combining data units and recreating the organizations of each character also contribute to my attempts to protect participants' identities. While pseudonyms are used for the story's characters and organizations rather than research participants' names and organizations, the quotations offered by the characters are from participants' interview data as is shown throughout the case study with the use of endnotes. The endnotes, referenced by superscript numbers, are listed in Appendix C with details explaining the coding system and instructions for tracing the characters' quotations back to the participants' interview data. Any elements in the story that do not have endnote references are written by me as a part of my own interpretation and representation of the data which characterize all of the participants' perspectives as well as my own.

| Character Name | Organization |
|---|---|
| Rev. Jay Jamison | Mount Moriah Baptist Church |
| Mr. Bill Knapp | Department of Social Services Faith-Based Liaison Office |
| Rev. Sergio Perez | Smithfield UMC |
| Ms. Kimberly Sloan | Central Community Cares |
| Pastor Mark Matthews | Good News Ministries |
| Mr. Joe Young | Metro Community Ministries |
| Ms. Terry Singleton | Central City CDC |
| Rev. Edward Burnham | Northside Family Life Skills Center |
| Ms. Michelle Abrams | Christ Ascension Episcopal C |
| Mr. Maruf Kamil | Islamic Cultural Center |
| Rabbi Samuel Bender | Jewish Community Services |

Table 4: Characters used in the Case Study, along with the names of the organizations they represent.

I now introduce the characters in a little more detail, presenting information on their role in the organization, and details on the organization itself. I present the characters in the order that they enter the story.

The first five characters appear in Act I. The first of these is the Rev. Jay Jamison, Pastor of Mount Moriah Baptist Church. This medium sized congregation is the sponsoring body of the Northside Family Life Skills Center (see Rev. Edward Burnham below). The Center was created as a separate 501(c)3 organization to offer formal human service programs and to apply for outside funding, including public money from the city, state, and federal governments. This Black church is in the center of the city and in the center of an old African American arts and culture district. Many families have moved out of this urban neighborhood, but make the trip in on Sundays for a worship service with almost 200 people in attendance.

The next character in the case study is Mr. Bill Knapp. He is the Virginia Department of Social Services Faith-based Liaison, a position appointed by the Governor and responsible for a network of 120 Liaisons in local Departments of Social Services throughout the Commonwealth. He has experience in the public sector and in church-related social services through his Episcopal congregation.

Rev. Sergio Perez is the Associate Pastor of Smithfield United Methodist Church, a congregation with 250 members just south of this central Virginia city. This is an urban congregation that provides a variety of social ministries in response to the needs of their diverse community. The services, such as afterschool programs, adolescent daycare, and emergency food and clothing, are offered by a staff of Rev. Perez and about 15-20 volunteers, most of whom are members of the church. Most members of the church are Caucasian, but the communities surrounding the church are comprised of African Americans and Latin Americans, such that all three groups are learning to work and worship together. This multiculturalism has been a major force shaping the mission of the church.

Ms. Kimberly Sloan is the Executive Director at Central Community Cares, a small faith-based nonprofit organization with no specific religious ties, but with relationships many local congregations. The religious expression of the organization is demonstrated by the director and may be shaped by the congregations that provide funding and volunteers to the organization's programs. The ten-year-old organization receives some outside grant money from private foundations and corporations, but has

not yet decided to utilize public money. But, as you will see, they are considering the use of government funds.

Pastor Mark Matthews is an itinerant Evangelical, a local Pastor at a small, racially diverse, inner city Baptist Church, and the Executive Director of Good News Ministries. He spent 20 years of his life addicted to heroin, yet now has a Ph. D. in theology along with his own experiences on the street to shape his ministry. Good News is a medium-sized faith-based nonprofit that provides a wide range of services for people who are homeless or living in poverty. Most notable among these are the 90-day and 2-year Transitional Shelter and Housing program with effective substance abuse components. They serve people all across the City and surrounding counties.

Act II takes place at Metro Community Ministries and in this setting, which is the first in a series of informal meetings among the leaders of faith-based organization, five new characters are introduced. Mr. Joe Young is the Executive Director at Metro Community Ministries, a very large traditional religiously affiliated organization in the city that serves children and families through a variety of human service programs. The organization has several board members from one of the largest protestant denomination in the area, but remains a separate entity. Metro Community Ministries has partnered financially with the government for many years and public funds make up more than half of the agency's $12 million budget. Mr. Young, who has his Masters of Social Work, is the only social worker among the cast of characters in the case study.

Terry Singleton is the Director of Central City Community Development Center, a separate 501(c)3 organization affiliated with the large Central City Christian Church.

The CDC has been in operation for almost twenty years and the church itself has been in this African American community for over 150 years. Ms. Singleton is clear in describing the CDC as a nonprofit organization, as a "business," and not as a faith-based organization. Similarly, she reiterates that the CDC is related to, but clearly separate from the congregation. Ms. Singleton has an evangelical theology as individual, but a very professional demeanor. She served as congregational administrator for several years before becoming the second Director of the CDC.

Rev. Edward Burnham is the Director of the Northside Family Life Skills Center, associated with Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Rev. Jamison's congregation. Again, the Center is a faith-based organization, a separate 501(c)3, connected with the church. The Center seems to be more closely related to Mount Moriah than Central City CDC is to their founding congregation. Rev. Jamison and Rev. Burnham have worked hand-in-hand, along with other members of the congregation, for several years in the establishment of their faith-based organization. This organization provides an afterschool childcare program, a summer school-aged program, adult job and lifeskill training, a variety of services for homeless adults, including an Emergency Overflow Shelter program and feeding program, and emergency food, clothing, and limited financial assistance for people in the Northside area of the city.

Michelle Abrams is the Community Ministries Director at Christ Ascension Episcopal Church. This congregation has over 50 years experience of meeting its community's needs as a congregation and doesn't plan to establish a separate service organization. They also do not receive grant money as all of their ministries are funded

by the church budget. It is notable that this large congregation has over $500,000 budgeted for their Community Ministries programs that serve almost 1000 people each month. This congregation is located in the city, but most of the more than 2,500 church members commute from the surrounding suburban areas.

Maruf Kamil, is the President of the Islamic Cultural Center, the largest Mosque, Islamic School, and cultural center in the region. They provide a variety of services to members of their Mosque and to other Muslims in the community. They receive no outside funding for their work, but are developing relationships with several local Departments of Social Services to better serve their members, and in these relationships have become interested in the use of public funds if money were available for work in which they are already involved.

In Act III, the second meeting of the faith-based organizational leaders takes place at the Central City CDC with a new leader in attendance. Rabbi Samuel Bender is on the Board of Directors at Jewish Community Services (JCS). He has been connected with JCS in a variety of ways for more than two decades. While JCS uses government money, he does not advocate for the public funding of faith-based organizations and always articulates the voice for a clear separation between the church and state.

**Themes that have Emerged**

As data collection progressed and data analysis was beginning to take place, several themes began to emerge. At first, these seemed to reflect my own assumptions that had been shaped by the literature and articulated through working hypotheses and foreshadowed questions. As I began to ask participants for new questions that should be asked and as I began to hear new information repeated in more than one interview, I made notes in my reflexive journal and made a list of codes in Atlas.ti. After the initial interviews were completed and the data unitized (with the aid of Atlas.ti), the process of sorting and lumping led to the creation of other themes. Some of these themes reflected notes in my journal and others reflected codes assigned utilizing Atlas.ti. In re-reading the interview transcripts, the process of constant comparison, the creation of categories of meaning, and finally in the hermeneutic process of reflecting on themes that emerged and negotiating the results with participants, eight major categories were developed and networked. The following image presents a loose network of related categories that emerged from the phenomena under investigation (Rodwell, 1998).

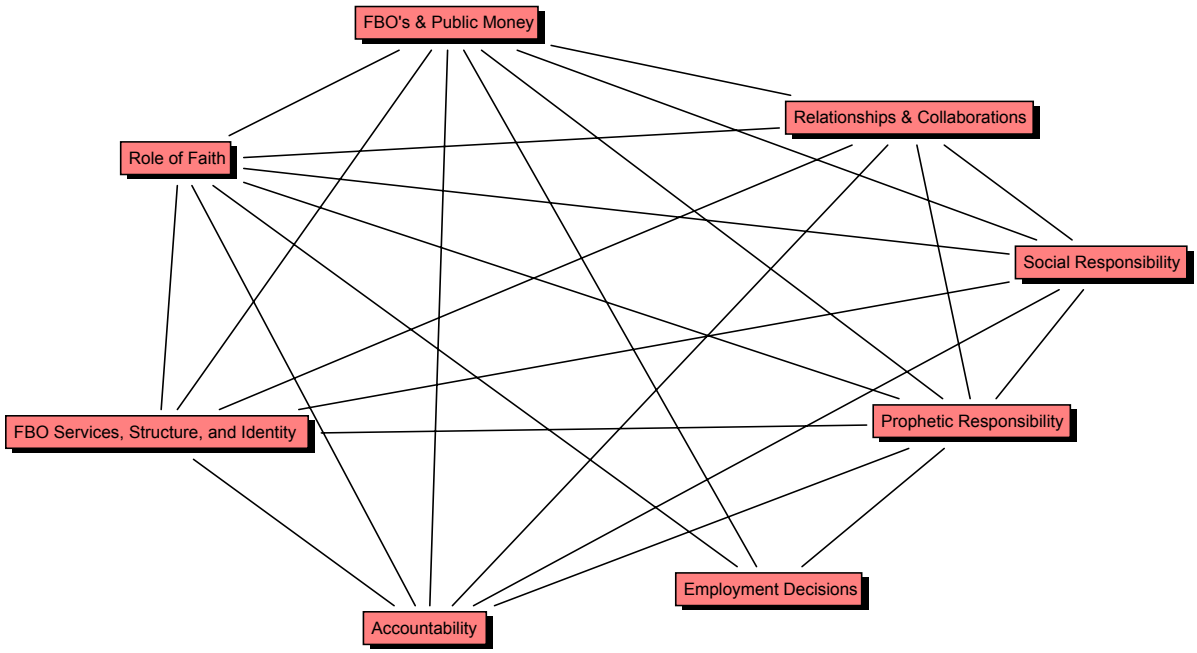


Figure 1: Relationship of Themes Emergent in Data

The themes (FBO Services, Structure, and Identity; Role of Faith; FBO's and Public Money; Relationships and Collaborations; Social Responsibility; Prophetic Responsibility; Employment Decisions; and Accountability) will each be articulated and interpreted through the use of the case study. The case study is divided into six Acts with each Act or Scene addressing one or more of these themes.

The order of the themes in the narrative is in itself an interpretation of the relationships among the themes. For example, I begin Act II with the characters discussing the structure of their organizations, the services they offer, and an understanding of the organization's identity. Because so many of the identities relate to being "faith-based" (though not all of them), I move in Act III to a theme where

characters discuss the role of faith in their organizations in relation to the human services they provide (in three scenes). In Act IV, Scene I, the characters move to a discussion of relationships between their organization and others with whom they work, and then discuss their Prophetic Role (Scene II) and Social Responsibility (Scene III), both of which shape and are shaped by their relationships to others. The effects of these various items lead to a specific discussion in Act V of how the faith-based organizations relate to public entities; these two scenes include criticisms and benefits of using public monies to fund human services. Act VI moves to two specific organization practices: Hiring (Scene I), which is often intensified in discussions of church-state partnerships was shown not to be a challenging issue, and Accountability (Scene II), an administrative topic about which many people inquire, but few offer suggestions, was given a great deal of attention. This scene concludes the case study with a discussion of financial and programmatic accountability that emerges from their attitudes and reflections on public funding.

## II. The Case Study

### Act I: Introducing the Issues of Faith-Based Initiatives

It was almost 4:00 p.m., as Rev. Jamison moved his glance from the window to his wristwatch. After a long and tiring day, the pastor from Mount Moriah Baptist Church decided to speak up, "I still don't think I'm clear on some of the issues that we face as faith-based organizations partnering with the government, and I have been doing this for several years now!" Rev. Jamision was attending one of the several Partners in Compassion Training Seminars that have been sponsored by the Department of Social Services (DSS). He was joined by about two-dozen other leaders from faith-based organizations (FBO's) in central Virginia, organizations ranging from large congregations to small community service organizations. As a few sighs made their way around the room, he gathered his wasn't the only voice of concern.

Rev. Jamison asked a question about applying for grants. Bill Knapp, a representative from the Department of Social Services Faith-Based Liaison Office, responded by asking the group to review some of the materials from the day's seminar on FBO's partnering with the government. Also tired from the complex issues raised during the day, the DSS representative thought he had addressed any and all possible concerns; he was ready to bring the meeting to a close. He asked about some of the themes that had been covered and Rev. Jamison again spoke up, "It sounds as though most of the organizations are able to work on a pretty level playing field in Virginia. The issues are not so much *can we as FBO's work with the government*. They seem to have more to do

with *what all does it mean for us get involved in our communities working with the government*."

"I think that is exactly right," said Mr. Knapp, part in relief, part in exasperation. "We work with all kinds of religious groups as long as they understand some of the basic themes we have discussed today."

Rev. Sergio Perez, a Latino Pastor employed as Associate by a predominantly Anglo congregation, spoke up with what had become known throughout the day as an insightful perspective. He tried to summarize some of those themes. "While the 'playing field' may be open to all of us, who we are as an FBO does matter. Before we think about what it means for us, as FBO's, to partner with the government in serving our communities, we need to consider what it means for us to be an FBO in the first place! What does it mean for our organizations to be involved in following Christ by serving our neighbors? I know that my white church has a lot of work to do in learning how to reach out to our black and Latino community before we can apply for anybody else's money."

Mr. Knapp replied, "That is important! Your purpose, structure, and the kinds of services you provide—these all have to be considered. Things like whether or not a church operates its own service programs, has a separate nonprofit, or at least separate accounts for service activities and programs are vital first steps."

"But let's not forget the reason we do all of these services," reminded Pastor Mark, a pastor and evangelist who also directs the Good News Community Center, a midsize FBO in the city. The role of faith is a theme he has focused on all day, raising questions about how to keep faith central to the services that his organization provides.

He also wanted to make sure that other organizations were able to base what they were doing on faith and not primarily governmental or secular principles.

Mr. Knapp agreed that it is important for the FBO's to consider why they are doing what they are doing. He talked earlier about "how to keep the faith in faith-based" and there had been lengthy discussions on how faith was used to motivate people to serve at the organizations and how it might also be used to motivate the people who are served. This earlier conversation included how faith was fully integrated in the services of some FBO's and how faith and human services were completely separate in others. While several organizations discussed a holistic approach to serving people where matters of faith are included in addressing the whole person, others were still struggling to articulate the role of faith in their human services.

Rev. Perez added, "Any partnerships should be considered as important to what we do. It seems to me that collaboration has less to do with how we relate to government funders, and more to do with how we work with other groups."

Rev. Jamison commented again, "The relationship between my congregation and our separate nonprofit is a collaboration in itself."

Kimberly Sloan, the Director of Central Community Cares, an organization that draws volunteers from congregations all around the region, commented that she often has to consider her organization's various partners and how these relationships overlap. "We don't have public money yet, but we do partner with the government," she said, "and we also partner with all kind of FBO's, other nonprofits, other funders, and businesses. And

when you work with this many groups, you really do have to strive to remember what your responsibilities are!"

"Since we are faith-based organizations, we have responsibility for religious activities, but some of us see this as something that is both pastoral and prophetic," said Pastor Jamison.

Rev. Perez added that he also wanted to know about how he could better address some of the secondary responsibilities of his community, like advocating for the people he served. He thought aloud about how FBO's must separate human services from political advocacy and from worship and religious education, particularly if he were to use public money to fund the human services. He also commented that this had to do with who was responsible for meeting the people's needs in his community, wondering if the government really expected his church to do it all!

Mr. Knapp replied by commenting on some of the traditional church-state struggles that related to so many of the themes of the day. "FBO's have to find ways to keep our religious activities and our human service activities separate when using public money." He went on to review some of the other issues related to this concern, such as employment discrimination. Reading from the conclusion of his training materials, he said, "FBO's have to keep the money we use for the church staff separate from the money for the service staff."

This led to a final conversation of the day that had to do with the impact of the activities in which the FBO's are engaged. "Now that some of us have taken on this responsibility for human services," commented Ms. Sloan, "I would like to know more

about specific programs you are involved in, more about where you have been successful—and how!"

Mr. Knapp had discussed accountability at great length earlier, but this remained among the most important of the themes discussed throughout the day. He took a few minutes to remind those gathered that accountability meant both financial accountability, which seemed difficult enough to some of the folks, but it also meant programmatic accountability. "You not only have to keep up with the different accounting procedures, but you will have to evaluate the effectiveness of your programs by measuring outcomes." Some participants nodded and others grimaced as this topic was reviewed at the end of this long day.

The day-long training seminar on FBO's partnering with the government that had been sponsored by the state government had come to a close as watches began to chime the five o'clock hour. Many of those gathered felt that the hour old concern raised by Rev. Jamison had not been resolved. Did this last hour of reviewing the themes bring clarity to how faith-based initiatives should be put into practice at the local level? As the session's participants were leaving, some of them talked more about the different issues that were raised. Some of these leaders had gotten to know each other during the day and those who were discussing these themes at the end of this session agreed to talk in greater detail at a later date. These leaders also seemed interested in introducing several others who also wanted to join in the ongoing conversation. They each left with questions and with other people's names in their heads, and so they agreed to stay in touch.

On the way home they each reflected on all that had been discussed during the day. People were discussing faith-based organizational identity and structure; the role of faith in human service activities, and the different activities of FBO's; partnerships between FBO's and the government, and with other organizations; the responsibility of different members in a society for meeting human service needs and for advocating social change; as well as practical concerns about hiring and accountability. The issues were all so intertwined that it was difficult to imagine how they could be sorted out. When Rev. Perez and Rev. Jamison got home, they started calling the others to find a time to get together. They agreed to look at the themes that they had been discussing toward the end of the seminar and let these guide their way.

## Act II: Organizational Structure and Identity

### Scene I: Introducing the Faith-Based Organizations

Over the next few weeks, the leaders began contacting each other and other leaders from FBO's who were not at the meeting to see if they would be interested in some of the themes they were planning to discuss. When they met for the first time, six leaders gathered to talk about the organizations where they served. They talked about the structure of their organizations and about some of the identity issues that came up at the Partners in Compassion Training Seminar. This helped them to see just how level the 'playing field' already seemed to be.

Rev. Jamison contacted Joe Young, Executive Director at Metro Community Services, one of the largest religiously affiliated organizations in the region, to ask if he would host the meeting. Mr. Young was glad to open up his meeting space as a place for this first gathering. Metro Community Services is located on the edge of the city on a large piece of land complete with housing facilities for a residential foster care program, a high-rise building housing older adults, and an administrative complex. A large conference room in the administrative building was the site for the day's meeting. Even though there was no hope for money tied to today's meeting, people were glad to be in attendance. Some of the leaders in attendance were intimidated by the location, but as they began introducing themselves, describing their organizations, and listing some of the services with which they were involved, everyone seemed to open up.

Mr. Young was excited to begin the conversation. "I'll begin by talking a little bit about who we are and what we are involved in. Our organization is a pretty large

nonprofit with statewide offices. Our services are coordinated locally, at our main office. These typically relate to child welfare and are operated in a very professional manner with religion shaping our values but not having much of a role in our services. We do have some broader family services that include financial assistance and vouchers for food and clothing at thrift stores. We offer a lot of information and referral services, and even have some traveler's aid services. Most of our services are publicly funded."[1]

"Tell us more about yourself," requested Ms. Singleton.

Mr. Young responded by saying that he was clergy, ordained by his denomination and a seminary graduate, but that he was also an M.S.W. "I served as a pastor and a pastoral counselor for years, before becoming involved in child welfare as associate director here. It was just a few years ago that I became director."

Terry Singleton next introduced herself and her organization. "I am a lay person in my church, a college graduate who was interested in our service work, and after working as a church administrator for several years, I was named director of the Central City Community Development Center (CDC). We are connected with the Central City Christian Church, but we are a separate organization from the church. Actually, let me start by telling you more about the church. It was established over 150 years ago and has always been a predominantly black congregation with black pastors. The church has been intentionally focusing on the community since the 1970's when we decided to stay and be an anchor in the neighborhood."

"The church had already been practicing a love for its neighbors and care for its members through the practice of mutual aid, business development, and educational

activities. The church has always provided food, financial assistance, and rooming for people in need and all of these ministries led to the development of the CDC as an extension of the church's mission about twenty years ago. It took some time to get the church, and really the government in the area, to see the need for what we were doing. You see, there wasn't anybody investing in the neighborhood in those days. We already had the senior adults center facing Main Street, and in the 1980's and more recently we acquired more than a dozen properties on that street and in the community. That's when we built our current building in the neighborhood where the CDC offers housing, business development, along with social services. Our real goal, though, is commercial development."[2]

"Our target population is adults in the community. Our church really does exemplify a come as you are attitude and this helps the people we serve to feel welcome. The church's bylaws say that we are to meet the needs of our members and our community, so we have a variety of caregiver ministries. We know we have to meet people where they are, so in our church's youth services, we use hip-hop and R&B in worship. We must show people how to live, so we have created a buddy system for people to learn from someone else. This practice of the church seems to works for the whole community."[3]

"With the CDC, which is separate from the church, we collaborate with the church on some of these projects and with other similar organizations. Our focus of economic development on Main Street began by redeveloping houses and now we are working on business development in the area. We have made the largest investment in

these blocks since the 1970's. When we are working with people on job skills, we look at the role of work and work habits in a person's life. We also emphasize community involvement, budgeting, and how to live in your own home. For example, many folks around here have never owned their own home before. They have to learn things like you can't just walk down to the main office for repairs."[4]

Ms. Singleton nodded to the gentleman smiling next to her. "Hi, I am Reverend Edward Burnham from the Northside Family Life Skills Center," he began. "I am here because we're connected with Pastor Jamison's church, Mount Moriah Baptist, in a way that sounds similar to Central City Church and CDC. We have all kinds of programs for children--they relate to the Standards of Learning from their schools. This is one way we stay connected to the community, to a local elementary school, and to the parents. Parents don't want to keep working with their kid's SOL's in the summer, so we try to help out. The children are also able to stay focused all day here; this says something about the quality of our programs. We serve USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) free lunches for them and have contacts with our state delegates and representatives about what we are doing with the kids."[5]

"Let's see, what else have we done? We have offered a Friday feeding program out of the church since 1993 and now this is under the Center. This ministry is also supported by the Central Virginia Foodbank. It's become our Food Outreach Ministry and we have food and clothing distribution as part of it. With the new businesses around the corner, there is a great potential for new jobs and new workers, and the Center here is one of the places that can train people for those jobs."

"The overflow shelter program we have is a great way for people in the church to get involved. Outside people are always surprised that so many of our people are involved in caring for the homeless."[6]

"One more thing I want to talk about is how we got started. It was with a few of us doing a survey of community needs. One of the stories that grew out of this was about a child in the school year program who didn't sign up for summer camp. I went to the Grandma's house and asked why. She said she couldn't afford it on her fixed income. I told her to fix her income and I would take care of the child. I brought the child up here, Grandma came up with part of the money and we came up with the rest. This is where faith comes in—the commitments we have with these families and our community, and the relationships that develop between all of us."[7]

"It's so interesting to hear about your churches that have started separate organizations to serve your communities. We are doing some similar things in our community. Our church has talked about a separate organization, but it never gets very far," commented Michelle Abrams, the very talented Community Ministries Director at Christ Ascension Episcopal Church. She continued, "We serve almost 400 people each month in our food pantry and almost as many in our clothes closet and household closet. We have a medical ministry that comes here once a week and we provide prescription services to help people get their medicines. We also have employment counseling once a month and a ministry that provides a worship service and meal in the park each week. We have a monthly recreation night for people in adult homes or homeless people; this serves as many as 30-40 people. We stay in touch with other homeless services although

we don't work with them much. We have several things for kids also, mainly our after-school ministry, and should have a new and improved childcare program up again in a few months."[8]

"There's a story I like to tell when I think about our ministries," opened Rev. Perez, Associate Pastor at Smithfield UMC. "When you think about the biblical story of the Good Samaritan, what could the person who was left on the road have used? A streetlight! That's what we need on this street to help this community and that is something concrete we can advocate for. Our church is intentional in serving the needs of the communities around here—not just the spiritual, but the social needs as well. Because the demographics have changed around here, the church called us to serve in this increasingly African-American and Latin-American community. Our being here is a response to what we call a 'hermeneutic of suspicion,' a sometimes negative reaction that people in the community have toward us. We have offered sensitivity workshops for our people focusing on our cultural differences, on things like knowledge and awareness about cultures. Our service programs target children, primarily. Issues surrounding welfare reform have tended to cause more harm than good for these families and we feel that a partnership is what we need to solve these issues. We also have a lot to learn about community needs and systemic understandings of problems. I heard a woman the other day talking about a boy in the neighborhood that warns her about driveby shootings so she can put up mattresses against the doors and windows. She also talked about sending her children over to a neighbor for diapers and trading for food. The church has a lot to

learn about the bartering economy in the communities we serve. Ministry has to change because of these needs."[9]

"I think that churches are also going to have to apologize for not being more open. A man in our church has many skills to offer but less knowledge in how to create opportunities to train others where they are. The church can help him to open his skills to people others cannot reach. We are learning to write curriculum for these kinds of ministries. People need skills, support, care—I agree that we must meet people where they are. We are getting young and old, Latin youth and Caucasian older adults to educate each other. All our initiatives can provide this creative kind of love. There are many ways to provide people with what they need. If one learns, others can pick up and show the value of the ministry by initiating it with others. They can pass it down this way to others."[10]

"Some of the programs we have are ESL and a mentoring program for young girls. With opportunities to serve like this, God will do the rest. We hear them saying things like, 'Nobody has loved me like this.' Ministry must continue to change in this way." Mr. Perez said as he sat back down, "It has to be different!"[11]

"Well, I will go next. I am Maruf Kamil, the President of the Islamic Cultural Center. Thank you for having us as a part of this event. We are the largest mosque and Islamic school in the area. We provide religious services for Muslims as well as education. We offer a weekend religious education program for children and youth for a nominal fee. Our full-time Islamic School provides religious and general education. This fee-based program offers pre-K through third grade, although next year we hope to

add a fourth grade class. We also have study circles, which are classes for adults, and one does not have to be Muslim to participate in these. Some attend for self-betterment and for increased knowledge."[12]

"We offer arbitration services and some financial assistance if people have references proof of need. The number of people who come for financial assistance changes with the seasons; at Ramadan more people come and more people donate to help meet these needs. We also have a youth food drive with other mosques; sometimes we have clothing and furniture as well. There is a coordinating council of Muslim spiritual leaders that our Imam participates in to coordinate some of these things. He participates with a local Masjid (congregation) that provides food distribution and received a certificate from the city for being among the largest in the city. This mosque offers services similar to ours—preschool, outreach services for older adults, and they also have drug-related support groups."[13]

"Our Imam also offers marriage counseling and weddings; also burial services such as prayers and preparation of the dead and some financial assistance with this. We have also offered advice in coping with life issues since September 11. Some people have lost jobs or face discrimination and negative attitudes at work. We have not had to do this as much as I expected."[14]

Scene II: Organizational Identity

Growing hungry and ready for a break, Mr. Kamil looked at his watch, and then went on to ask, "We have a question about how others of you balance your human services with your religious roles? And, how did you come to do what you are doing?"

Mr. Young noticed the glance and commented that this would be a great topic for after lunch. He encouraged the group to take a break for an hour. He, for one, did want to hear people talk about this question of multiple goals or purposes and thought it might go better after a break.

After lunch, Mr. Young regained focus and responded to Mr. Kamil's question. He said that most of the services offered by his organization were driven by a strong professional mission base, and not just faith, not just the government or even some outside group, "Ninety-nine percent of all of our services are driven by professionalism and not religion."[15]

"Black churches may not understand or talk about things like 'professionalism' or 'organizational purpose or identity'," Ms. Singleton quickly responded. "They will understand 'mission' and 'church work.' It's not that they can't understand the words or they don't understand the ideas, they just don't use these words. They will talk more about 'ministry' and 'religion' than 'faith' or 'faith-based initiatives' or anything like that. Black churches just minister to people; they don't always have organized programs to do it. Black churches are natural communities of care, but then we also love to sing the song, 'Get right with God and do it now/ Get right with God and He will show you how.' Black churches often have an emphasis on not just giving people food, but on 'getting right with God,' and this forms a real tension in understanding how to serve people's needs."[16]

Rev. Burnham joined in, "I preached in one of our black churches on understanding the nature of the Kingdom. It was a well-researched and thought out

sermon where I talked about a community's response to social justice. In typical fashion, when I finished the preacher stood up and affirmed what I said, but then brought his own word, saying 'but ultimately, people need Jesus!' meaning that Jesus would make these issues of injustice no longer an issue."[17]

Ms. Singleton said, "The focus of the black church is ultimately on conversion. The black church values change in a person's life and they say that Jesus Christ brings that kind of change to someone's life. As I said before, the black church is a community of care, but individual change is often emphasized. Becoming a Christian is said to bring change, to bring self-sufficiency."[18]

"The missionary work of the black church that comes with this is often all-encompassing." Rev. Burnham continued, "They feed, serve, care, and love people because it is what they are supposed to be doing. To be Christian is to do this. I call it a mission lifestyle, but mission is not separated from the rest of life; religion and service go together. I've heard black preachers talk about how we are supposed to 'just be,' to just do it, just serve and care. We don't have a separate mission outside of who we are, so when we do ministry we are just living the Christian life."[19]

Michelle Abrams joined in with a comment from her experience. "I go to churches all the time where one or two people will talk about how many different people they are helping or taking care of. It's just a natural ministry for them; it does seem that it is what they are supposed to be doing. I think Christ Ascension is a church with this kind of missionary spirit, in terms of going to the community to help it meet its needs. And, we have more than 50 years of community ministry programs here. We were one of

the first around to have a social ministry person on staff. It is mainly because of our denomination's social principles that we do these things in the first place. The principles make our involvement in human services easier."[20]

Mr. Perez commented on the work of his congregation, "There is a very strong camaraderie at our church that helps a lot with our caring for the needs of the community. And, like I was saying earlier, we have had to become innovative. In the mission statement the church is working on, helping others is central."[21]

"Helping people in innovative ways is also important for us," answered Ms. Singleton. "The church began the CDC because we really are about trying to help people become fulfilled human beings. Our services are about more than building a nice house. We focus on esteem-building, personal development, self-advocacy, and skill development. You can look at our mission statement and you will also find our commitment to a holistic approach to human services. We meet needs in the way Jesus did to help people get to a level of sustainability; this is concerning their thinking about themselves, their situation, their work habits, opportunities they have. People are searching for something, for meaning in their lives, and we see our purpose as being a bridge ministry for them between social services and the church."[22]

"I think our purpose is similar," said Rev. Burnham, "since we see our role as trying to catch people who fall through the cracks. We must feed the soul, the spirit, and the mind of children and families—this is a part of getting at the root of poverty and fear. Our programs focus on child development, but we also use spiritual development because

it makes a person stronger. We have a strong focus on families and children because it is critical to strive to end poverty for the sake of the legacy of these children."[23]

"We know that the people we work with may not have money, but money may not be what they need. We can give them money to buy a fish or we can teach them to fish, and we strive to teach people to fish," replied Ms. Singleton. "We also aren't doing it to make money. Nobody can go into community development thinking they can make money. These projects, like creating a home for someone don't happen overnight. Systems have to be put in place to meet people's needs. Systems have to be put in place to get the work done."[24]

"Speaking of changing systems, we have wanted to change the concept of this community with our work here." Rev. Burnham continued, "We had to ask ourselves, 'how can we establish for ourselves the needed community support ministries?' There were many opportunities for training adults; many services rely on what faith-based organizations can offer as new jobs come into the city."[25]

Ms. Singleton again rejoined, "You make a great point, Rev. Burnham. Changes to the community always begin with each person you work with. Whatever we are doing, when working on our different projects, we are working with people as the main thing. We had a family go into their new home for the first time with us and some people from the city and everyone was looking at the quality of the painting and the woodwork. The woman moving in quickly reminded us why we were there. She said, 'the paint is nice, but this is a safe place for us now and that is what matters to us.' This is a person-issue. We are focused on people."[26]

Rev. Perez spoke up again to ask a question his church had been considering. "It is really great to hear about all of the church involvement in serving individuals in your communities. It is also interesting to hear that some of you have started separate nonprofits while others find it more beneficial to work out of your congregational structure. Tell me more about how this has worked."

Mr. Kamil also spoke up saying that he thought this would be important for the Islamic Center to know more about.

Mr. Young again spoke first. "I think it is important to encourage the formation of a separate 501(c)3 organization, or at least fund accounting that separates income streams in an organization."[27]

Ms. Abrams answered back, "Creating a separate organization allows the church to speak out and be involved in different ways, but having another organization requires administrative work that takes away from money and time that should be meeting needs."[28]

Rev. Burnham replied, "The organization we have created help us to carry out the vision God gave to the pastor. The organizations are separate, but they partner with Mount Moriah Baptist Church to help the church meet needs! The organizations are better kept separate because the pastor cannot run these things and the rest of the life of the church. It is also better for financial management, recordkeeping, and showing that what we are doing is working."[29]

Mr. Young jumped back in, "It seems to me that our state is trying to make congregations more accountable by having them create a separate nonprofit entity. This

is a good idea, but it doesn't solve the bigger problems. The business practices of religious organizations are not always as strong as they should be. I guess the state requirement of having congregations create a separate 501(c)3 organization is an attempt to address this."[30]

"A best practice for faith-based initiatives may be having them set up a separate 501(c)3 organization, but my understanding is that they can apply for the money without doing this," replied Ms. Abrams.[31]

Rev. Burnham tried to clarify. "Most churches that want to serve their communities to this extent start a separate organization."[32]

Ms. Abrams looked offended by the comment that her church might not have the same desire to serve the local community, but she listened to Rev. Burnham's response as he continued. "Most churches cannot secure this level of financial security without a separate nonprofit organization. For example, we are a middle class congregation, but have many older adults with fixed incomes and as a church we have less money, but our community has many needs. The new laws don't say that churches need 501(c)3 status, but with the liabilities they face, separating into a new organization protects the church. One new difference in the law is that churches can apply and most of them aren't prepared for what is asked of them—for the recordkeeping and accounting. They don't understand the need for a separate organization."[33]

"I still think this push for separate organizations is a legal ploy to protect the state when they fund faith-based organizations regardless of what our state constitution has to say," offered Ms. Abrams.[34]

"Maybe you're right…" said Mr. Young, "but there seems to be a lot of confusion between the federal law, the state law, and the state's 'suggestions'!"

"Let me tell the story of our early experiences as a 501(c)3 organization working with the government," suggested Rev. Burnham. "Our first real program was federally funded with the money coming through the city. The guidelines we used for hiring and accounting weren't about that grant as much as they were about being a nonprofit organization. Being a 501.c.3 required us to do many of these things. We were set up as a separate organization to help us with funding and accounting; and it has been helpful for us."[35]

"Were you concerned about losing your identity when you separated?" asked Rev. Perez.

"We have tried to make it clear that Northside Family Life Skills Center is an outreach ministry of the Church, with an inclusive goal of having other organizations buy in and support our work. The church accepts our ministries as their own, and the center runs them. The Center maintains faith-based ministries and has its own faith-based identity. We weren't concerned about being able to maintain that religious perspective. We've been able to maintain it because people know the Center is connected to the church. The administration of our nonprofit organization sees the church's vision; there's a similar vision between us and this brings a close connection to the church and a tie with the cries of the community. We do occasionally have to find ways to keep the church invested. Some church people don't want the church to fund the Center. Many others benefit from their participation in the Center; some from the programs, and some from

volunteering. They are now able to say, "If we eliminate the Center, we hurt ourselves." The pastor's goal, then, is that when the Center moves out it will have a sign that says that it is a part of Mount Moriah Baptist Church Ministries."[36]

"Were public entities supportive of a nonprofit with ties that close to the church?" asked Mr. Young.

Rev. Burnham answered, "It has taken time to win the confidence of public entities, because even though the organization is separate, we are in the church. Our daycare is still under the church's name so people will know it is part of the church and is outreach for the church, but the Center has its own name. We try to show them that we are fully separate and have a separate purpose apart from the church. Funders sometimes struggle with this, with our being operated out of the church but not part of the church. I think it was important for us to create a 501(c)3 organization because we didn't have the funds, but we did have the personpower and skills and we knew the needs. We always try to assess the needs of the community knowing what we have to offer. In our 501(c)3 application we said that we weren't involved in sacerdotal activities, but you know that there are organizations that do everything at the same time."[37]

Ms. Singleton offered her agreement about the value of a separate organization. "We also set up a nonprofit separate from the church for financial reasons, although we didn't have to. Another thing is that it is relevant to the people we serve because we don't want to be a barrier to them and if we were the church, we would be. This reason is spiritual and we don't have to be a church to achieve this."[38]

Mr. Young continued with a new line of thinking. "We are pretty large and we do have a religious name with the word 'ministries,' but sometimes discussions like this lead us to talking about changing our name. We think we may be missing referrals when people hear that we are a faith-based organization. Other times, we know that people value the services we offer because of the nature of our work and its connection to religion."[39]

Ms. Singleton commented on the name and structure of her organization. "Our brochure says that we are 'related through faith to the church; however, operate separately.' And, there is no religious symbol on the brochure. Some of the people we work with may assume that the Central City CDC is just an arm of Central City Christian Church, but it is not at all anymore. I think the government wants to see separation from the church as much as possible. Most funders want to know about the services we provide and about our religious intentions. They want to know there is quality work and they want to know the church is not too involved in the work. They want to know that our accounts are separate from the churches, that we have separate financial tracking, and that we are our own fiscal agent for grant programs. We have a small staff distinct from theirs—two full-time, one part-time, one person who receives a small stipend for a homeless outreach program, and then we have about 100 volunteers from the church—yet all management and board practices are 'hands off' by the church. The pastor has never interfered in the work of the organization. In-kind services from the church are accounted for and we always show clear lines of authority. The Center does pay rent to the church, giving us our own space. I am always arguing that more money from the

church should go to our work, but I am afraid other people aren't doing this enough for other activities the church needs to focus on: worship, education, reflection."[40]

"You said something about funders wanting to know if you are faith-based." Rev. Perez commented, asking, "Do you tend to identify yourselves as an FBO?"

Ms. Singleton replied by saying that while the CDC operates separately from the church, it is an extension of the church into the community. "Our church has been in this community for decades, but this organization is really the first intervention of the church in the community. In this sense, we were set up as a matter of faith by a faith-based organization, but we don't call ourselves a faith-based organization. I guess we could be intertwined as a faith-based and a community-based organization. The community knows the programs here are associated with the church because of our names, but we are not an FBO. We really are more of a community-based organization; for us, this means the community needs set the pace for our programs. Each person's individual faith plays a role in why they are here, but organizationally the faith of the church matters more than that of the CDC. An example is that a woman in our program was adopted by the church and was baptized there and has made several friends and supporters there."[41]

Rev. Burnham said, "I don't think it matters if an organization has a religious name or says they are faith-based. Many organizations with religious names aren't very religious at all, and then there are hermits who are religious without knowing it! If God is our Father, then many organizations bear his name that he would not identify with and others don't have his name and God is there. We want people to know that we are an FBO; that our mission is from God and that we do have ties to Mount Moriah and other

churches that work with us. When people come in, they see the church's name with ours on the front door."[42]

Mr. Young tried to describe the faith-based nature of Metro Community Services. "We are connected to our denomination's faith at the larger level. Most of our denominational services are offered by specific service organizations, separately incorporated from the organization's offering religious services, which are mostly churches. Churches often want to work with children and families and we facilitate this for them. I feel that we could serve twice as many people by working more directly with churches and they are really the faith-based organizations, even though they may not understand themselves that way. I guess I really don't know if we are faith-based, though. If we are, it is due to the larger church we work with and, I guess, our values. We are probably more values-based than anything. Some of these are religious, like justice, but many others are just human values, such as respect, individuality, and diversity. Thinking about how all this goes together, I have been asked to do board and staff trainings on some of these values and how they relate to the church's social teachings."[43]

After a brief pause, Ms. Singleton thought it important to say, "I also want to say that we pretty much see ourselves as a business just like any other business. As a business run by Christian people, we are about our Father's business as Jesus instructed us. For the government to fund FBO's like us we have to run like businesses or it could be the worst debacle ever."[44]

Rev. Perez joined in, "Stewardship is the key to what we do in our ministries; there is a part of what we do as a church that has business dealings. Business practices and services cross and then separate again at some point."[45]

"This combination of things is what really pushed us to become more formal and professional," said Ms. Singleton, "not that we weren't professional, but we run more like a business now. Our management practices are run by a policy manual just like any other organization."[46]

Rev. Burnham began to describe their practices in a similar business-style approach. "We also run just like a non-faith-based-organization. Many religious organizations run their ministries with their hearts and not with their heads. You have to have a good head with a good heart for faith-based initiatives to work. You cannot have one without the other or you will have a recipe for disaster. I was ordained and licensed as a minister, but it is more than faith that keeps this work going. I have been using a balance between faith and a sense of business. I bring a business understanding and a sense of ministry to this place. It is important for faith-based organizations to have this business understanding. I worked in state government before this and that experience has helped me here."[47]

Ms. Abrams commented, "We are serving our community as the church, so we are a faith-based organization, but we don't call ourselves a business. Most of the funding for our services comes from the church budget. We have some donations that come directly to community ministries, but we don't have any outside grant money. We

believe ministry has to be two-fold, with a faith-based service and a religious piece. We minister to people here through both."[48]

Mr. Kamil echoed Ms. Abrams, "At the Islamic Center, we have no outside funding for any activities. All of our activities are based on local donations. There are absolutely no monies from overseas or local organizations. We have membership dues and some fundraisers, but it is all local money."[49]

"I think it is interesting that you comment on your money being local," said Mr. Perez.

"Well, recently the media has really emphasized the few international organizations that support Islamic service work and that might also support terrorism, and we just want to make sure others know that we are a people of peace."

"It is sad that people do misuse funds, even in religious organizations."[50]

Mr. Kamil commented again, "It is greed that shapes integrity—not government funders or other foundations. The money can come from anyone and still cause problems. And, then, all of us suffer. Mosques, other congregations, and our communities all suffer when organizations lie about what they are doing. I think changes are going to have to be made around things like honesty in what our human service programs actually do for our communities."[51]

Mr. Young asked if some of this had to do with board structure. The others responded with some comments about their boards of directors.

Rev. Burnham said that most of the Center's board came from the church. Ms. Singleton stated that her boardmembers were not necessarily from the church, but that

many of them did come from a Christian foundation.[52] Mr. Young nodded and added, "Earlier in our history and again in recent years, most of our board members have been from our denomination. From 1995 or so back to the 1960's, this was not the case for us. Now we have a governing board comprised of clergy, lay people from the denomination, and many others who help to shape our professional policies and our services; we also have an advisory board that is comprised fully of denominational people, clergy and lay persons."[53]

Ms. Singleton commented again, "Some of our board members are not from the church. Some are from neighborhood churches that work with us, and some from other organizations in the community. The pastor is no longer on the board, but his wife is. She serves on the board as a corporate representative and not a church member. Our board members are chosen by recommendations from other board members and from the pastor."[54]

Rev. Burnham said of his pastor, "Rev. Jamison is the president of our board and his wife is the vice president. He is there to remind us of our mission to serve our local community in the church's name. I think he is also concerned about losing control on the board—about having too many members not connected with the church. We are run professionally though, with monthly meetings and a democratic process meaning he doesn't always get his way! It is overall a pretty diverse board—black and white, business people, attorneys, principals, but they are all Christians. This was a concern we had when we got started and I wanted to ask others of you about it: Have you worried

about your board's being, I don't know, less religious, or at least less committed to the original missions you had?"[55]

Mr. Young replied, "I don't know; I don't really think so. We are not concerned about losing our faith-based identity. The governing board expressed a desire to strengthen the Christian connection of the organization a few years back, but not necessarily the level of denominationalism in the programming. The board tends to be critical of church hierarchy, so they don't want too much denominational control. They really don't seem too concerned right now about losing the influence of faith in what we do. There is a faith component to what they do—there are religious and administrative processes in the board meetings and the spiritual is often intertwined with the practical. A practical matter that comes up could be decided by business practices, but we might take a spiritual route to making a decision on it."[56]

"Our board also has a spiritual focus on decision-making," said Rev. Burnham. "We also begin meetings with prayer and have been reading a book together as a spiritual practice. The board always seeks to balance the role of faith and our service to the community. You don't have to be a Christian to be served here or to work here, but you do have to be Christian to be on the board! But, they do seek members who are able to help meet our neighbor's needs."[57]

Ms. Singleton commented on the Northside Family Life Skills Center's board structure, "It seems that many smaller organizations are based on the person who started it and really have less input from other boardmembers." She then turned to reflect more on her own board structure, "Our board is also concerned about its make-up and ours.

Funders want to know that we have a strong board. We have had to convince them that the board is really developed with appropriate expertise. They're concerned with who's on our board and have commented at times that it is composed of too many church members. Faith is not necessarily a criterion for our board members or for people who work here. A person's skills are more important—and we still don't have the skills we need for fundraising!"[58]

Rev. Burnham again replied, "We just want to make sure we stay true to our mission. We know it happens, that faith-based organizations lose the faith, but it is sad to think an organization would change its mission to be able to receive money from the government."[59]

"Well, this isn't what we are doing!" rejoined Ms. Singleton.

"Oh, I know," defended Rev. Burnham, "I just know it does happen—that organizations lose their faith-based focus for the sake of money, or lose the focus of who they are serving. The staff and the board at the Center spend time with the people we serve and not just with administrative things. I see myself as one of the many advocates encouraging the children we serve and I see the board doing the same thing. One board member helped mentor a child who had lower grades in school and experiences similar to his own growing up. After a few weeks, the mother called to tell me her son was a changed child! This board member is on the financial committee and also spends time weekly with this child—all on top of his demanding full-time job. I hope that he will inspire others on our board!"[60]

Mr. Young began to move the meeting to a close saying, "I hope you don't mind if we stop here for today. This has been a great day of hearing these kinds of stories, of getting to know each other and learning about who we are, what we do, and how we serve our communities."

Rev. Burnham said, "I hope we can do this again, and soon. I still have many unanswered questions that we didn't get to—questions about faith, about funding…."

Ms. Singleton offered to host the next gathering: "How about the first Friday of next month for at least a breakfast and morning gathering. I know it's tough for us to get away, but I, for one, think it would be worth it to discuss some more of these things."

Ms. Abrams said that she, too, thought it would be valuable and that it was interesting to see how many different types of faith-based organizations were serving their communities. She agreed to attend. Mr. Kamil and Mr. Perez said they weren't sure if they could attend, but that they would try to make it. Mr. Young and Rev. Burnham said that they were putting the date on their calendars.

**Act III: Role of Faith in relation to Human Services**

Scene I

Ms. Singleton gathered as many as possible from the group of leaders for the next meeting and hosted the event in the conference space at the Central City Community Development Center. Central City Church and the CDC were next door to each other in a downtown neighborhood that has gone through a lot of changes over the years. Most of the surrounding businesses have closed, which is why they were able to get the space for the CDC. There are few residential units in the area, which, combined with the lack of businesses, has made this pocket of downtown pretty deserted. The Central City buildings, however, were well-maintained and well-protected, and there was a fairly steady flow of people through them.

Besides Ms. Singleton, Mr. Young and Rev. Burnham were gathered along with Ms. Abrams, Ms. Sloan, and Pastor Mark Matthews. Rabbi Samuel Bender, who is on the board of directors at Jewish Community Services, also joined the others for this meeting.

Mr. Young asked Mr. Knapp from the Department of Social Services Faith-Based Liaison's Office to attend, but said he was unavailable. Mr. Knapp did provide some of the materials that were used by the office when consulting with faith-based organizations and the group agreed to discuss some of these. Mr. Young mentioned these around and the first item was something that had been a concern for Rev. Jamison and Rev. Burnham. Mr. Young told the group, "This issue, at least according to Mr. Knapp, has to do with how FBO's understand their mission: 'to see if they understand their mission in a

way that allows them to have faith motivating them and not have faith embedded in the services they provide' as he put it."[61]

Mr. Young went on to describe an image that he had heard Mr. Knapp and others from the state office frequently use: "They ask organizations if their programs are more like salads or brownies. Salads can have parts taken out and remain a salad. In a brownie, all the elements are mixed in and can't be separated. These types of programs are said to be less appropriate matches for using public money."[62]

Pastor Mark, an outspoken itinerant Evangelist and the Executive Director at Good News Ministries chuckled, "Then we offer brownies; take away our faith and what's left crumbles. I guess this means we'll never get government money."

Rev. Burnham added, "We also feel like a brownie, but we have always been able to work with the government."

Kimberly Sloan from Central Community Cares described one of her spirituality support groups, "The group is optional; so the spiritual and the service activities can be distinguished. In our hearts though, we know the spiritual is at play in other things and we can't really distinguish them. I hope that this makes sense and is O.K. when we start applying for public money."[63]

She paused and continued, "I guess I just don't like the idea that matters of faith are posed as an either-or question. In some ways the church should separate religious activities from its services, but in other ways the two will always be integrated. Like in a faith-based program that provides care for older adults—the values of the people are in

why they are serving, but they are also concerned about the social issue—the purpose for their work is in the program."[64]

Mr. Young also felt the religious elements of service to be important, but wondered if they could be a separate dimension in publicly funded programs. "For example," he said, "a drug rehab program could have several approaches to rehabilitating a person and several sources of funding. The program could use public money for housing and meals. A Christian faith component or a Muslim faith component could be incorporated in other places, but using private money received from these religious groups."[65]

"There often seems to be a struggle to determine the place for faith," said Ms. Singleton, "This can be true when funding is predominantly public. I think the struggle is appropriate though, and perhaps a symbol that everyone is involved in the decision-making process that should be and that they are addressing the right issues."[66]

Rabbi Bender, from the local reformed Jewish synagogue, has served on the board of Jewish Community Services for several years, and decided to comment on the matter: "The local foodbank gives away its excess cheese. Cheese, here, is the issue, not God's cheese. If a group wants to offer both, have the recipients come on Sunday for God's cheese and offer them the other cheeses on other days of the week."[67]

Rev. Burnham commented, "Well, we have made our Christian base explicit when we apply for grants and other money. Our experience is that religious organizations can have prayer in their programs and still receive public money."[68]

Ms. Sloan joined in again, "We don't want lose opportunities for funding because we are faith-based, but we do want to maintain the place of faith in what we do, showing that it is clearly important to us and the congregations we work with."[69]

Mr. Young responded by saying that the organization shouldn't change, but the practices may. "Going back to our goal, being aware of needs, trusting others, and being open to each other—these are some of the things that changed us, not government money. We probably won't return to the early Christianity beliefs that we had because of our commitment to being open to all people. Yet, we will always be based on the Bible verse that is in our mission. Our organization's origins were more overtly Christian; we provided Bible studies for people during the Civil War and emphasized Bible reading and church attendance. Some of our practices have changed over time as the community changed, and partly because of using government money, although it is really our desire to keep the religious separate from our services. Faith has remained a part of who we are—we just don't require it of our participants anymore."[70]

Ms. Singleton stated, "Our organization hasn't evolved in quite the same way, but the church had similar developments when beginning the nonprofit. We don't proselytize or worship as primary activities, so it is just natural that we are able to keep the religious activities separate from the human services. We agree that it is important for organizations to be able to do this. I guess we are a kind of 'salad' then. By design we decided to handle faith separately and don't feel like we were forced to change."[71]

Rabbi Bender offered an example of a daughter who is a therapist. "She works with families and children and she cannot discuss faith openly with clients, but if a family

does this first, then she can draw on what they have said about faith as a way to talk about it. This kind of practice shows a way to keep the practices separate."[72]

Mr. Young also used an example, "We try to connect the African-American Christian kids we serve with African-American congregations. Some are connected with our denomination's churches, others with others in the community, and since churches are so important around here, we have to include them. But, we also serve Muslim and non-religious kids. We really bend over backwards to do this. The board says that they think we spend more time on non-Christians than Christians. Our mission though, is to serve children holistically and not saving souls, so we don't ever push church. Every once in a while, parents don't even know that we are Christian. Overall, we do try to let people know that we do operate on Christian principles, but also that we feel professional values and faith-based values are not antithetical. People across the organization agree and understand our perspective because they appreciate the way we choose to acknowledge Christianity and the separation of church and state."[73]

Ms. Singleton was interested in hearing more about the meaning of faith in his organization as she asked, "How is your religion related to your human services?"

Mr. Young responded, "They are melded more than they have been in a while. I think this is mainly due to the fact that we use a broader understanding of Christianity. Faith is a part of our values and principles, but these are broader than Christian doctrine. Most people here seem to be able to identify with them and find ways to live them out with us. And, we always ask if what we are doing falls within these values. We still have some elements of faith that are more explicit. We have a voluntary chapel for the

staff and have prayer in some of the services we offer. There is some exposure to the denomination, but this is voluntary and never by force. We do things this way for two main reasons: so we can use government money, but moreover, so that people who come to us don't feel like they are having religion forced on them."

Ms. Singleton nodded and he continued, "We are not so concerned about getting in trouble for addressing spiritual needs by including some faith-based components in what we do, at least this has been a shift for us in the past few years. An attorney on the board is more concerned about this than I am. We went through a lawsuit a few years back and our director ended up being fired. We created a separate organization for the school then and this provided more separation between our services and the places where faith is evident. Like I was saying earlier, there is a pretty secular feel to what we do and how we look. There are almost no religious icons around; there is one small cross in the conference room and our logo has a religious symbol. We sometimes use the Bible in our materials, but they are usually passages that are a part of all faith traditions. I guess for us, religious activities can be distinguished from human service activities, but spirituality is shown to be integral to all activities of life. Our faith will always be integral to what we are doing, but faith is evident at the level of mission and not at the direct service level."[74]

Ms. Sloan was interested in how an organization could maintain a sense of faith and "remain legal" in terms of using government money: "I think that if you are talking about the mission or the foundation of faith-based services, then it is impossible to provide human services without spirituality, but we use spirituality mainly for its moral

purpose in shaping people's lives. And in this way, our approach is also pretty broad. Our meals program provides the real faith component for our organization; this is where service and faith are integrated because the meal itself is an act of faith. The free lunches are usually served by churches and the meal guests usually know they are served in the name of Christ. People know they can ask us to pray for them or with them, but the food they get from the churches is the loudest message of hope. It always reminds me of the quote from St. Francis of Assisi that we 'want to reach the whole world for Christ, and if necessary, use words.' The meal is this kind of message for the churches. Some of them don't do anything explicitly religious with the guests but they always are involved to support our mission to care for others and to offer them hope."[75]

Ms. Sloan continued, "I think for us, faith is seen in our primary organizational goal rather than our service goals. Our primary goal relates to a spiritual desire for wholeness in the body of Christ and the human services have grown out of that primary purpose as an opportunity to minister together in a cooperative spirit. We want a Christ-like attitude, we want our hearts to be involved in everything we do, but we also want to be smart about what we do."[76]

"I think it is also our mission that helps us to keep a faith focus," said Ms. Singleton, still reflecting on what the others were saying.[77]

"All these words are difficult to sort through, and they still don't capture what seems most important for us. Religious? Spiritual? So many people distinguish these, but I don't know if this makes sense for us. We really don't use the word 'faith' either," commented Rabbi Bender, "but 'faith,' to use that word, is very important to our mission

and is often based on Jewish values like *mitzvoth*, which means good deeds, and *tzedekah*, that is justice or righteousness. There is no separation for us really, then, between religious activities and human services. This means we serve because it is the right thing to do; it is how Jews feel they should express themselves. It is more a form of secular humanism than something we do because God told us to. Practicing *tzedekah* is just the proper way we feel we should express ourselves. Not through prayer, not for God, but doing good for the sake of doing good. *Tikkun olam*, repairing the world, this is another way to express how our services relate to our faith; it is another Jewish value. In the mission statement we are working on, helping others, repairing the world, and working for justice are central. People ask us about the one thing we are known for, and it is probably the value we place on promoting social justice."[78]

"That's kinda like what I said last time about the faith of the black church being all-encompassing," Said Rev. Burnham.

Pastor Mark spoke up, "Now, 'all-encompassing' is what our faith is all about. Faith is the key word describing our mission and all our services. Any counseling people receive from me is Bible-based, so let me start there. II Corinthians 5.7 describes the role of faith for us, 'We walk by faith and not by sight.' And from Hebrews 11, faith is that we have the assurance of things hoped for, the belief in things not seen. In many ways, this is illogical; it is beyond common sense, but this is the essence of faith. Faith keeps us moving, keeps us coming along. There's that song, 'He didn't bring me this far to leave me,' and I know that if we trust in God that He will be faithful to us. So, for us, there is a biblical mandate that makes our mission clear: that we are to care for the poor

and reach out to our neighbor. We have a social responsibility, but faith is also seen in the daily activities of what we do….”[79]

“Now this sounds even more like our perspective,” Rev. Burnham interrupted, “Faith is seen as the ministries come from the vision of our pastor, but they are also a part of the essence of what we do around giving of ourselves so that everyone prospers, not only financially but as whole people. We are here under divine guidance with a purpose to serve, and this servant leadership is our goal. The reason we serve comes from the mission of the church. Many organizations burn up or become bureaucracies without this sense of servant leadership, and it is our faith that shapes this sense of purpose for us.”[80]

Mr. Young was trying to articulate the differences between how faith shapes the different organizations, as he continued to reflect on faith in his organization. “In our denomination, we sometimes have a tension between a ‘ya’ll come’ perspective and a more formalized social work approach where service recipients are involved in the process, but also where professionalism is valued. This may be less appropriate in terms of how some of you understand your ministries, and sometimes I think it is easy for us as FBO’s to fall into this “professionalism” trap rather than stepping back and looking at where faith fits in, at why we serve in the first place.”[81]

Pastor Mark responded, “Well, our prayer is that True Christianity shapes social work!”[82]

Mr. Young commented again, “I think we have to be careful not to equate the progress we make in serving those around us with the Kingdom of God. Our recent denominational writings also point out this trap of thinking we know what True

Christianity demands of us! I think we have to look further into the future beyond just short-term successes."[83]

Rev. Burnham interrupted again, this time to settle some of the differences that were arising in the room, "Well, it is becoming clear that however we understand faith it is the *raison d'etre* for all of us! The purpose of all of our organizations is to serve and that is where faith comes in."[84]

Scene II

Ms. Sloan was still considering more concrete issues as she asked, "So how is faith evident on a daily basis? Or is it?"

Pastor Mark, wanting to defend his organization's commitment to faith replied, "Faith plays the most important role in what we do. For us, faith plays a role in all of our services. Christian faith is our base, our identity. If we don't have a faith-based identity, then we don't have any identity. This is true of our education for children in our school where we focus on Christian values. Another program we offer for adults is a combination of a 12-Step program and healing prayer. It is an example of what is really needed in working with substance abusing adults. In these types of services, the government can't offer something like this. We don't require anyone to be Christian, we just ask them to be open to participating in our practices and they know what these are coming in. Bible study, for example, is used because it is a good spiritual practice, but it is also a good practical discipline. By developing a sense of discipline in Bible study, they are able to get a driver's license or reconnect with family."[85]

Rev. Burnham added some of their experiences, "Many of the children we serve from single family homes need values and morals instilled in them. We know that this is important to our work, but we really don't know how to do this. Parent meetings are hard for them to attend; they know the church is connected to the Center, but they don't come. We have devotions and a Bible story each day for the kids and we just hope that they take some of this home with them. The county doesn't say anything about this as long as the parents are satisfied."[86]

"For us, the most important thing is for the practices of faith to be tailored to the needs of the population," said Mr. Young. "We have chaplain services and the residential kids in our programs are the ones most connected with the chaplain, and therefore with our faith. Our doctrine may also shape some of the placement of children. For example, the chaplain may use denominational teachings about homosexuality when talking to a gay couple about foster care or adoption."[87]

Rabbi Bender again broadened the role of faith, "I don't think religion is used quite that way for us. There are some cultural issues that we might address out of Judaism on a day to day kind of basis, more so than any religious issue."[88]

"I think for us, we are seeking to infuse a universal understanding of faith into our programs," responded Ms. Singleton. "One of our programs incorporates faith-based principles, but it is also used by groups like the Boy Scouts and not just religious groups. We have a community garden that we talk about with references to gardens and foods in the Bible, but we talk about the growth of life in the garden as a metaphor for our lives."[89]

Ms. Abrams, who had been quiet most of the day, decided to comment on the role of faith in the services offered by her congregation, "We are first of all a church, so as a congregation, the central component of what we do is around faith. Faith is also integral to our human services. Faith is the guiding principle for why we serve our neighbors; it is reflected in how we serve."[90]

Rev. Burnham added, "We aren't serving as the church any longer, but as connected as we are to the church, it's pretty clear, at least to me, that faith is always present here. This whole country is founded on biblical principles and faith in God; this is the reason we are blessed as a country, and this is the reason we are blessed as a church. I believe the strength of our organization is also that belief. Our pastor often says these kinds of things in public and never has any comments made about faith being too central, about being too religious. The city knows he is a minister and that he is the board president for the Center."[91]

Pastor Mark gave more details about the role of faith at his organization, "Our view of faith does sound similar to yours, Rev. Burnham. We have a substance abuse program that requires attendance at worship on Sunday mornings, but admission into the program is voluntary and the funds used for it are private. We are very up front about the role of religion and the men in this program do not have to stay with us. If they choose to come, religion is used in treating them. It is never hidden, it is at the forefront of all we do. Since our name is religious, we keep this central. How can we afford to lose our faith-based identity when our name itself is a matter of faith? People around town joke

about this when sending men to our program. They call it the "pray in and stay in" shelter, but we are not forcing religion on people."[92]

"Prayer is greatly emphasized as a part of our services." Recognized Rev. Burnham, but acknowledging the differences in other programs, he continued: "Different organizations will do what is most appropriate for them and the people they serve. The spiritual part may not be this explicit, but a lot of organizations that do use public money are able to include faith-based aspects without any real concern. Either our program will be faith-based or I will go somewhere else. I must have prayer as an element central to the process."[93]

Pastor Mark seemed to concur, "Too many government programs only change people's pocketbooks, but we try to change their lives and their hearts and so the whole role of our organization is related to faith. Our mission states that we are based on the Bible and that we have a mission to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs. The government teaches people to steal; faith teaches them to share. We do this by basing our teaching and healing on the word of God, so our faith is seen whenever we meet human needs in Jesus' name. The gospel of Luke with all of its stories of Jesus helping people around him shapes who we are. I describe us as being biblically driven but contemporarily oriented. We are always saying that we are wondering where Christ is leading us, so we ask, 'What did Jesus do?' And that is what we should do in our world today: feed the poor, help widows, others who are in need, helping them to see that they don't have to stay in their situation. Jesus went about doing these things, setting an example for us."[94]

"Well, we hope that our programs share Christ's love, and even if this message is not preached, we hope people see it," replied Mr. Young, almost defensively. "To avoid church-state legal entanglements, though, we don't have the religious emphasis that you do, but we do say grace, and we do teach a kindness that is definitely biblical. We just don't ever require participation in our religious services or activities. The chaplain I was talking about earlier works in our on-site residential program, but she also works with all of our programs. Her role relates to clients and to staff. All services offered by her are voluntary—Bible study, chapel, small groups, Sunday worship, and on Sundays, she will make arrangements for any religion, even if someone is agnostic. Some of these things may have been required before we received public funding, but are optional now. This better reflects our philosophy anyway."[95]

Ms. Abrams also responded, "Our congregation offers the people we serve the opportunity to attend things like Bible study or choir. They can receive a Bible, join a spirituality class, and say grace before meals, but none of this is pushed on them. We don't beat them over the head with it, but we give them the opportunity to join us. People respond to services based on how you treat them. It is not about what you force on them. We don't force our beliefs so we don't alienate people. We would lose many of the people that need our help if we were trying to force our beliefs on them. There is often a fear of the unknown with some of the people we serve. Trust is important to them, but they don't know who they can trust. They often feel that they cannot trust God, so a faith-basis is important. It cannot be pushed or people will certainly resist it. I guess this

all reflects the whole philosophy of our congregation's social ministries which is service oriented with religious activities available if someone wants them."[96]

"Now this philosophy sounds like what the state office is suggesting. We've been going back and forth between how faith shapes our mission, our overarching goals, and how it relates concretely to human service activities at the service or the program level," summarized Ms. Singleton. She continued, "We have two buildings for the two purposes, we have two purposes for the two organizations. We have had no problems with not teaching the Bible or doctrine at the CDC. We deal with spiritual things, but we also teach life skills. We may draw from faith, but we stay within the guidelines agreed to in our original applications for 501(c)3 status and for funding. The church work that we do at Central City Christian Church is definitely separate from the human service activities at the CDC, but in a lot of ways, particularly at that overarching level, they are linked more like bread and butter than like a salad."[97]

"Yes!" proclaimed Ms. Sloan. She continued, "We offer secular and spiritual components to our program, and I guess I feel that faith-based organizations should be able to distinguish between religious and service activities, but this is difficult because in our mission they do intermingle—they are still connected for us in a lot of what we do! We are a faith-based agency, but more importantly we are a holistic agency, allowing churches to serve all parts of the human being—dealing with the emotional, psychological, social, physical, and spiritual. Faith is a dimension of this. We had a strong religious foundation, but wanted to be more holistic in what we did. We explain that for us this means that we like to work with the whole person and that this includes

working with the spiritual part, but participating in activities related to spirituality is still optional for people."[98]

Rev. Burnham commented, "We also address the physical, economic, and spiritual all together in our services. Everything is integrated and it is impossible to separate out the components in our programs. Spirituality and service are so intertwined historically that they should not be separated. This is so much a part of our history and of the churches we work with that faith and services cannot exist without each other."[99]

"Also," he continued, "It is ridiculous to think they can be separated when you think about what makes us effective in what we do. As faith-based, we have a reason for what we do, it is faith that makes our programs more effective and keeps us there for the long haul. We have one program where only one of the women who came through the program ended up back in prison. It is an example of faith in combination with good social services practice."[100]

Ms. Sloan commented on faith and effectiveness, "I also think there can be more success if faith is a part of the person's recovery. We have a forty-eight percent success rate with forty-three percent of the people having some faith-based connection, or recognizing the role of spirituality. I believe that the only substance abuse programs that continually demonstrate their effectiveness are those with some spiritual component, those that emphasize some dependence on a higher power in overcoming their addictions, or those that include a process that involves a conversion experience of some kind. This is where we find a niche for the church."[101]

Pastor Mark was also excited to comment on how faith related to effectiveness, "Success is driven by faith, evidenced by the fact that half of our staff at Good News comes from the program. The director included! The programs here are faith-based and offer clear successes. We have always said that it is the Lord's will for us to be here and we know that God will honor our work. It is the grace of God that keeps me here and that keeps the organization alive. We know that God is also at work in the lives of the people we serve, in the staff and on our board. In our work, we have to be open to God who provides for all our needs. All of our success is for the Glory of God!"[102]

Mr. Young offered his response, "We believe God is present in our work and we are clearly able to show our effectiveness, and have put together a brochure demonstrating our outcomes, but I don't know if we would say that our effectiveness is due to the role of faith in the organization. The use of faith for us is not limited to faith in Jesus Christ, but a sense of love, of care so that we are operating with a broad sense of what it means to love our neighbor as Jesus instructed us. In this sense, faith for us is a primary motivation or inspiration. It offers a wider perspective for what we do, it provides for more than just a focus on meeting a specific need. There is a faith background that is behind our services that we hope shines through."[103]

Scene III

The group decided to keep talking through lunch as Ms. Singleton ordered in pizza for her guests. As they ate, Ms. Sloan remembered the State's faith-based liaison talking about ways that faith motivates different organizations as they provide services, but stating that it really isn't the core of the activities they provide. "He was promoting

his belief in the separation of church and state, while also affirming that faith should be the basis for why religious organizations offer human services in the first place. He said 'faith is what usually brings organizations to the table.' Well it certainly has brought us to the table today, but I think faith does more than motivate us. I hear what Mr. Young is saying about faith motivating services, but not being an explicit part of services, but this is clearly not the case for all of us!"[104]

Mr. Young continued, "I remember one of our denominational leaders saying, 'We don't serve people because they are Christian, but because we are Christian.' When I was a student, the question was asked of me, 'In whose name do you come?' I felt that I had to be able to say that I came in God's name, that I came as an expression of my faith and not as a matter of addressing someone else's. Faith, then, is most evident in our attitudes and our actions, in how we offer the services, in how warm and inviting we are toward the people we serve, and in how we live out the social gospel, being consistent in our religious and our professional values."[105]

Rabbi Bender added, "I believe the Jewish service organizations feel the same way—that they serve because their Jewish values motivate them. And, our staff's religious identity seems to mirror that of the larger community, so we have several faith perspectives motivating our services and not just Judaism. The same can be said of our volunteers; they come from all over the community and reflect various faiths."[106]

Ms. Sloan commented, "Faith plays a large role for us through the work of volunteers from congregations and groups from several different faiths."[107]

Ms. Abrams reflected on the volunteers utilized by the community ministries program of her church, as well as volunteers who were deacons, missionaries, and in staff positions. She said, "There is a shifting role for volunteerism. We still have a lot of volunteers, but many of our current professional roles were once filled by volunteers. There is a large network of services provided in congregations by volunteers and volunteers from all over the community do a lot of the work in these congregations. Pretty much all of our ministries and outreach activities are run by volunteers and it is usually their faith that motivates them to serve."[108]

"We receive financial support and most of our meals from volunteers from local churches," replied Ms. Sloan. "We also have volunteers with a lot of commitment and few resources. When people serve this way, as acts of faith 'in their closet' so to speak, without talking about why they are doing it, they are still living out a religious commitment. Their being here is a simple act of faith, a way for them to act on the love of God."[109]

"We have some volunteers as well as staffmembers who are motivated by their faith," Ms. Singleton began. "Some want to see a pure social services experience, but others are here because they want to work in an organization with some Christian ties and faith sustains them to keep doing the work they do. For example, this summer we were slower in getting started so I asked the staff if we could extend the program by one week. It was a matter of faith that they were willing to do this in order to achieve our purpose. They may never talk about their faith at work, but it is the reason why some of them are here. Everyone here might agree that there is no one Christian way to serve a single

mother, for example. The church may have its ideals or standards, but in serving her different people will be motivated in different ways. There may be some personal beliefs that differ from professional values, but I have not experienced major differences that are conflicts in what the church would have us to do."[110]

"I am not so sure about there not being a Christian way to go about serving others. Faith does motivate our staff, and me, but Christ is that motivating factor for us. We serve because God has called us, because the Spirit of the Lord is upon us. We are called to model God's call to Jesus in our own communities. This belief motivates us because it helps us to believe in ourselves." Rev. Burnham continued with a personal testimony. "I always tell my children, my staff, and myself that I am here because God intended me to be here. This is not what I intended to do with my life. I have a master's degree in human resources and years of experience in corporate America and then, through an act of faith, the pastor approached me about becoming the director of the Family Life Skills Center. My family didn't think I would do this. One of my children asked, 'Daddy, why you want to work down here?' The other one said, "You know better than to ask that!' She knew it was an act of faith for me to be here."[111]

"That sounds like the kind of faith that motivates our staff," said Pastor Mark. "I know the difference Christ makes in my life serves as an example to others. The same is true for the staff—Christ in their life serves as an example to the people we serve. Faith is the most important thing we have. We have wanted to make sure that the staffmembers are people who are called to this work. There is also an element of faith to be seen in the working relationships between the professional staff and the staff who

come up out of our programs. They all see their work as ministry and so a part of our staff development is spiritual development. Since so many of our staff has experiences similar to the people we serve, and since this often means substance abuse recovery, there is an assumption that faith is important. People depend on something on the process of recovery and for us that something is Jesus Christ."[112]

"Pastor Mark continued, "Faith is used to motivate people—by our words and actions. I can't talk about how faith motivates our staff without saying more about how it motivates our clients. The life we live is the best testimony there is. 'Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.' This verse shapes the people we serve, to help us work with them to transform their minds and their lives. And this transformation occurs by faith; humanity reaches its fullest potential through faith."[113]

Rev. Burnham commented, "Faith also motivates the people we serve, sometimes before they know it. Some of the people we serve are not even aware of their wounding or the possibility of God's healing presence. We can be talking about something that happened a few years back, and I point out that what they are talking about may be the comforting presence of God and so often they can't even see it. Our counselor says that the population we serve is more and more wounded. The process of receiving services and helping them find jobs can be very intimidating to some of the women we serve and they need self-esteem to be encouraged to go to their interviews and get the jobs they need. Spirituality plays a major role in this process and it is one that the government cannot offer them. What's the government gonna do in these situations without us? There is often a poverty of the spirit that people face that goes beyond low incomes and

we have to listen for this spiritual need. In thinking about how faith motivates them, we believe that if their spiritual life is straight, then all other areas will line up."[114]

Ms. Sloan said, "We build relationships with the community in many ways and what we accomplish is always a demonstration of our faith. We know that faith matters as much as the services to some people we serve. Faith is the most important thing to many of the people we serve, so we have played it up when we are working with these populations but play it down with fundraisers, because of our fear that the faith component is less important to them."[115]

She continued, "And, we don't really care what religion people are, but we do often expect that they will believe in something greater than themselves—maybe this is what faith means for us—because more and more programs, like AA, recognize the role of spirituality in serving people's needs and we try to do that also."[116]

Rev. Burnham commented on a new program they were offering, "We have a new faith-based initiative that seeks to develop the whole child and the child's family. As we strengthen their bonds, we strengthen the bonds of the sheep and this is one way we are able to do God's work. Faith can be seen in how the staff treats them and how they are motivated to learn. We are about transforming the community by transforming people one by one. We don't proselytize; we encourage right behavior by example. Our first city grant did help the church as well as the Center because the young people we served came to join what we were doing in the church. It helped us to reach out to get to know some people from the neighborhood."[117]

Rabbi Bender perplexedly asked, "Does this really amount to a choice on their part? I mean, this is another word I don't understand: proselytization. I know it means converting people to your religion, and you say you don't proselytize, but you willingly encourage them to behave according to your beliefs and then to join your church. I know some congregations are more comfortable talking about evangelism than proselytization, but what is the difference? Some clients may respond because of their own faith-based orientation, others may not know what they are getting into. They may not be going in with a clear understanding of the role of faith in the organization. There are also power struggles to be considered here, related to client's 'freedom of choice.' Clients receive a free service and then have the choice to attend a religious activity, so does this really amount to a choice on their part?"[118]

Mr. Young replied, "I remember the faith-based liaison saying that there are some organizations that want evangelism at the forefront of what they do and that they have to stop and discuss this with them in order to gain more clarity about these things."[119]

"We don't recruit based on faith!" Rev. Burnham started in, "There is a lot of diversity of faith in the people we serve. Some parents who brought their children asked if we proselytize and we said, 'Absolutely not!' We are always cautious not to proselytize and not to require children to attend church activities. We told them that we use some biblical themes and prayers, things like 'The Fruits of the Spirit,' but we don't have any proselytizing and we don't make any requirements of people. We do offer answers when questions are asked and if we are doing our jobs people will be asking questions. So, we try to be good listeners, try to get to know people better, and in

everything we do there is usually an opportunity to discuss what we believe. We don't make individual invitations for people to come to church; we just let people know who we are and where we are from. We do keep the church separate from the center and the activities of each separate in this way. We may witness everyday here, but it is a personal issue and not something we do in our programs. We don't want to prevent ourselves from serving people by coming across pushy or forceful."[120]

Rev. Burnham continued with another story, "One woman who came here as an atheist said she wanted services, but without any of the 'God stuff.' I asked if she believed in God and she abruptly said, 'No!' She didn't really have anything else to say about this and didn't want to have anything to do with talking about God, even though she knew we were connected to the church. A year or so later she was still with us, and asked me to be her sponsor in baptism. She came to God on her own; we may have provided a place for her to think about this, but that's about all. All I ever told her was who I am and the reasons why I do this."[121]

Ms. Abrams joined in, "We know that if we partner with the government we cannot proselytize and we cannot recruit people for Christ Ascension Church, but people who come to the ministries can attend church activities and things like Bible study or choir. If people want to come they know they are always welcome, but we don't evangelize, except by our actions. We really don't believe it is fair to people who are here as a captive audience in a service program to evangelize them."[122]

"We also allow churches to share Bible stories in the programs when they bring meals," offered Ms. Sloan, "but we would be open to any group sharing their stories.

Some churches choose not to do anything with the participants, believing they can let their example speak for themselves. The participants have the opportunity to join in but are not forced to do so and we ask congregations not to proselytize. This means that some churches have chosen not to participate because they cannot evangelize. They feel they cannot get what they need out of the relationship with us. All of this is spelled out in our policy manual, and we have stretched the role of faith about as far as we can with the congregations we work with and we ask them not to expose us to risks when we are getting ready to apply for government funding!"[123]

"There is some concern for us too, but not a major one," said Mr. Young. "The government has never said to us, 'You can't do A, B, or C,' but then again, we are not in the business of proselytizing or sharing Christian doctrine. The religious is really pretty separate for us, even though we do extend an invitation for people to use the chaplaincy services. People will sometimes come in and ask for a Bible or for prayer and we do that for them. People can receive spiritual or social services if they ask for them."[124]

As if waiting for the last word, Pastor Mark rejoined, "Spiritual recovery is a part of the total recovery of any addiction. In this program, we are absolutely, unashamedly evangelical with an invitation to come to pray at the end of the service. For me, it's freeing to know that I can witness to someone or share the Gospel if the need is there."[125]

Everyone seemed to sigh in relief as Ms. Singleton brought the gathering to a close. Despite the difference over the role of faith, the leaders were willing and ready to meet again. They agreed on a date and a topic and agreed to meet at Central Community Cares next month.

**Act IV: Relationships and Responsibilities**

Scene I: Collaboration

The next month, the same leaders gathered again to continue their discussion. This was the third meeting of the group of leaders from a variety of faith-based organizations and they still had a lot of enthusiasm about meeting to sort out their concerns. Ms. Sloan wanted the group to see the small corner office in the east end of town where her organization had recently located. She was prepared to discuss a strength of her organization, and a matter that she felt the others would also be excited to discuss. She wanted to know more about other organizations with whom her peers were partnering. As Rev. Burnham, Rabbi Bender and Ms. Singleton came in, she was describing to Mr. Young and Ms. Abrams the way that her organization partnered with congregations who offer volunteers to help provide meals and shelter to people who are homeless and living in poverty. She updated the group on the plan of her organization to apply for government funds.

After helping herself to a cup of coffee, she opened the conversation, "Let's talk some more about collaboration. We know it is an extremely helpful way to do things and is something we all seem to be doing one way or another. Collaboration, I guess, really means a mutual sharing of many resources and it's not always easy to figure out how to do this. We know our impact can increase with collaboration, but we don't always achieve the fullest degree of working with others. Coordinating activities together is really the greatest extent of most of our so-called 'collaborations.' I remember that at one of the faith-based conferences held by the state, a speaker talked about how some grants

and contracts require us to collaborate at the local level, but we also know that not all program areas are suited to collaborations."[126]

Finishing a donut, Rev. Burnham replied, "It's not always clear what the state means when they say they want to see more collaboration. We know how important collaboration is for smaller organizations and that it really does take this kind of partnership to make a difference in our communities. In the past few years, most of our programs have involved partnerships of some kind, with faith-based and non-faith-based organizations, with all kind of community-based organizations, for-profit and nonprofit organizations. We began to partner with anyone and everyone serving the neighborhood: community leaders, other groups, schools."[127]

"We are learning to do this, too" offered Ms. Singleton, "We are being forced to do it—by United Way, by the government, by most funders. We have always felt that if churches are involved in projects then it will be seen as worthy of support from others. This was true with a housing program in our area. Some neighborhood people were concerned about joining, but when the church became involved they became more trusting. I believe that churches have good will in a community; Central City CDC has the good will of Central City Church when we work with other housing organizations, the community, and the government. Even though we are forced to do more collaboration, the things that happen when we get involved help me realize that it is important and that it doesn't happen enough! There just aren't enough collaborations between churches and other organizations. The government will fund small organizations that are willing to

collaborate, but I think partnerships between organizations like this could be better funded. I think we could also do a lot more if we would try harder to work together."[128]

Mr. Young then said, "I agree that the government could do a better job of funding ecumenical collaborations which are not really promoted by the government. We fight with several other FBO's for resources to serve children in the community and then we have to come together to advocate for these children. There are religious community organizing agencies that provide examples of the whole religious community working together to bring about change in a way that avoids these conflicts. We have been involved in some efforts like this; for example, we worked with the Catholic agency to serve refugees last year. It is just not easy when we are working toward the same mission and for the same money."[129]

After several nods and a brief pause, Pastor Mark offered his reflections on the value of collaboration with churches, "I think we need to see groups work together, but our question is not just for the FBO's. We also ask, 'what does collaborating with an organization provide in terms of strengthening the faith of the congregation?' Churches always need more resources and collaboration may help to provide volunteers or money. This is a way to work together that allows the people we serve to be able to connect to a church and allows the churchmembers to use their gifts to help others. This helps us make sure that we have Christian mentors for the people in our programs who need resources like TANF and foodstamps and WIC, but who also need the support of people in a faith community."[130]

"I guess the big question here has to do with church and state relationships for those of us that are trying to work with the government. How do we partner with churches but not get into legal trouble? I guess we have to show how we work not only with congregations, but also local businesses and other community organizations." Ms. Sloan wondered aloud.

Ms. Singleton responded, "We have tried to show how broad our collaborative efforts are, and this means partnering with other organizations, like local corporations. We have applied for some outreach grants for the CDC to be able to reach new people in the community. Corporations also support organizations through their employee's efforts. They give money and then have a string attached—we have to find a place for their employees to volunteer. This is really no problem for us! We have already had great support from local corporations in the community and now we are trying to get the small business owners connected. They too often assume they don't have much to give, but they have a lot to offer out of their experiences."[131]

Rabbi Bender spoke up, "I think part of the challenge is that we don't even know our neighbors in most areas. There is a loss of a sense of community, but it is important to reclaim it. Citizen and civic associations must work together and then we must join them to address our communities' needs. Most groups don't seem to do this very well. Some community groups get it and others don't; some know what it takes to make a difference and others don't."[132]

"I agree," offered Rev. Burnham, "our strength should be that people can go from the huge DSS office where one worker works with 1,000 people to small groups in local

communities who work together for people. We have to be in the community to be a faith-based ministry and we have to let people know that we are here for them. We have been trying to do this for years, and now people will call me when they know their needs and are looking for support. It is also important to note that there is a spiritual dimension of people that is manifest in interactions in the community. Once we see a need, we have an ethical and spiritual responsibility to respond. We can't pass the person on the side of the road because of our own needs. Thinking about the Samaritan, we must learn to partner with others to meet the needs of people in our community. The community often approaches churches asking them to serve their neighbors, and we should, but we have to encourage this to be a community-based approach. Otherwise, we know the results aren't as strong and that the churches lose out."[133]

Ms. Singleton offered, "Collaboration among human service systems does seem to be valuable. We are learning just how important it is for all agencies in an area to work together, because no one group has all the answers, or all the resources. And, if they are all competing for answers, programs, and money, then no one wins."[134]

"Ms. Sloan, one of our experiences relates to your question," offered Mr. Young. "We applied for federal and state funding a few years ago for a safehouse program that we worked on with another large FBO, with DSS, and with a local hospital. We all made contributions and some questions came up about having two faith-based groups involved. We mainly offered administrative service and then some of the group counseling. We actually felt pretty secular when it came to service delivery on this project. The people questioning us saw this and there weren't any real problems. I think the public sector

drove the need for this partnership, but this project really did help us focus on an organizational value: community-centeredness. We still really wrestle with what it means to work in the community as well as with the government, and we have been using government money for decades! We have often just taken government money for granted, but recently we have begun to pay more attention to the relationship we have with both government and other groups. We welcome the involvement of other organizations but we also hope the government will increase resources that are available for us."[135]

"We agree that collaboration is important," stated Rev. Burnham, "but the church and the state must each keep their identity, joining only for the purpose of providing a service. FBO's have to look at their mission and their goals before thinking about collaborating with the government or other organizations. We have decided that collaboration is very valuable, and think it can be important for others, but we also know that it is a very individual kind of question for organizations to consider. We also know that every organization is going to bring their own motives and values to the table, and I guess this is what prevents us from working better together. But, we can't see these motives and values as bad things. They are the things that make us who we are and that give us the vision to help meet needs. So often our issues get in the way, but the goal should be to work with others to solve problems."[136]

Ms. Abrams rejoined, "We haven't been involved to the extent that we need to be when it comes to working with others downtown. Sometimes it has to do with these differences you are talking about, but sometimes it's just a matter of the time and energy

it takes. We were connected with others through the daycare, but we closed it to renovate our building. We'll reopen soon and when we do we will make it a point to work more with others. We'll work with the DSS again, to get referrals and, although I'm not sure we should, we have talked about using DSS childcare vouchers which would mean some government money coming in."[137]

Mr. Young nodded and replied, "Every organization has to decide what they can handle—in terms of their own capacity as well as the extent to which they can partner with others. We use quite a bit of government money, but we also use them for referrals—DSS, the courts, the Veteran's Administration. We have great relationships with the court system for a program for batterers and it doesn't involve an exchange of money; the perpetrators pay their own way. We also want to start a program that focuses more on caring for victims of crimes and counseling them. We would work with the courts and other local officials to do this"[138]

Rev. Burnham said, "We have been a site for government funded programs for children and for job training programs, but we believe federal funding should come more freely to faith-based and community-based organizations, along with best practices too. Most of the money goes to a midlevel or state-level administrative body first which slows the process of it getting to us."[139]

Pastor Mark stated, "Government and churches could work in harmony; ideally, I guess, the government should grant money to FBO's and trust them without strict accountability, but it's never this easy. We are funded by private money and mission

support, and probably won't consider using public money, although I guess we would use technical support from the government or to help us get funding."[140]

After a brief pause, Pastor Mark began again, "You know, one program we have actually saves the government money. Our 90 day program serves as an alternative to jail for substance abusing men and when the men come here we save the government money. They don't have to pay us for this, but rather we still work together by saving them money when they have fewer people to put in jail. People come to this program from the courts and from DSS. I think an ideal government-funded program is when taxpayers benefit as much as we do, when the government gives the money back to people and then they give it to us. I believe our tax exempt status helps us do more for our communities, but the government could increase the amount of money going to FBO's even more by decreasing the amount of money leaving the organizations to pay staff taxes—the government could offer tax breaks to all fulltime staff at FBO's and not just clergy. I believe the best government results are from tax relief to people so that they can put the money back into the work of FBO's. One example of this kind of approach is Virginia's Neighborhood Assistance Program that allows organizations to have their taxes go to service organizations. It helps the corporations and the service organizations. This is just one more way we FBO's can work with corporations and the government, without directly taking government money."[141]

Scene II: Prophetic Responsibility

Ms. Sloan heard Pastor Mark's comments, but wanted to push further in considering what these things meant for her organization. "OK, then I have another

question." She began again. "There are a variety of ways we can partner with community groups, companies, and the government—funding related, tax related, but I want to hear some more about how we understand our responsibility when we are in these relationships, particularly with the government."

"What do you mean?" asked Ms. Singleton.

"Like, what is our responsibility as religious organizations? For some of us, worship and education is first. We also know that we have a service-related role, but the state's faith-based liaison office also asks us to consider our 'prophetic role' and we know that this is often an important part of our work. It allows us to speak our truth, to hold society accountable for what we believe God desires in a community, and it provides the basis for our involvement in promoting social justice, but, how do we balance this prophetic role with the pastoral role of meeting needs. Pastor Mark is urging more tax breaks, and Mr. Young said that he wanted to urge the state to have enough money available to help us meet more needs, so how do we do advocate for these things and still partner with the government financially. Does it amount to biting the hand that feeds us?"[142]

Ms. Singleton responded first, "Well, when in the role of providing services for a community, church and state can join together. When advocating for the powerless in our communities or educating the people who have the power, things related to the prophetic role, the church is often confronting the state. The state tells us that there is a difference between education and lobbying and asks us to consider this whenever we use our prophetic voice."[143]

Rev. Burnham spoke out, "I believe that even if we receive state money that FBO's should maintain a prophetic role; the government knew we were prophetic before the money came in and I don't think they can expect us to change. Every pastor should have the freedom to be prophetic. FBO's shouldn't choose funding that will limit this role. I think that if you have integrity, you will speak what is true; you will have the courage and faith to stand up for what you believe in. As often as it can be spoken, a word should be spoken about tough issues facing our communities. Some people are more comfortable with this than others, but as my daughter says, 'not everybody has bootstraps to pull themselves up by' and that is why our role is so important and why we can't sacrifice it. If you sacrifice this for government, then you will sacrifice what you believe for anybody."[144]

"Well, that sounds fine, but the government does step in to try to shape or even hinder FBO's prophetic role," answered Ms. Singleton defensively. "We have limits on money that we can spend on lobbying, and even without the use of government funding, as registered 501(c)3 organizations we are limited in our prophetic role. Providing services and criticizing public policies may be more difficult for small organizations and the risks associated with this kind of criticism could be a danger for them, but perhaps they are part of a denomination where the prophetic voice can be offered so that the smaller organization can do its work."[145]

"One group of churches with a USDA food subsidy was worried about losing money when they spoke out against a public policy last year, but they were able to offer their voice through a statewide religious advocacy group," offered Rev. Burnham.[146]

Ms. Abrams joined in, "It has been helpful for our congregation to have a denominational body that serves as the prophetic voice. The rector will sometimes do this as well, but our community ministries focuses on providing the direct services; we really don't take a political role in what we do. It could be that the government is more willing to support organizations that serve the pastoral role."[147]

Rabbi Bender commented, "It is also important, I think, to realize that there is a difference between being partisan and being prophetic. There are churches that have lost their prophetic voice because of partisan politics. Voices on both sides need to be careful because there are always organizations that get hurt when their prophetic voices are labeled partisan. The prophet is one who speaks to both Democrat and Republican, and is neither. The prophet speaks for those forgotten by the community and even if rejected for it, it is an invaluable role. There may be days when funding is at risk, but congregations will be vindicated. Churches can be reminded of this by looking at the work of the civil rights movement."[148]

"I know that I never give a second thought to where the money is coming from when I preach," responded Rev. Burnham. "I have a mandate to the Gospel: to feed the poor, care for the sick, and love my neighbor. This means we have to become the voice of the people we serve. We have access to political leaders that many of the people we serve don't have."[149]

"I think we have found appropriate ways to make our voice heard," offered Mr. Young. "One example is child advocacy. We joined an organization last year to lobby against the use of corporal punishment in foster care. The DSS commissioner led on the

other side of the issue and our funding seemed a little threatened. Many in the public sector applauded our risk and we were able to win. I had the full support of the board on this to say what I thought was right. I guess it made me feel like we had more room than I expected in terms of social criticism and lobbying activities. We are always asked to get involved with issues, but this is one of the few times we did jump in and it was because of the way we were able to stand up for children."[150]

Again Rev. Burnham spoke up, "I guess our pastor is also someone who has learned to be outspoken in a politically correct way. I know that we have been able to hear community needs and then find ways to raise the issues that are important to them. It is our right, we feel, to say how the city is run or how public money is administered."[151]

Ms. Singleton, frustrated with the different views on this matter, again commented that there should be a line between advocating for clients and lobbying, "Nonprofits should be precluded from lobbying. Besides, it may not be politically advantageous to receive government money and then get out in the street and act a fool! When you get government money, you have to give some of that up. The church has created a social justice ministry to advocate for change and they have a few people from the CDC that have been involved. Public money does limit our advocacy, but this church group feels they have more freedom."[152]

Scene III: Social Responsibility

Rev. Burnham, whose strong feelings about social advocacy had been clear, now raised a question related to social responsibility. "We seem to have a wide range of

responses to this question about lobbying, so I wonder if there is just as much diversity about whose responsibility it is to care for the needs of people in our communities. So much of the conversation in the public eye seems to be about the government co-opting FBO's, the government passing the buck to faith-based and community groups, or about the federal government getting out of the welfare business. What does all of this mean for us religious groups?[153]

Pastor Mark was more than willing to respond to this question. "I'd rather the government not have anything to do with social work! It's not the government's responsibility—they shouldn't be in the people business, people should be in the people business. The people of God gave up their responsibility to the government, but that doesn't make it any less our responsibility. Social problems are tough to solve and we've seen that when the government tries to do it all, the human part is missing. FBO's address something human, something spiritual that governments just can't do. The government can't be all things to all people and if I had it my way the government wouldn't be involved like they are now."[154]

Rabbi Bender offered a different perspective, saying "The Jewish community exists to serve their community. So, while we believe that these things are not best done by the government, the government must support them. The government certainly has some responsibility because of taxes we pay. And, besides, congregations just can't do it all, they can't save the world, so they have to find their niche. Welfare is like bridge-building; it is too big for us to solve on our own. We can't solve issues of poverty, housing, mental health, and employment alone; we don't have the knowledge or

resources to cure every individual person's struggle. We can't get you and you and you off of drugs, and help you and you and you to fight mental illness. FBO's just can't help everyone—there aren't enough resources and besides, it's not our responsibility."[155]

Rev. Burnham then commented, "Pastor Mark, we agree on a lot of things, but I'm gonna have to go with the Rabbi on this one. The government has the resources, and constitutionally, it is their responsibility. Then it is up to others to fill in the gaps; that's why nonprofits were created. It is our responsibility, but not to do so alone. The government has to be involved."[156]

Ms. Singleton replied with what seemed to be a unifying perspective. "I really think it is a mix of everyone's responsibility that we are talking about. Everyone has to reach out to people in need—the government has a share of the responsibility but can't meet every need; religious groups are responsible because of their scriptural mandate and a calling to serve, but also can't do it all. They both have similar callings, but different authorities. In this shared calling, communities need the support, the knowledge, and the care that comes from community and faith-based organizations, and these groups need government support. Really, no one group can do it all. Besides, a holistic view suggests it is all of humanity's shared responsibility to be involved in caring for others—government, congregations, other organizations, and all citizens. We all need to look at what we can bring to the table. This is a part of why faith-based initiatives have so much potential to be helpful. There are still different understandings of how to get everyone to work together, but this is the heart of the struggles we are talking about!"[157]

Mr. Young largely agreed, "I think this shared responsibility is best, and de Tocqueville was among the first who pointed out that the third sector makes a big difference in our society. All private organizations should be involved in serving others, but honestly, churches, congregations, and other FBO's seem afraid of being dumped on, afraid that the President is transferring the nation's safety net to religious organizations. You're right in saying that it's not feasible for FBO's to do their part without the support of other systems. Who knows how much it would cost community organizations to pick up the federal government's social services budget. Whatever the number might be, it is well beyond the reach of most congregations, FBO's, and other community-based groups. I don't know anyone who thinks the government will really turn the responsibility over to private organizations; the President assures us this is not what is happening, but the government has been becoming more dependent on us. There has been, in the very least, a government shift to faith-based and community organizations for many important services, and this goes back well beyond the current administration. The government has been working itself out of the welfare business for some time without being explicit about it—it is just now being more explicit about it."[158]

Pastor Mark once again spoke up, "Our government does what the people give them permission to do—its role is not cast in stone. It's not up to the government to decide what programs are best suited to a community's needs. We may look to the government for support, but historically their failures lead me to say it's not the government's responsibility in the first place. Our public education and housing problems are because the government is trying to do these things that's not their

responsibility! The government is responsible for seeing the American people benefit as a whole; it's not set up to run feeding programs and shelters. I believe that all social services should be done by the church because Jesus taught us it is our responsibility to serve the poor and needy. He said that 'inasmuch as you have done these things to the least of these you have done it unto me.' The church hasn't taken this responsibility seriously and this is the reason for crime and poverty and so many other social problems. If churches would be faithful, if they would redirect money away from big buildings and toward meeting needs then they could have enough resources. We should have faith that the church can do this, and the government should have faith in us to get the job done! They should rely on us because we can understand needs in ways that government can't."[159]

Ms. Abrams voiced her opinion, "But there are so many diverse and complex problems in our communities that congregations, or even FBO's can't be expected to address them all. Now, I don't know if the government has all the resources that are needed, but I also don't know that religious organizations can do it. People in most religious organizations aren't equipped to handle all the many different social issues, they aren't trained to care for people with complex needs—and that from a woman who serves people in a church! People in congregations want to help, they want to be involved. They feel it is their mission or calling or whatever, but they just cannot do all that is asked of them. It is just too romantic of a notion in our modern economy to expect voluntary organizations like congregations to be this involved. Our role should really be more of a complementary one rather than subsidizing. In a complementary role, the

government provides the foundation and then FBO's and other community organizations fill a niche in providing services. If we carried all the responsibility there would always be people not being served. Besides, if FBO's take on more and more social responsibility what happens to our other roles? Caring for others is an important role for religious organizations, but there are others that are just as important."[160]

Rev. Burnham commented again, "The question here is, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Yes! People of faith are stewards of each other and we are to be faithful in that calling. We may be able to meet people's needs better than government can, but we have asked for government involvement through the constitution and there are so many FBO's working alongside government, that I cannot imagine the government not working with us. So what is the appropriate balance in who offers welfare, healthcare, training, childcare, and a living wage? The government probably spends about one percent of its budget on social programs and yet this amount is greatly needed because it comes from a big picture perspective. Our Center does great work in this one community of this one city, but we could never initiate a nationwide effort like Headstart. There are states that have privatized whole systems, like the whole child welfare system in one state now has a FBO as its largest provider, but there are too many groups calling on government to see that it keeps its role in serving the common good, in working for what is just. Our denomination, and probably many others have said that the government's role is to provide for the common good and the church's role is to advocate for this when the government fails to provide in this way. It is crazy to expect churches to do what should

be the government's job, and I agree with Ms. Abrams that this also takes churches away from their other tasks."[161]

With much being said and little progress made on persuading each other to change their respective views, the group of leaders decided to call it a day. They made plans to gather again the next month to hear more specifically about experiences of partnering with the government. The conversations today made it a full day, complete with reflections on the value of collaborating with others in the efforts in which faith-based organizations are involved, and then a shift to reflect on the different arenas for which faith-based organizations are responsible. The leaders went home with a sense of satisfaction of their time spent together and of the work of which they were a part in their local communities.

**Act V: Faith-based Organization's and the Use of Public Money**

Scene I: Criticisms of Public Money

Rev. Jamison and Rev. Burnham offered to host the next gathering at their church and community center. Ms. Abrams was in attendance, interested in how another congregation served its community. Rev. Perez and Ms. Singleton walked in at the same time, and Mr. Young and Rabbi Bender were both present. Mr. Kamil was also with the group again. The hosts began with a tour of the building and a discussion of the historic neighborhood where they were situated. The building was a maze as the interior of the century-old structure had been remodeled several times to adjust to the congregation's needs—and now to the community's needs as the Center made its home in one wing. As the group moved toward the pastor's conference room, Ms. Sloan, ever mindful of how her organization might partner with federal, state and local government began the conversation by asking, "So, last month we ended up talking how everyone is responsible for meeting needs and I have been thinking a lot about different ways of doing this. If everyone is responsible and it's not just a matter of us, the nonprofits, versus them, the government, then how can we best work together to serve others?

Pastor Mark began, "I know you are probably tired of me jumping in so quickly, but I feel that my response to this question relates to what I was saying at the end of our last meeting. These kinds of things are just not the government's responsibility! This means that my church and my organization won't use public money. There are several FBO's around that have chosen not to do this. We went to a leadership network conference in D.C. with members of the White House staff and the President's Faith-

Based Office and we came back discussing the appeal of this money, but we decided that we would probably never partner with the government this way. Many Baptists feel the same way; it seems that many African-American churches are interested like yours, Rev. Jamison. And I'll tell you what I told them: Go forth and do good, but we don't want to be a part of it!"[162]

"Well I can understand your skepticism," replied Rev. Jamison. "We brought Rev. Burnham to help us figure out how to partner with the government and to help us figure out what it meant for our church's mission. I feel that if churches use public money they should watch how every dollar gets used. People ask us all the time about our work and how we use government money and other grants, and I always suggest having a goal of financial independence. The grants you can get from the government will eventually leave you hanging. Government money will come and go and you really can't depend on it to keep you going; you have to look for other money too. We also ask other groups to ask themselves why they are seeking public funding and we ask them if funds are available in the church—and if not, why not. We know that with coming changes to our programs we are going to have to look more carefully at our sources of revenue. There is no pot of gold and getting people in churches to understand this is difficult."[163]

Mr. Perez joined in, "Now there is actually a smaller pie and it is being cut into more pieces. There's been no new money for these faith-based initiatives. Many religious organizations do great work, and have a great mission, but I wonder if the work

is being done by money from the churches' sense of mission, or if public money is doing most of the work."[164]

"Government money can disappear much too easily!" answered Rabbi Bender. "It seems that some organizations want money for growth. The biggest issue then is that the organizations can't grow, but they can take on extra liability. The impression of long-time FBO's like Jewish Community Services is that dwindling public monies are being cut into smaller and smaller pieces. This is not a good way to assure the success of faith-based initiatives!"[165]

Rev. Burnham responded, "With more faith-based organizations applying for public money, we were concerned about competition with other organizations and the fact that there is less government money available for services."[166]

Ms. Singleton commented, "Yeah, a lot of groups seem to think there is new money and there just isn't. There is some money targeted to FBO's, but this has been the case for several years. That's something organizations should know. There's really nothing new about faith-based initiatives. That's a lot of fluff!"[167]

"Organizations shouldn't look to the government to keep them running or to keep them growing," said Rev. Jamison. "They should look to the government for incentive grants that offer startup money, but this is not perpetual. Organizations should really do what is needed in their communities rather than looking to other sources for funding that guide them in different directions."[168]

"We still have people in the church who criticize us for taking public money; the older members feel it hamstrings us to use so much public money," offered Rev.

Burnham, "but I don't see it! I think it is important for FBO's to think carefully and prayerfully about applying for government money; the money may open new doors for ministry, but I always encourage churches to be careful. They need to know that their faith is not enough to protect them from a lawsuit if something happens."[169]

"There really do seem to be a lot of little issues that should be considered to make faith-based initiatives work and to make them fair," stated Ms. Sloan.[170]

Mr. Young joined in, "Yeah, it seems like a lot of organizations would make a mess out of using public money. They don't understand the bigger issues, struggles, and infrastructure needs. They have a great passion for their work, but without the necessary infrastructure, they may end up going out of business and this also damages the clients. This is what I think could happen in faith-based organizations that don't have human services as their primary mission."[171]

"That, and then, there are some groups who are going to try to bring God in the back door so they can qualify for public money. This is where I get concerned," offered Rabbi Bender, "I would much prefer that they allow God to come through the front door and say 'no' to the money. I think God would be more pleased with this as well."[172]

"Well, I think we prefer that too! God is certainly a front door guest with us! We welcome His presence openly in everything we do—and that is why we haven't used public money." Pastor Mark continued, "We know that whoever pays the bills sets the rules, and we only abide by one set of rules. I feel that without any public money, FBO's can continue to serve their communities. There are a lot of faith-based services being

offered that are very valuable to the clients and these organizations should continue to exist as they do now."[173]

Ms. Sloan wondered aloud, "I think this is at the heart of my concerns, that if a program is trying to be faith-centered then its spiritual components may be compromised for the use of public money."[174]

Ms. Abrams offered her thoughts, "I think that faith will change with public money. Church and state can work together, but I worry about religious organizations getting in bed with the government. If they take government money, they are going to have to do things the government's way. When they do get in bed together, it is usually the government who comes out smiling."[175]

Mr. Young said, "Organizations should be concerned about maintaining their identity. They should know the limit of the religious activities they can have in their programs. It is important for FBO's to ask: 'what are you willing to give up to receive public funding?'"[176]

Ms. Sloan had been considering these risks and offered some reflections, "There are certainly strings attached to public money that must be considered. Even if the government says that they won't interfere with what we are doing, there is still the fear that they will do it anyway. We know of an organization that applied for HUD funding a few years ago and were awarded about $100,000, but only if the organization would agree to their rules about religion. They wanted the organization to certify in writing that they would be free from "religious influence." What does this even mean? How could a faith-based organization agree to that?"[177]

"I am really not an anti-government kind of minister, but I just hate to see an organization have to give up its religious freedoms. We don't use government money precisely because we want our faith to influence us. We want it to be our top priority. We don't ever want to have to put a government priority first. There are quite a few organizations that have been willing to do this and some of them have religious names. You know the saying 'you can't get something for nothing;' well it fits here: you can't get government money without their control. Money is not given freely when they expect something like this in return; when they are trying to buy our minds. The spiritual content can be jeopardized, but more than that even. Another local FBO, Faith Transformed was their name, they used state-funding and the more they received the less control they had—first over religious things, but then in programmatic changes, and the state eventually took over the program making a lot of changes along the way and leaving some pretty unhappy organizers behind. So one of the most important questions is: who will take us over?"[178]

Ms. Abrams had a similar concern to share, "A friend of mine works in Headstart and keeps bringing up these kinds of things. We thought about offering a Headstart class in our new childcare program but we use the same room for Sunday School and we didn't want to have to remove any of our Christian pictures."[179]

Rev. Burnham offered the experiences of the Center, "We have had mixed experiences related to that. We were waiting for the final OK on one federal grant for childcare and we had volunteers lined up to help. The administrator for the program came in and asked about the role of the church and all the Godtalk saying that this

wouldn't work with a government program. I told him we had other government money, but he just said that his office didn't partner with organizations with religious aspects. We just said that we have always been this way and wouldn't change for this grant. We value prayer, reflection, and our Christian values, but we are not so dependent on government money that we couldn't take that kind of step to maintain our identity. It is still pretty much a fallacy though that when a religious organization receives public money that they can't have prayer. We are an example of a FBO that has both."[180]

Rabbi Bender tended to agree with several of Pastor Mark's concerns. "I am not comfortable with increased government funding for FBO's. I believe the organizations will meet their community needs just fine even with some of the restrictions, but the money is difficult to come by and it often does come with government control. Because of experiences like those of Faith Transformed, it is important for organizations to ask a lot of questions: Will they become dependent? Will they lose control? Will they be able to handle the fiscal responsibility? Will they lose their prophetic voice? Will they be willing to bite the hand that feeds them? Will they be willing to blow the whistle when needed? Will they be willing to stand up and address issues of need that differ from their funders? Will they take time to stop to consider these risks? My feeling is that if you have to stop to think about if this is a risk, then you are likely to be at risk. You may have sacrificed it when you stopped to consider if what you are saying is OK."[181]

"Well, those are tough questions alright!" replied Ms. Sloan. Ms. Abrams and Mr. Perez nodded in agreement.

Mr. Perez said, "The congregations being offered public money may change, but they may never get around to the point of changing the lives of the people they serve!"[182]

Mr. Kamil joined in, "It sounds like religious leaders will be spending more time reading the Federal Register than Torah, the Bible, or the Quran!"[183]

Rabbi Bender again commented, "There is a pretty important ethical risk here that FBO's will become the arm of the state policing organizations of society. With this come risks to the quality of services and to confidentiality. For example, if a religious organization has to measure if a person is meeting his or her TANF work requirements, is the organization then serving the person or the state?"[184]

Rev. Perez comments, "I guess FBO's and DSS are both on the dancefloor with one partner waltzing and the other doing the tango. The question is, 'who is teaching whom to dance?' For me, it is a question of authority and control."[185]

"Authority and control aren't the only issues that we are considering though," said Ms. Abrams. "I know that I am also cynical about government inefficiency. The government doesn't always have the best systems in place to get money distributed. The church talked about creating a separate nonprofit thinking this would help us get funded, but the only policies we discussed were financial and not how to better serve. I'm just not sure about getting mixed up with the government for traditional church-state kinds of reasons. I just feel like the government would get in the way of the process of serving people; and, there's no way government money is going to help us address issues that cause poverty and injustice. We decided we wouldn't put the name of the church at risk, so if we actually applied we would have gone with a separate organization."[186]

Ms. Sloan agreed and added, "Our focus on promoting justice and equality keep us moving pretty fast in our work, but I feel that some government requirements would push us faster than we want to move!"[187]

Pastor Mark offered, "The current President says that he will not expect FBO's to make changes they don't want to make, and he may be able to do this, but what about the next president? And the leaders of all the federal agencies under him? We never know what will happen after this administration. They may promise money and religious freedom now, but that all could change in a few years."[188]

Mr. Kamil asked, "All of this makes me wonder what is going to happen with the new faith-based initiatives. I wonder how they will play out—now, and in future years? I remember feeling like big fundamentalist Christian groups would benefit and not smaller ones, but it sounds like smaller groups are being targeted and have more to lose. Others have also said that black churches were being targeted, and that the money would be used to court evangelical Christians. I think the government may be afraid of us rather than the other way around! I really do wonder who will benefit from this public money; our parishioners are a part of the public paying this tax money, but we wouldn't qualify and I don't know if we would want to after hearing some of this. I am beginning to think vouchers are the only idea that might work in this plan. That way people could choose where they want to go and the government only pays indirectly."[189]

"The childcare assistance we would get from the government works like a voucher program," offered Ms. Abrams. "It uses parental choice where parents qualify

for the payments. This is probably what voucher programs would look like if they were to be used more commonly."[190]

Scene II: The Benefits of Public Money

Ms. Sloan said, "I think vouchers could be a good idea, but I still think other faith-based initiatives could work. When the state faith-based liaison organized conferences around the state there were several points where a faith-based perspective could have been offered. I know there are other issues and lessons to be considered by FBO's when partnering with the government, but the voice of a religious leader with experience in these things would have been important for us to hear."[191]

Mr. Young replied, "That's why we decided to have these meetings. I hope you will remember the value of good things that FBO's have been able to do with public money. Like someone said earlier, there are FBO's that have been using public money for years. If it weren't for public money, we could only do a fraction of what we do."[192]

Rev. Burnham added, "The church doesn't have the resources to do the work that is needed in all our ministries, the government can help here. The only way to do it right is to partner to meet the needs of the community. FBO's have the choice to maintain their religious identity; some may have sold their identity for money, but not all of us."[193]

"We have often treated public agencies better than our churches." Mr. Young continued, "Churches give us a lot of money, but we have had to ask what we are giving them. We have joined them in some of their projects now to remind us that we do have a faith-based identity—and this hasn't seemed to jeopardize our public funding."[194]

Mr. Young went on to describe some of his organization's use of public money, "We've pretty much always received public money—since the days of FDR (Franklin Delano Roosevelt)! And, we've see a lot of changes in funding systems for public money. Also, we have quite a bit of money from the government—about 95% of our budget. It's from social services at either the local, state, or federal level and it's pretty much all for families and children. We have some money for migrant workers in rural family development, some for work with unaccompanied minors, residential foster care, some Juvenile Justice funds that allow children to be here rather than in corrections, and treatment foster care which brings in most of the money. Second is residential care. Some money for an older adult program is Medicare and Medicaid related. All together we have 35 contracts with public entities. One of the newer ones has us sending out RFP's (Requests for Proposals) for adoption programs to other organizations. We were chosen as an intermediary to award the money and manage it. This has been exciting, and a challenge. I guess this all means that the government is fine with us, with who we are, but they are less critical and more laid back than they use to be."[195]

Mr. Burnham was reflecting on their use of public money. "Government funds account for about 20% of our budget. We have money for our Headstart classes, we also have CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) money and DSS payments for childcare. We have some money in our USDA feeding programs for the kids. We serve about 80 kids in daycare and 95% of them pay with public assistance, but this is definitely not a moneymaker; it's just a ministry."[196]

"We have several other programs though, shelter, food pantry and feeding, and summer camp, and these are all more diversified," added Rev. Jamison.

Ms. Singleton joined in, "We are largely publicly funded and have been for a while. We have contracts with the federal government, with the Department of Corrections, and we also have CDBG money. We have been funded by local corporations since early on, but have mainly seen a growth in our federal grants."[197]

Rev. Burnham continued, "The public money we get is pretty much half from the state and half from the city. We have some FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) money and some USDA money. We talked to HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development) about housing programs but they are too strict in their management, financially and on faith-based attitudes."[198]

Rev. Jamison spoke up again, "The only real housing program is that we are a site for the Emergency Shelter run by DSS and they asked us to do this. This is an example of a program that is a ministry of the church, but is administered by the Center. I also just want to say that the contracts we receive for these programs are the same as for a nonreligious organization. We follow the state requirements to maintain our religious exemption category, which is the only difference. And, we don't change our mission to go after money—we don't chase it. We have adapted, but in ways that help us achieve our mission. We are looking at a grant now to strengthen families that would require some program changes, but it is the kind of thing we want to be doing."[199]

Rev. Burnham added, "Yeah, we have had a willingness to make these kinds of changes for funding and we have been able to do a lot of good because of public money.

I think these partnerships are important because they can promote effective programs that have privately funded faith components and publicly funded human services."[200]

"Isn't this part of the problem though? I mean, when an organization receives public money to provide human services, this frees up local money for the religious organization to use in other ways," Rabbi Bender commented. "Now that Mormons in Utah, for example, have public money to help them run their childcare program, they have some of their own budget money freed up to send evangelizing trips to Massachusetts to evangelize Catholics, or vice versa. Cash in one pocket relates to cash in the other. What is the word for this: 'fungible'?"[201]

"Well, maybe, but if someone's hungry, the black church will feed them. There's a song we sing that says we are to 'Help Somebody Along the Way' belted out Rev. Burnham. "That's what feeding them is about and if the government money will help us help somebody along the way then we will use it for that. I think most black churches are open to this. They really aren't concerned about government money for one thing and church money for another. They don't mind taking government money if it helps us help somebody along the way. If it helps them feed a person, they'll take it. They'll do what it takes to feed people just because people need to be fed; not because they need to be counted for some reports, and not because they need to save somebody's soul or something else religious like that."[202]

"Well, I agree that the mission of is the most important thing driving an organization—more than any issue related to government money. If you are meeting your mission then government money won't cause a conflict," offered Ms. Singleton.[203]

Mr. Kamil spoke up, "I think we are open to working with the government and our mission would fit, I think, but the Imam would want to know that there would not be strings attached. We think it is important to use government resources if they are available to help people. We always try to have the government help people when they can and if people do not qualify for government services, then they turn to us. There is a desire to explore a relationship with DSS to have some kind of partnership—we don't have many contacts with other groups or the government, so I don't know if we would benefit, but we think working with the government could benefit everyone involved."[204]

"Well, I think congregations would benefit, as would communities, from taking advantage of faith-based initiatives," replied Rev. Burnham.[205]

"The only way I think we would benefit from taking government money is if we knew that we could maintain our identity and use the money for single projects, such as construction or one-time purchases, like for computers," suggested Pastor Mark.[206]

Rev. Burnham again spoke up saying, "There really have been no questions asked about the faith in our programs, and we are touted for our handling of grants by the state, for how well we operate them. The Headstart program is the one place where we made some changes—we took down some pictures of religious scenes, but then asked, 'how can you ask a religious organization to remove all the pictures from its walls?' The regulations have become less strict in the last few years; in part, because we said we were going to be true to ourselves as an FBO, first, and to Headstart, second, and we wanted to make sure they understood this. We kept on getting the money. Most groups won't stand up to them like this, but the parent's weren't concerned about these pictures being up, it

was the government that focused on it. The parents bringing their children here knew the money helping their kids was going to an organization connected to a church."[207]

"Still," said Ms. Sloan, with concern in her voice, "our biggest fear is that if we receive money, we'll also receive a list of do's and don'ts. This is a fear we still have and it may be at the heart of our understanding of separation of church and state."[208]

Rev. Burnham offered solace, "I favor faith-based initiatives with some church-state separation. For me this means freedom from government oppression. Our country's motto is 'In God we trust,' and we can't separate out and shouldn't separate the people we serve from their spirituality."[209]

Ms. Singleton added, "It still feels to me like faith-based initiatives aren't anything new, except for the freedom FBO's now have, like being able to discriminate in their hiring or use religious images in their building, and then there's the focus on congregations being able to directly receive money."[210]

"Neither of which really seem to be issues in Virginia," concluded Mr. Young.

"Well, at least not according to the people I talk to at the state office," offered Rabbi Bender. He continued, "These things may be a part of the federal policy proposals because of the born-again Christian president who is urging these things. He did say that the government should be able to work with FBO's as partners and not as rivals. It will be interesting to see how it works. Virginia did make some changes to the law to reflect the federal plan and to try to be a more 'level playing field' for religious organizations which seems to mean that FBO's won't compete with the government, but they will be competing with each other more than ever."[211]

Rev. Perez wanted to offer an idea, "My recommendation for maintaining some separation between church and state and for helping reduce the tensions of competition is to have some kind of management or fiscal entity for public funds. Churches could provide the services with a separate financial entity that relates directly to the government. It would be less intrusive for FBO's to have this one organization funding us and making payments. Otherwise, the process is too technical and requires too much training for some of us FBO's to be able to do it all."[212]

Rev. Burnham again spoke out, "Well, I really feel like faith-based initiatives could work for small FBO's and that they are an essential part of the solution to solving America's social problems. We have been able to use public money in a way that addresses our mission; we had to make some changes for accounting, but we haven't had the fear that the government is going to make us change the practices of our faith."[213]

"That's right," Rev. Jamison joined his associate, "There is not enough money available to change how we work, but it does try to change us from time to time. Government money tries to change everything, but one thing they can't do is dictate to us our religious beliefs and practices, just like churches can't shape who the government is and what it does. Our public funders are supportive of us and they have said on a couple of occasions that they expected us to have some faith-based practices."[214]

Rev. Burnham joined in again, "The children we serve can come to church, the invitation is always open, but the focus of the church is for the Center to focus primarily on community service. That is why we have a distinguishing name."[215]

"That's good to hear," returned Ms. Sloan, "I just hope it works that well for us."

Rev. Perez, still not convinced, said, "Well, I'll believe it when I see it! We would be more than willing to plug some of our holes with federal money if we could, but the ideas don't seem very concrete and aren't very relevant to what we do. The President has made it sound as though these initiatives were for everyone, but the government is cutting programs and budgets, so I wonder, 'Is this program for everyone, or is it for no one?'"[216]

Ms. Sloan lamented, "Obtaining any kind of grants has become so difficult for us. We have applied for government money before and made it down to the top two, but never to number one. Bigger organizations have people writing grants for them. We have been to trainings and seminars, but we don't have the resources needed to get the money. The private sector has really kept us alive; the public sector has talked about it, but hasn't done much for us. We aren't giving up though. The board is willing to work to find public support."[217]

Ms. Abrams echoed Kimberly Sloan's comments, "Faith-based initiatives haven't really been for us either. If they had money to help us with our work we would probably take it. There was some interest in faith-based initiatives in the church when President Bush first began promoting them, but we really aren't involved in the kinds of things he was talking about."[218]

Rev. Jamison commented, "We went to an event several years ago, before the current faith-based initiatives were being pushed. It was something one of the governors organized for FBO's related to welfare reform and do you know, only three pastors

showed up. This was to try to encourage churches to partner with the state government on welfare to work programs."[219]

Rabbi Bender followed saying, "And then I heard that a few months ago that the current governor was asking some questions about faith-based initiative and wanted a person in the administration to be working on these things. He didn't even seem to know that he had a faith-based liaison in the Department of Social Services at his use."[220]

Rev. Jamison added, "Well, I think this all means that congregations and other FBO's have to be watching out for themselves. I think they have to ask: who is setting the agenda for us? Is it the church or is it the state? I think conservatives and liberals in the government want the support of people of faith. There is always a double standard because the left and the right want their issues promoted by the church."[221]

"Well, I have an instinctive aversion to church-state coziness. This may be related to my background, liberal or Reformed Judaism, where I grew up with this understanding. Also, I have studied history enough to know that our current constitutional rights and processes related to church and state are working perfectly well." Rabbi Bender offered.[222]

Again, in a more open tone, Pastor Mark commented, "I know that for us, we put on a 'separation of church and state' filter at the beginning of the relationship rather than at the end. We hold tightly to this old Baptist principle and think about how church and state will taint each other before we ever get started working together. I do sometimes think we will have to find ways to work together, to work on common ground, or to at least find some!"[223]

"Well that's impressive," Rev. Burnham laughed with others smiling.

Mr. Kamil thought a moment, and then presented his perspective: "Well, there are tensions that often come up related to church and state with these initiatives, but this kind of separation is a relatively new idea, and it is difficult for Muslims who have a very different understanding of church and state in which there is no separation. Early in this country's history the schools worked this way; they were full of protestant influence. With the growth of Jefferson's 'wall of separation' the idea may have been to get religious influence out of the social sphere. The enlightenment, after all, taught us that we are sufficient in our reasoning abilities without a spiritual dimension. Islam provides a different view, an infrastructure that covers all areas of life. State and church are one in an ideal world, and in an ideal world religious leaders would be political leaders. Many Muslims were influenced by Western education and then try to live Eastern values and this is not easy to do in this system. We are not here though to buck the system just because church and state are not one here. I want to make sure this is clear. Just because we have a different ideal, we are not here to buck this system. We can work within the system. Faith-based initiatives are a way to do this for us. The value of service that people receive from a Mosque could come from both the state and the church, from one and the same, if we have government support."[224]

"I also have a problem with the separation of church and state," replied Rev. Burnham, "I think the idea has gone way beyond its intentions to another radical extreme. The phrase 'separation of church and state' was never used much before the 1960's and now it is overused. The phrase is from a letter that Thomas Jefferson sent, and he had

several drafts of the letter that didn't use the phrase. Jefferson never meant that religion couldn't be practiced more broadly in this country."[225]

Mr. Perez responded, "With all the freedoms that religious organizations now have, there could be some backlash for faith-based initiatives. There may be less separation between church and state with them, but this may jump out and bite us before it's all over. I think that with government and churches working so closely together, the Supreme Court is going to be involved before it's all over."[226]

"Well, there are many double standards in how church and state questions are framed in churches and in the public arena." Mr. Burnham held his ground, "Too often in our understanding of these issues, we want the government separate from us, but we don't want to be separate from them—from what they have to offer us. The bigger question that may have to do with employment issues is 'what does the separation of church and state mean?' Early in our nation's history it was meant to protect churches from the government; now it is being turned on its head to protect the government from churches. If the government says 'God can't tell me who to hire,' then why do they think they can tell me who to hire?"[227]

Rabbi Bender also held firm, "It seems to me that it feels good to see church and state talking about working together and we all have warm fuzzies, but there will be a court challenge and it may do more harm than good because it may put a line in the sand separating faith-based and community-based organizations in pretty concrete ways. Jewish Community Services is traditionally recognized as faith-based, and we benefit greatly from public money, but some separation of church and state is a good thing."[228]

The group realized that at a few points in the discussion this morning their conversations felt less connected to some of the practical concerns they had. They thought about addressing a few of the more concrete issues later in the day, but decided to put it off until next month. They decided to gather one more time and shift to two matters that have come up whenever they talk about using public money. These issues have to do with employment discrimination and accountability. The other leaders expressed interest in the topic and realizing that they weren't sure of all the details on these issues, they agreed to invite Mr. Knapp from the state to help them obtain what they thought would be a more accurate understanding of these practical concerns.

**Act VI: Examples of Administrative Practices in Partnership with Government**

Scene I: Employment

A month passed and the group decided that they would focus on a few final details that they had not fully addressed at the other meetings. They knew there would be many more issues that would arise as they continued to see faith-based initiatives implemented in their state and they knew they had a supportive network to help them sort through these processes. They decided to make this last meeting a brief one and be finished around noon.

Ms. Singleton, Rev. Perez, Ms. Sloan, Rabbi Bender, Mr. Young and Rev. Burnham gathered at Pastor Mark's organization, Good News Ministries. Mr. Knapp also joined the group for this last discussion. Pastor Mark welcomed the group and took the opportunity t show off all that his organization had been able to do. Considering how evangelical Pastor Mark came across as being, the organization hardly looked religious. And, their work was very impressive. The name was certainly religious, but there were no other obvious symbols on the outside of the two or three buildings they owned on the edge of downtown. The leaders toured the building, making their way through a maze of offices, shelter beds, and classrooms before coming back to the Pastor's office. There were a few images of Jesus on the walls and a few scenic pictures framed with Bible quotations on them, but not as many as some of the leaders expected to see.

The church where Mark Matthews pastored was around the corner on a separate piece of land, but many church members and a few other leaders from the church were making their way around the halls at Good News Ministries. While Pastor Mark was

dressed in a tie and jacket, the others were all dressed in dress casual clothing in such a way that it was not easy to distinguish between the people being served by the organization and those who were there to serve. Pastor Mark seemed to take great pride in the blurring of these lines, yet it seemed to reinforce the interest in the topic that would be discussed this morning. While it was not a concern for Pastor Mark's organization which does not use public funds, the others were clearly interested in discussing how employment decisions could be made within a faith-based organization.

Thinking about program participants that were now on the staff at Good News Ministries, and remembering the broad range of criticisms and benefits expressed by the leaders about their different partnerships with government entities, Ms. Sloan was among those who wanted to talk more about how faith might play a role in hiring decisions if her organization were to use public money. She inquired, "Questions about employment and hiring with faith-based initiatives come up in everything I read and I want to know how this is going to work if we want to hire church members or people from our programs."

Rabbi Bender said, "The question, as far as risks to religious organizations, has to do with civil rights violations in hiring."[229]

Mr. Knapp agreed and offered his insight, "Most of the FBO's funded by the state do not employ within their own religion, so this hasn't really been an issue here."[230]

"Faith doesn't play a role in employment for us. There is not a religious qualification, although I guess one's Jewishness may play a role in some positions," offered the Rabbi.[231]

Ms. Singleton echoed Rabbi Bender and Mr. Knapp, "We try to stay legal in this issue along with age, race, sex, and other civil rights categories, just to be safe. We don't discriminate on the basis of faith or any of these. I don't believe faith should be a litmus test; civil rights should definitely be protected. Our board can hire someone with no connection at all to the church because the organization makes its own hiring decisions."[232]

Mr. Young also joined in support saying, "Few of our human service positions require a person to be a member in the denomination, and less still if the position uses public money. Most people would expect our Executive Director to be from the denomination, or at least to understand the role of faith and the dynamics of the church, but I don't even know if this is a written policy."[233]

"Employment decisions are not an important issue for these initiatives if people are chosen for their ability to provide a service. The people hired aren't doing religious activities with government money, so hiring really shouldn't matter," stated Rabbi Bender.[234]

Mr. Young added, "Not only do we not discriminate in hiring, but we don't even know anything about a person's faith unless they tell us. Sometimes applicants will bring up faith, but it is usually because of a relationship they have with the denomination. We just feel like we don't have to ask about a person's faith to understand if their values match with ours. We can be a team focused on a common mission and still have religious diversity on the staff. Our staff review looks at how people live out their

principles and values rather than a performance evaluation, so these values matter a lot in terms of how our staff measures their success."[235]

Rabbi Bender continued, "We seek talent first and then make sure the person is able to work with our vision. There is a mix of Jewish and non-Jewish people on our staff, but I think they all represent Jewish values. We have some Jewish perspective to what we do and we encourage everyone on the staff to have some familiarity with Jewish culture, but then again this depends on the program. The most important characteristics for us have to do with financial acumen, character, expertise, and a professional skill set, all these more than anything religious. We try to adhere to the highest professional standards with annual evaluations and there are no faith-based criteria on these either. Professional standards matter in each program we offer and the standards are relevant to each person's licensure criteria, whatever their discipline."[236]

"We would still choose the best person for the job even if we knew we had the freedom to discriminate," said Mr. Young.[237]

Again Rabbi Bender agreed, "I believe the organization would not discriminate in hiring even if we were not publicly funded. I think the staff feels that diversity is important and that we can learn from other people's perspectives. When filling a receptionist position, we may call someone back who is Jewish, but there will also be others who are called back, and this is largely based on skills."[238]

Rev. Burnham joined in again, "There are two things we look for in people we hire: attitude and aptitude; the first has to do with values and the second has to do with skills. I didn't have many of the needed skills when I started, but I did have the

'understanding' that the Bible talks about and that has helped me to be open to learning new skills and to hiring other people to help with what I cannot do. We don't ask questions about faith in hiring; we like it when we learn that people have faith, but we also like to have people without faith. Sometimes Christians don't need to be here in a Christian organization but out in the world and other people may need to be here to experience God. I think we should hire other people to learn from their experiences. And we don't hire the way we do just because it's the law, but because it's the right thing to do. It is another way for us to show an example as we treat others with dignity."[239]

"Is it easier to hire someone from outside the church so that they aren't connected with the church?" offered Rev. Perez. "I mean, it seems like they wouldn't worry about being both a churchmember and an employee at the Center that way. Otherwise, it must be difficult to separate church from work."[240]

Rev. Burnham continued, "Well, with our daycare center, for example, the turnover is so high that we can't be too choosy. We make sure the focus is on the children and their learning first. I don't hire a person for her religion or where she goes to church, but for her core beliefs and how they translate to our purpose here. I simply ask, 'what do you bring to this place?' and am able to find out more than any question about religion. We do ask other things to find out what people believe and what their values are and this is what is central to their serving with our families and children. Faith and family are central to our work and our staff and so we do often end up talking about it. I sometimes ask about their beliefs and how they fit with what we are doing here."[241]

Ms. Singleton commented, "We don't hire people who are the same as us and I really don't understand why anyone would do this, or why anyone would serve only the same kind of people and not everyone. Being Christian is not required for employees and we serve people regardless of their religion."[242]

"To be honest, sometimes I think it would be nice to ask about faith, but we haven't for all these years, and probably wouldn't know what to do," offered Mr. Young. He continued, "The questions about religion and employment are not that significant for us. For us, the questions of other civil rights issues are more important and can be more difficult. If people who are gay and lesbian were to gain broader rights in this category, then there would be some struggle for our denomination and our organization."[243]

Rabbi Bender shared, "We decided not to discriminate in hiring on the basis of sexual orientation and to make this our policy even though the government doesn't include this in civil rights language. There was some concern among our board, but they understood the importance of our decision."[244]

"This has been more important for us than the issue which everyone else talks about, the issue that allows evangelicals to be able to hire only evangelicals in publicly funded programs," added Mr. Young.[245]

Rev. Burnham offered a relevant story from his experience, "We had a gay man as the daycare director and a woman in a same-sex relationship as a teacher. Personally, religiously, this was hard and I had questions about this, but I knew they did a good job. The board didn't like keeping them, but we didn't want a lawsuit. As it turned out, they were the best teachers we ever had."[246]

Rev. Young told of an agency in Georgia facing a lawsuit, "An FBO similar to us is being sued by one person who is gay and another who is Jewish in relation to their discriminatory practices in hiring."[247]

Pastor Mark decided to speak up, "It urks me to think the government has this much control over us; that they can give money to me and control me. I don't like to think the government has this much power in shaping our hiring practices. The government is going to do all it can to have a say in who gets to work here."[248]

Ms. Singleton looked at Mr. Knapp sitting quietly by and said, "If you are using government money, then the government should be able to say that you can't discriminate. Personally, I believe that this does not change the organization's mission or how they run their business. There is enough discrimination and segregation on Sunday mornings in America—it is the most segregated time period in our country, so these groups should not be able to further discriminate when hiring people. I believe that we all worship the same Being, but we may not be able to sit down and agree. So, the government must have these regulations in place to help us work together and not discriminate against each other."[249]

"Of course, in many places, discrimination does exist," Reminded Rev. Perez, "and I don't want to see it happen. A person should certainly not be eliminated because of religion."[250]

Pastor Mark exclaimed, "I disagree! I think an organization should be able to choose their employees as they choose!"

"I was wondering why you were so quiet!" chuckled Rev. Burnham.

Pastor Mark continued, "In our line of work, employment shouldn't be based on something like education, but on the differences that have been made in a person's life that leads them to do this—difference that they can make in someone else's life."[251]

"I think faith is important to employment decisions when the issue relates to job roles," said Mr. Young, "Like I said earlier, our executive directors have been people of faith and this has been a strength to the organization. This position is hired to reflect the denomination at times, and so questions were asked about my faith. We have a few others that we knew were Christian—the chaplain and the church relations director, but these use private funds. When we do hire someone with public funds there are different requirements, so we have to do things differently."[252]

Pastor Mark replied, "Faith is a top priority in employment for us; everyone on our payroll is a Christian because we believe faith is central to all of our roles. Even the people cleaning and answering phones are models to the people in our programs. The faith of our employees serves as an example for the men, some of whom may move into employment with us. We have 34 employees on payroll and half of them come from our programs. I spent 20 years on the street and 8 on the needle, so I know what these examples can do for people. I know the difference Christ makes in my life serves as an example for the people we serve. The recipients of our services know the employees are Christian and that our curriculum is the Bible. If an organization is truly faith-based, then they would not settle for government hiring restrictions."[253]

"Even if you used public money?" asked Rev. Perez.

"Our staff is engaged in healing the brokenhearted, in setting captives free. People come here knowing that they are entering into a community of healing, of love, of resurrection. The work of our employees goes beyond counseling to healing, no matter who is paying them. God is needed in this work along with trained spiritual guides who know how to address all of a person's needs—psychological, public assistance, social supports—and to include spirituality in all of these things. We see employment as a ministry, as a calling," answered Pastor Mark.[254]

"Some of our staff sees their work as a mission or a ministry. They see their employment as a calling. We just don't require this or require a person to be from the denomination unless the employment function requires knowledge of our beliefs, and then the person is usually paid with private funds. We don't require a person to be from our religion in direct service positions such as counselors, advocates, and outreach workers," offered back Mr. Young in disbelief.[255]

"The very positions where faith is likely to matter most!" retorted Pastor Mark.

At this tense moment, everyone looked to Mr. Knapp for clarity, but he could offer very little. He said that the charitable choice language only repeats civil rights legislation about religious organizations. "FBO's maintain a religious exemption and the freedom to discriminate based on religion if they are categorized as a religious 501(c)3 organization, even if using public money. A religious organization can hire people it wants to hire according to the Civil Rights Act and charitable choice. So far, the courts have allowed religious organizations to discriminate based on religion and still receive public money. But like I said earlier, it really hasn't been an issue in this state."[256]

Scene II: Accountability

The energy was too high for the group to take a break, and they were hoping to wrap up in about an hour, but Pastor Mark had already put in a call to his kitchen staff to get some lunch ready. A little earlier, at about 11:00am, Mr. Kamil and Ms. Abrams arrived, so they decided to keep the conversation going. Just after Mr. Knapp seemed to shrug off the hiring discrimination issue, lunch was served, and then Mr. Kamil raised a concern he had as a representative of a smaller organization considering a partnership with the government. He said, "I understand your differences now, particularly related to employment, but we are too small to do much hiring, and since this hasn't even been resolved in the courts yet, I want to ask another question. Some of you were talking earlier about your fear of government control, and others about what you were able to do as a result of using public money. So, in all of this, how does the government hold you accountable for what you are doing with the money?

Mr. Knapp jumped in this time, not quite so relaxed: "FBO's should be concerned with accountability. The government expects a lot, but there seems to be more of an understanding now about what is allowed and what is expected. The larger FBO's with strong administrative structures are fine with government accounting and evaluation expectations and procedures. In newer and smaller FBO's, particularly grassroots organizations, it seems, financial recordkeeping and the language of outcomes may be new and challenging. We have figured out that if we present our requirements in twenty pages of bureaucratic language, everyone gets confused; we don't have to do it this way.

Government agencies have been able to provide some technical assistance on these things and we know there is a need for more of this kind of support."[257]

Ms. Abrams joined in, "Any organization using public money should have good fiscal disciplines and accounting methods. You can't go out and give millions of dollars without financial accountability in place. There have to be accounting systems in place and I guess organizations should be expecting this—otherwise there is no accountability. I just don't think we can handle this; that's why I hope we don't get involved."[258]

Pastor Mark said, "We aren't accountable to the government, but we have strong accounting practices, with an accountant monitoring things, and we are members of the Better Business Bureau—we are probably the only FBO around that's a member. We also use an outside auditor annually because we want to be accountable to the people who give to us; we want them to see how we use the money because we know we get a dollar and ten cents of worth for every dollar that's put into our programs."[259]

Mr. Young added, "For us, there is also an expectation to be held responsible beyond the organization. The government shapes all of our accounting practices, they want careful records, and with some things, if we don't record it, then it is as though we didn't do it! But, what is more interesting is that our churches actually have more expectations than the government. The church can be stickier than public agencies sometimes. We're more concerned about being accountable to these churches than we are to the government. This balance is a part of what it means to be good stewards.[260]

Ms. Singleton stated, "You've got to know how to provide balance and how to follow the rules. Public money definitely shapes our accounting, but we try to stay

compliant. The paperwork is unreasonable, but again, it is required. I don't think most foundations expect as much as the federal government—they watch every penny, scrutinize every aspect. It's a zoo! We have to dot every 'i' and cross every 't' and in here it's me doing this and one other staff person. We really don't have the mechanisms in place to do this. Luckily, we have a volunteer that helps us keep the books straight; I don't know how we would do it without him. He keeps things perfect down to the last two cents. I think the government should be more willing to help out, to do some handholding for smaller organizations. They need to realize that we put people first, and their regulations second."[261]

Mr. Young responded, "The government wants to see sound financial bookkeeping and good results and the stronger these are, the less scrutiny we experience. The paperwork is arduous, and the language and accounting techniques are difficult for any size organization, but it is probably easier for us as a larger agency. I guess you are also right, that accountability for public funds is becoming greater and more important than it was a decade ago."[262]

Rev. Burnham joined in, "Levels of accountability and responsibility are rising, and there is stress on the organization with all the tracking, paperwork, and computing, but we certainly accept the challenge. Anyone is going to have these expectations and we pretty much use the same, standard accounting procedures for public or private money. Both our funders and the rest of the community want to know that we are responsible with what we have been given, so we also have an audit annually, from the inside and outside. We expect to be held accountable from public and private funders, and this is in

large part why we are a separate organization from the church. Everyone expects reports and every funder wants it to be done their way—as long as you keep the books straight and satisfy the IRS, then everything is fine and the anointing comes down!"[263]

Rabbi Bender replied, "But we can't be naïve, if we are "irrationally exuberant," as Greenspan says, then we can still be hit hard when we come face to face with tough issues and requirements of government regulations. JCS has cut back on its use of government programs, and we are a large organization with a lot of contracting experience. I wonder how many FBO's being targeted now have the infrastructure to handle government accounting?"[264]

Ms. Abrams then expressed her concerns, "Regulations and responsibilities are important, but we know churches can be held liable if they don't do what is required. Churches can use public money now, but I also wonder how many are ready for the accounting. That's why I think current faith-based initiatives are not a good idea. Along with all the paperwork and other compliance issues that congregations aren't equipped to handle, there is a lack of seriousness in the details of how to work together with the government, making these kinds of murky partnerships even more challenging."[265]

Pastor Mark offered his thoughts, "It seems to me that in the 1980's, so much government money went to nonprofits with so little accountability. It was just a payment to a contractor and then came along audits of the organizations. There is some kind of suspicion of religion by the state. Audits are seen as supervision and manipulation of the church by the state, or as mechanisms of control. I guess any other relationship would probably be just as dangerous."[266]

Mr. Young said, "But aren't accountability standards to be expected with government funding? They are a challenge at times, but they're also important to have. It is important for government money to be effective, and it is important for the government to see if we are effective and making an impact."[267]

"Yes, but the government focuses more on audits than the use of the money," stated Ms. Singleton. "We have to account for every penny, which is more difficult for a small nonprofit like us, but then that responsibility for public money doesn't have any focus on outcomes. We just applied for a grant that will require some technological changes for the CDC. They wanted to make sure we have separate accounting procedures from the church, and they assured us they'll make visits for audits, but not to see our outcomes. When we first had audits, it felt like a 'throw me to the wolves' kind of process. It was easier after a year—we were more efficient and there might have even been less paperwork, but we still felt like we are just jumping through hoops to keep the lights on with little attention paid to what we had accomplished."[268]

Mr. Knapp replied, "As we talk with organizations we help them get a holistic sense of what they are trying to do and to make an informed decision about their abilities related to accounting, evaluation, and the type and quality of the services they offer. We have provided more support when it comes to applying for the money and managing it. We are trying to let organizations know that they will also have to start measuring outcomes."[269]

"I think the government has seen the effectiveness of some faith-based programs, as well as they struggles they have faced" offered Ms. Sloan, "and now they seem to

expect fewer organizational changes than when faith-based programs were first being funded. We had always heard the accountability issues were an administrative nightmare, but the government seems to be learning how to work with FBO's."[270]

Ms. Abrams doubted this, saying "There is too little oversight, evaluation, and enforcement of policies leading to more murkiness, which is certainly not to the advantage of the clients, or the government. I guess it's really only good for the organization receiving the money to provide the services."[271]

Rev. Burnham replied, "The government knows who we are and what we are doing. A woman came from DSS once to check on a complaint against our daycare, and while she was here kids were screaming and in pretty bad trouble, but when she saw how we handled things, she was gone. She knew we were doing our work and she didn't have any questions for us—about our work or our accounting practices. We know we are accountable for all things to both our funders, and more importantly, to God."[272]

Mr. Young also replied to Ms. Abrams, "We have oversight and evaluation of our work. Public grants are beginning to ask for more here. Sometimes the reporting is easier than others, and from my experience, government expectations have helped us with our accounting practices and we have used some of what they expect for outcomes to help us in other programs. Now, there are organizations who would be content to just count the cases served, but our board has always wanted to demonstrate outcomes. We also have an accreditation body that expects this of us. Here again, I realize that our size does help us with these things. We have been able to hire outside help to write some of our evaluations and I know not everyone can do that. We just want to make sure that we

are setting a standard when it comes to the outcomes of our services; I guess this comes back to a sense of integrity and credibility that we have."[273]

Rabbi Bender said, "Most of my concern about accountability has to do with financial issues because program evaluation has not really been emphasized—the impact of government money just hasn't really been measured in what we have done. But, we have increasingly had to do more to show measures of change and of performance outcomes."[274]

"I do think government accountability should be based on results," Rev. Perez joined in, "If FBO's make a difference in their clients' lives and the results are strong, then the government has all the accountability it needs."[275]

"Good point, Rev. Perez," added Rev. Burnham. "On this matter, government expectations don't shape our evaluations as much as our faith, but we always do what our funders ask of us. It is important, we think, to be good stewards of money, both the churches' money and government money."[276]

Mr. Knapp commented, "Well, we always say that FBO's could do a secular program evaluation for the government, and then add religious questions to it."[277]

"More than anything, we have to balance the needs of our funders with our own mission," continued Rev. Burnham. "Faith and effectiveness do go together for us, but doing an evaluation this way is like the difference between doing something because you are paid to do it and doing something because you want a good outcome. We just want to make sure that our faith-based goals matter more than what others expect of us. When it comes to evaluation, we do it for the sake of the people in the community and not the

government. Even if we didn't have government money, we would want to see if we were being effective in what we do; we would want to measure its consistency with our mission and values."[278]

Ms. Singleton expressed more about her desire for government support on evaluations, "We also want to make sure our programs are effective and that we actually do what we say we will do. It may lower our productivity to keep up with it all, but this is a challenge that is worth it. That is why we are surprised that our funders haven't asked more about this."[279]

Rev. Burnham added, "The comments on accountability are important for people to hear. People may say that 'God told us to do it,' but if they don't want to do evaluations, I don't understand that. If God has birthed an idea, God will equip you to succeed. We do a lot of work that people don't like to do and there's a lot of paperwork that goes with it, so we have got to be crazy or have faith. It is definitely faith that helps us succeed!"[280]

Rabbi Bender noted, "I am sure your faith plays a large role in what you do, and how you do it, but until recently, I wasn't sure if faith-based organizations would have to maintain the professional standards as other organizations. I have heard that religious organizations will have to use the same standards of quality with their staff. Religious day care centers don't always have to do this, so it will be interesting to see how this works."[281]

"We hope professional standards will be maintained with smaller FBO's and congregations," replied Mr. Young. "Some contracts and grants have professional

standards and others don't. They really should be applied to all organizations using public money. There may be well meaning programs that are not able to get off the ground because of these things, but the protections for families and children are so important. Just look at recent examples in the Catholic Church—a commitment to faith cannot make up for the use of professional standards of quality. Faith can support adherence to values and standards of excellence, but when public money is involved, it is helpful to have a public eye on what the program is doing—that's where licensure and standards are important."[282]

Rev. Perez commented, "It sounds like we all tend to agree that the quality of what we do is important, and that evaluating outcomes should be accomplished."

"Yes, I think so," said Rabbi Bender, "it's just that there's so little attention paid to accountability for outcomes that the stress of financial accountability makes us wonder if using public money is worth it."

"Well, now, that's still the issue isn't it!" asked Mr. Kamil. "Will our faith-based organizations decide it's worth it to use public money."

Rev. Perez offered one last thought, "That is the question isn't it! What are we going to say when they ask what it means for us to partner with the government?!"

**Lessons Learned**

I believe there a variety of lessons to be learned from the case study report. In the writing and rereading of the case study, I made note of these and present here for you my list of lessons learned. I hope that you see the relevance of these lessons and as a reader, I hope you will be able to articulate other lessons. I believe these lessons are primarily applicable to the practices of administrators in faith-based organizations, but there are also implications for other stakeholders, including social work educators and policy practitioners. The lessons are listed in Table 5 and are discussed in greater detail along with implications in Chapter 5.

| Lessons Learned |
| --- |
| 1.) Faith-based organizations continue to wrestle in the balance between religious tradition and service innovation, and organizational leaders should encourage such processes that help to foster programs most relevant to community needs. |
| 2.) Faith-based organizations are encouraged to incorporate as a 501(c)3 organization when using outside funding. |
| 3.) Faith-based organizations that form separate nonprofit organizations are attentive to legitimacy issues in their relationships with the congregation or founding organization, with funders, and with other organizations in the community. |
| 4.) Theological context shapes faith-based organization practice, and it may be helpful for organizations to articulate the meaning of terms used in relation to the beliefs or values-based content of their efforts (e.g. faith, religion, spirituality). |
| 5.) While faith has meaning at the program and organizational levels, it also has meaning at the individual level for a variety of people within faith-based organizations and faith-based organizations should seek to understand how it is that faith motivates people. |
| 6.) With a growing public mandate for faith-based organizations to be involved in serving human needs, many organizations strive to do so by working in relationship with a variety of organizations and for a variety of reasons. |
| 7.) An important matter of faith with which many faith-based organizations struggle is their ability to offer both a pastoral and a prophetic voice. |
| 8.) Many faith-based organizations feel that it is the responsibility of all participants in a society to share in meeting human needs. |
| 9.) Faith-based organizations want their mission and identity to take priority over partnerships with government. |
| 10.) There is little consensus on whether faith-based organizations may legally discriminate in hiring using public funds and less concern about this at the local level. |
| 11.) Faith-based organizations feel that their faith, more so than funding expectations, shapes program outcomes and their desire to evaluate these outcomes. |

Table 5: Lessons Learned from the Case Study Report

## Chapter 5: Implications of the Inquiry

What are the meanings of church-state relationships for faith-based organizations? This is the research question that has shaped the data collection and data analysis processes of this dissertation research. In this final chapter, I discuss the meanings offered by research participants in terms of the lessons I have learned from them and the implications of these lessons. To return again to the writings of Rorty (1991; 1999) and Fish (1982), as well as the constructivist methods used in this inquiry, I ask also for the readers' response to the case study report, not only to gain an assessment of the 'thick description' of the research interpretations, but also to ascertain the readers' understandings of the implications. I concluded the case study report with a table of the lessons learned through my interpretation of the data and my understanding of the phenomena of faith-based organizations partnering with government entities to provide human services in this Central Virginia locality. In this chapter, I expand on these lessons, offer some of the implications of these lessons, and bring this inquiry project to a close.

## I. Lessons Learned

I began the discussion of research methods for this dissertation in Chapter Three with a focus on Rorty's pragmatism. From my creation of a narrative case study report, I have learned several lessons that may have some pragmatic value for leaders of faith-based organizations as well as other stakeholders. I do not suggest that these lessons are normative for faith-based organizations, or even that all faith-based organizations would agree on them. Rather, these lessons I have learned are based on the consensus that is developed from the case study report and are stated in terms of their potential implications for faith-based organization practice. In this section I discuss some of the implications for social workers, but follow this section with a more detailed discussion of implications for social work practice, education, and research. As my implied and actual readers come with different perspectives, from different disciplines, and with different goals in mind, I ask the reader to discern if the lessons I offer are of value, as well as to articulate other lessons that can be learned from this inquiry. It is in solidarity around the lessons and implications for this setting that the pragmatic value of the research for this context may be found. If in the case study report, I have offered an appropriately thick description in reconstructing what the participants have shared with me, then this research may also have value to readers in another setting.

Lesson Learned-1: *Faith-based organizations continue to wrestle in the balance between religious tradition and service innovation, and organizational leaders should encourage such processes that help to foster programs most relevant to community needs.* While faith-based organizations with some denominational or church relationships may have strong traditions shaping them, several of the leaders from these organizations feel that faith-based human services, or "social ministries," have to change in order to better meet the needs of their communities. This suggests that while a few organizations feel that the basis of their faith provides enough of a foundation for creating change in a person's life, many other organizations realize the value of balancing the role of faith with innovation in the planning and delivery of effective services. Further scholarship in this area could be attentive to the relationship between tradition and innovation in faith-based human service programming. With the creation of innovative programs based on community needs and based on faith, faith-based organizations may be better prepared to demonstrate their effectiveness.

Lesson Learned-2: *Faith-based organizations are encouraged to incorporate as a 501(c)3 organization when using outside funding.* Current legislation in Virginia does not require that an organization be incorporated in order to receive public funds, but the DSS Liaison does encourage this as an effective practice. Organizations that work with the Commonwealth for funding will find that the DSS Liaison does promote this practice; organizations that receive public funds at the local level (grants or contracts from County or City; may be from Federal formula or block grants) or federal level (from Executive

Departments that provide discretionary grants or contracts) may not be encouraged to incorporate. The Working Group on Human Needs and Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (2002) Recommendation 14 also suggests that congregations create separate 501(c)3 organizations.

Although a state constitution prohibits the funding of religious organizations, separately incorporated faith-based nonprofit organizations are often able to receive public funds under lower state laws (personal communication, Robert Tuttle and Ira Lupu, 20-24 February 2003; 5 March 2003). Public policy analysts and other legal scholars may find value in this tension between the Virginia Code of Assembly Procurement Act and the Virginia Constitution. This difference in the laws may be a legal reason for the Virginia DSS Liaison for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to encourage organizations to incorporate. The Virginia General Assembly considered another Procurement Act amendment in 2003 that required faith-based organizations to incorporate as 501(c)3 organizations in order to receive public funds, but the bill was left in the House. While not mandated at this point, faith-based organizations that do incorporate may benefit in terms of their financial capacity as they have increased opportunities for public funding at the state level and increased accountability structures.

<u>Lesson Learned-3</u>: *Faith-based organizations that form separate nonprofit organizations are attentive to legitimacy issues in their relationships with the congregation or founding organization, with funders, and with other organizations in the community.* In this sample, faith-based organizations that have incorporated separately

from congregations strive to articulate a separate identity and mission, whether faith-based or non-faith-based (as one person put it). I have learned just how important it is for them to strive to demonstrate their credibility as a separate organization. In terms of funding, for some there is a perceived need to be identified with the administrative practices of a business, or of a secular nonprofit, rather than with the sponsoring religious organization. For others, a religious legitimacy leads to a need to maintain the mission of the congregation or to articulate their own faith-based mission. These organizations also seek legitimacy in terms of the people they serve as these participants express interest in organizations that best serve their needs and/or best relate to their faith perspective. As a result, the legitimacy of faith-based organizations may be connected to their ability to demonstrate the effectiveness of their services.

Social work educators in administration and planning content areas will want to note the different publics in which faith-based organizations seek legitimacy as there is much overlap with legitimacy seeking activities of other organizations. There may also be value in further understanding the balance between faith and effectiveness when faith-based organizations want to be considered more business-like.

Lesson Learned-4: *Theological context shapes faith-based organization practice, and it may be helpful for organizations to articulate the meaning of terms used in relation to the beliefs or values-based content of their efforts (e.g. faith, religion, spirituality).* Organizational leadership, funders, collaborators, and persons served by the organization benefit by understanding the use and meaning of these terms. For example, an employee

would want to know if she is expected to hold a certain theological perspective and a client should know if religious practices are used in service delivery.

Faith-based organizations in this sample often distinguish between the use of terms such as faith, religion, and spirituality in ways that demonstrate, for example, the use of faith in programming and religion in the organization, or spirituality in leadership and faith in service delivery. Some organizations are very explicit about the use of these terms and these characteristics; others worry less about the terminology used and focus more on the theological characteristics that shape the organization. The meaning of the language that leaders use often expresses values and beliefs held by others in the organization. As a result, the meaning of terms like "faith-based," "religious," "spiritual," and various other expressions vary from organization to organization and context to context in such a way that the subjectivity of contextual understandings matters more than any more objective attempt to define these terms.

I have learned to be attentive to this subjectivity and strive to understand the theological context of faith-based organizations and will learn to encourage others to consider the intersection of theology and service in these organizations. Social workers have struggled with various understandings of these terms and their practice throughout the profession's history (Derezotes, 1995; Ellor, Netting, & Thibault, 1999). While the term "faith-based" adds to the complexity of the issue, I believe it is important for social workers to consider the theological beliefs and values found in faith-based organizations and to realize that theological matters do shape practice even though they vary widely in use.

Lesson Learned-5: *While faith has meaning at the program and organizational levels, it also has meaning at the individual level for a variety of people within faith-based organizations and faith-based organizations should seek to understand how it is that faith motivates people.* All of the research participants emphasized ways that faith motivates people in their organizations. Faith was said to motivate leaders and other staff (including service volunteers and boards of directors), as well as clients. Faith motivates a variety of people and faith can also be understood to motivate people in a variety of ways. For some people, faith as a motivator led them to serve; some were motivated to share that faith with others.

Another implication is found in a distinction that can be made between ways that faith is said to motivate clients. There is a difference between a client's own faith motivating that person to participate in the program and other peoples' faith being used to motivate the client to participate in the program. This difference can be heard in the leaders' comments, although not always made explicit. There are social justice implications here for social work educators and practitioners who ask about the way faith is used to motivate clients: Does "faith as a motivator" reflect the dignity of the client and her or his own self-determination? For example, leaders in faith-based organizations frequently said that clients were invited to participate in religious activities, but that these were optional and left up to the individual. One leader asked if this truly allowed for client choice if that person thought he or she might have negative experiences by choosing not to participate. Another organization said clients in the program were

required to participate in religious activities, but no one was required to be in the program. The shelter program in this example is a limited service in this locality and it is not uncommon for this to be the only shelter available, meaning that a person has to choose between religious participation with the human services or no services at all.

Lesson Learned-6: *With a growing public mandate for faith-based organizations to be involved in serving human needs, many organizations strive to do so by working in relationship with a variety of organizations and for a variety of reasons.* Faith-based organizational leaders in this study express a desire to serve others and many realize the value of working with others to accomplish their goals. Some of the faith-based organizations partner with other organizations to overcome the loss of a sense of community (e.g. isolation in urban or rural settings) and others do so because it is increasingly required by funders. Some seek out organizations with which they share a theological foundation; others seek organizations whose human service programs complement their own.

In these relationships, I have learned that some organizations have used a strength-based approach to choosing partners and some have expressed the value of community-centered practice. Other organizations described a sense of legitimacy derived from their relationships with congregations. This was described by one participant as the "good will" of congregations that is experienced as congregational relationships contribute to the overall value of faith-based organizations.

It is increasingly important for faith-based organizations to consider the capacity they have to work with others as well as the ability they have to maintain their own identity when partnering with other organizations. Some organizations express the value of determining what is required in partnering with another organization to provide a service. Coordination of services is the extent of most relationships in which faith-based organizations are involved. Many faith-based organizations suggest their involvement in a various collaborative relationships, but the mutuality of involvement that this level of partnering requires more of an organization than they may be able to offer. If an organization does not have the capacity to be involved to the same extent as others, it is important for organizational leaders to determine how the goals, values, and beliefs will be incorporated in the relationship being offered. They may also want to consider how important it is for their identity to be expressed in the activities put forward by the relationship.

From this, a lesson I learned that may be of value for social work educators and other scholars has to do with the types of relationships in which faith-based organizations are involved. As suggested above, the word "collaboration" is frequently used among these participants and in scholarly literature to describe a variety of relationships, many of which might not be collaborative (La Piana, 2001). At the public policy level, the partnerships suggested by faith-based initiatives are government and faith-based organization collaboration, but the experience of these organizations is that the relationships remain contractual partnerships. While this research has considered a

variety of understandings of relationships among faith-based organizations and other groups, distinctions between types of relationships has not always been made clear.

For example, faith-based organizations have a wide range of views on the meaning of "separation of church and state" but few of them believe that this separation should mean no public-private relationships or no public funding for faith-based organizations. Many of the leaders in this research affirm the constitutional principle of the First Amendment's "establishment clause," but generally do not believe it is relevant to the funding of faith-based organizations (i.e. these leaders support the public funding of faith-based human services). Those leaders critical of church-state separation seemed, at times, more likely to criticize the public funding of faith-based human services for reasons such as government control and the pressures of accountability.

Lesson Learned-7: *An important matter of faith with which faith-based organizations struggle is their ability to offer both a pastoral and a prophetic voice.* The pastoral perspective is offered in the human services provided by an organization and their commitment to care for the individuals, families, and groups they serve. A commitment to social justice is what is found in the expression of an organization's prophetic voice.

There are a variety of ways that formally incorporated organizations feel they may be at risk for losing their prophetic voice. For some, public funding feels like a threat to this role; others recognize that incorporating as a 501(c)3 organization limits their political activities. It has been helpful for some organizations to distinguish between lobbying and educating in advocacy efforts, although Virginia state law does not make

such a distinction (Virginia Lobbyist Registration Act, 2001). Some organizations find a separate channel for leaders to offer a prophetic voice, such as a small group that meets separately from the organization. Some use other organizations to help with their prophetic responsibilities, such as a denominational body or an organization that is not incorporated as a 501(c)3.

Still, there are some leaders who have chosen not to express a prophetic voice and there are others who do not feel their prophetic voice has been hindered in any way (nor will they allow it to be hindered). When the broader society is not caring for the needs of people, the prophetic voice of faith-based organizations offers a valuable response that most organizations recognize and struggle to maintain. The importance of this voice makes sense to social work, a profession that claims its own prophetic role. As a result, social workers in faith-based organizations may be able to help assure that this voice is maintained. Educators may be able to encourage faith-based organizations to consider the value of this voice while researchers engage faith-based organizations in assessing their prophetic role.

Lesson Learned-8: *Many faith-based organizations feel that it is the responsibility of all participants in a society to share in meeting human needs.* While public policy debates often suggest a dichotomy between the responsibility of the public sector or the private sector, the overwhelming consensus of these organizations is that everyone and every organizations in a society has to reach out and respond to people in need—the government has a constitutional responsibility; religious groups suggest a divine calling

to be responsible; nonprofit and for-profit organizations, community organizations, individual citizens and other citizen groups are also called to participate in providing for the common good.

Communities need the support, the knowledge, and the services that come from community and faith-based organizations, and these groups need government support. Voluntary organizations, such as faith-based organizations, cannot be expected to take on the primary role in meeting human needs in a society. One participant argues that faith-based organizations should have a complementary role, where the government provides the foundation and then faith-based organizations and other community organizations fill a niche in providing services. Another participant states it well in offering a holistic view that it is all of humanity's shared responsibility to be involved in caring for others—government, congregations, other organizations, and all citizens must participate if we are to do our best work at serving others.

Social workers should hear this perspective and, as policy practitioners, be prepared to advocate for the appropriate balance of responsibility, particularly considering the voices of these organizations who feel they are called on to take more and more responsibility for meeting human needs and are not able to do so. Some faith-based organizations take on more responsibility without a full understanding of the capacity they have to plan and deliver human services. One of the social justice concerns in an era of devolution has to do with the appropriateness of faith-based organizations being asked to be more involved, particularly when there are organizations that do not feel that their primary function is in providing human service activities and programs. The participants

from congregations recognize the responsibility their organizations have to serve others, but they also recognize that the primary function of congregations relates to worship and religious instruction

One further item for social workers to consider moves the focus of this lesson beyond "who is responsible?" to "what happens in relationships between responsible parties?" If both church and state are responsible for meeting human needs, as well as community groups and individuals, as these participants suggest, then how do the different groups work together in meeting needs? This shift suggests the need for further research into partnerships that take place in local service delivery systems. As organizations recognize and articulate their shared responsibility, social work planners and organizers can find new ways to be involved in the development of these relationships to better serve the needs of people in our communities.

Lesson Learned-9: *Faith-based organizations want their mission and identity to take priority over partnerships with government.* Some organizations feel that public money has helped them to be involved in new things as they strive to achieve their mission. These organizations state that this partnership works well as long as their sense of identity drives them more than government funding or other government expectations. It is not always possible for organizations to have the freedom they desire; this seems, in part, to depend on the organization's mission, how it fits with the purpose of the public funds, and the source and purpose of the funds.

Some of these organizations have expressed concern about becoming dependent on government money, about competing with other faith-based organizations for fewer government dollars, and about losing religious liberties or other matters of control related to organizational self-determination. Small religious nonprofit organizations and congregations have the opportunity to apply for public money, but seem to have less success in finding public money relevant to the services they provide. Different government entities express an interest in partnering with faith-based organizations, but generally, there is less money and there are more organizations applying for it. In this sample, there were a few complaints about an unlevel playing field for small faith-based organizations that have new programs or little experience with public funding; there were more complaints about the limited amount of public money available for the programs needed to address social problems and the fear of government control that comes with the money when it is available.

While social work administrators and educators work with faith-based organizations to develop their capacity to manage public money, they should also be prepared to encourage organizations to develop and maintain a focus on their mission. Public agencies occasionally work with faith-based organizations to help them become more accountable in this environment where public agencies are attempting to partner with nonprofits for the delivery of human services. Despite these support services, many of the newer organizations in this sample fear government accounting processes, feel that they are not prepared for financial accountability, and worry about losing their organizational identity.

Lesson Learned-10: *There is little consensus on whether faith-based organizations may legally discriminate in hiring using public fund and less concern about this at the local level.* The State's faith-based Liaison says that faith-based organizations receiving public money may legally discriminate on the basis of faith; most of the organizations receiving public money say that as 501(c)3 organizations they cannot. As a result of the ambiguity, this issue is often at the forefront of the public policy agenda, but may be less of a concern in practice among faith-based organizations that use public money. These organizational leaders do not feel that hiring policies and practices are different as a result of charitable choice legislation; they cite civil rights legislation as the key factor shaping their nondiscrimination policies. Several organizations state that professional standards and skills are their most important employment criteria and they would not discriminate on the basis of religion even if they learned they could legally do so. Other leaders in this sample, whose organizations do not use public money, state that faith is an important criterion in hiring decisions and are more likely to discriminate on the basis of religion; this is a part of why they will not partner with the government.

It is important for me to view the concern about discrimination in hiring among faith-based organizations as a primary matter of social justice, and while this should be important to social workers, the issue has not been a primary concern for public funding entities or for faith-based organizations in this locality who both claim that these

organizations rarely discriminate in hiring on the basis of religion. Future research and policy advocacy are likely to maintain a focus on this concern.

Lesson Learned-11: *Faith-based organizations feel that their faith, more so than funding expectations, shapes program outcomes and their desire to evaluate these outcomes.* Despite the lack of empirical evidence, all of these faith-based organizations feel they are effective. Several of these organizations are interested in demonstrating their outcomes even if not asked to do so. Those receiving public money decry government emphasis on financial accountability of funds rather than programmatic accountability of program outcomes.

Social work educators in administration and planning should continue to teach skills of program evaluation, but they should also ask students to consider what is measured and why. For faith-based organizations, what role does faith play in shaping programs and their evaluation? Further research should consider not only the effectiveness of faith-based programs, but also the relationships among outcomes and evaluation processes in a variety of organizations in a local service delivery system. These faith-based organizations are interested in the outcomes of their services and many would have appreciated support in how to create and evaluate this level of measurement in their programming.

## II. Implications

Related to the pragmatic value of this case study, I would like to offer some further implications that can be derived from both the case study report and the lessons I have learned from the research. Some of these implications have been included in the discussion of the lessons learned, but are offered here in categories of significance for social work practice, policy, education, and research.

### Social Work Practice Implications

For social workers in general, at clinical, group, community, planning, and administrative levels, there are practice implications that derive from this research. I will discuss these in terms of the concerns expressed by the National Association of Social Workers. Recently, NASW Executive Director, Elizabeth Clark met with Jim Towey, Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, to reiterate the policy concerns related to the Association's view of faith-based initiatives. The statement released by the Association (NASW, 2002) stresses the importance of "having a professionally trained mental health workforce; providing accountability; supporting equal access to services; guaranteeing separation of church and state; and maintaining government responsibility within any faith-based initiative."

While these concerns are also policy related, there are connections between the concerns of this statement and the broader practice of social workers. Social workers involved in local service delivery systems may or may not be directly related to the work of a faith-based organization, but due to the fact that local service delivery systems often include faith-based organizations, there are lessons from this research for general social

workers and the NASW statement suggests some of these. Most of the faith-based organizational leaders in this sample want the same things that are encouraged by the NASW. The leaders of faith-based organizations in this research emphasized the value and importance of qualified and skilled staffmembers, of accountability, of equal access for persons in need of services, of separation of church and state (which does not preclude some church-state partnership), and of government responsibility.

This again serves as a policy reminder to social work policy practitioners that some faith-based organizational leaders advocate for the same practice principles as social workers (particular when faith-based organizational leaders are social workers!). As an implication of this research for practice, social workers can support faith-based organizations in working for the some of the same fundamental principles of service delivery. Faith-based organizations are often able to balance the role that faith plays in the organization with their commitment to accountability, accessibility, professional staffing, church-state separation, and a shared responsibility with government for providing human services. While policymakers drafting faith-based initiatives may not urge these practices, social workers, as professionally educated practitioners, should be involved to encourage quality services and should hear the perspective of this sample of faith-based leaders who also want to offer such quality of service. Social workers can encourage colleagues to be involved in encouraging professional services where they are needed and not already in existence. Social workers can participate in the creation, implementation, and modification of accountability systems, both financial and in terms of outcome-based measures. Social workers can also join in the call of faith-based

organizational leaders for shared governmental responsibility in the efforts required to meet human needs. As mentioned above, social workers are able to offer a prophetic voice related to social problems and the needs of the people they serve. Faith-based organizations also represent a heritage that values this practice of social advocacy and as such, a space is created for the collaborative advocacy of social workers and the leaders of faith-based organizations.

**Policy Implications**

For politicians and policymakers, this research teaches that faith-based organizations are an important part of local service delivery systems and they are willing to partner with other organizations, public and private, for-profit and nonprofit, so long as the faith-based organizations feel they have the capacity to faithfully and effectively deliver the services and so long as they are allowed to maintain their sense of mission and identity in the collaborative efforts. It is important for people interested in the faith-based policy initiatives to also hear that the role of faith matters in faith-based organizations and that the theological context of an organization can shape its practices. Similarly, it is important to note that while theology matters, it varies widely across faith-based organizations and these organizations will implement and experiences in many diverse ways.

Considering these differences among faith-based organizations, public policies related to all faith-based organizations are likely to make generalizations that are too broad. Decisions about partnerships between faith-based organizations and public entities should be made locally when possible. State and local public agencies should

have the freedom to make decisions about the involvement of faith-based organizations rather than federal policies that preempt local decisions. This presents a challenge to any effort to level the playing field for faith-based organizations generally, for there is no faith-based organization in general; there are only specific faith-based organizations.

As a result, "equal treatment to nongovernmental providers," the early language of the 2003 CARE Act is preferable to that of charitable choice, which promotes the "nondiscrimination of religious organizations." There are some faith-based organizations whose missions may not be compatible with the missions of public agencies and this should be decided locally with federal policies making only broad suggestions for the equal consideration of all organizations that have the capacity to deliver the needed services. Policy practitioners should be attentive to recent and proposed legislation and amended federal agency rules that at times offer special protection of faith-based organizations rather than equal treatment of all nonprofit organizations (CARE Act, 2003; White House, 2002c; 2002d).

A final policy implication that I have noticed is that the capacity for the planning and delivery of services seems to be handled best by organizations that are incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization separately from congregations or other sacerdotal organizations. The leaders of faith-based organizations in this sample often suggested the value of 501(c)3 status, particularly in terms of the legitimacy it brings to organizations who are wanting to be known for their ability and capability to meet the needs of others. This official distinction helps with financial development, accountability, and it shows a level of independence from a sponsoring organization. All of these seem to promote the

value and worth of the organization in the eyes of funders, other community organizations, and most importantly, the people being served by the organization.

**Implications for Social Work Education**

In the scholarly and academic work of social workers, there are also implications of the lessons that I have learned in this research. Social work educators can articulate the ethical implications of the work. Related to social justice, the significance of this research is that most of the leaders and staff of faith-based organizations want to contribute to the delivery of quality human services and that faith is the basis for their wanting to be involved in meeting human needs. There are a variety of motivating factors for people involved in meeting needs and faith is among these. Faith serves as a motivating factor in a variety of ways in this research. For some organizations and for some staffmembers within organizations, human service delivery can be a means to another end, that being the personal sharing of faith. This relationship between faith and service certainly and appropriately comes to mind when policymakers are concerned about the effects of proselytizing in faith-based organizations. For other organizations and their leaders, including many more in this sample, faith motivates people to serve, so that effective services promoting social justice are both the means and the ends. In social work education, consideration of faith and of other factors motivating social workers could dispel some of the concerns regarding faith-based human services and would remind students of the historical significance of religion and spirituality on the profession, for better and for worse.

Developing the capacity for human service delivery, particularly when utilizing public funding, is a frequent need among newer and smaller nonprofits, including faith-based organizations. Social workers in general can be involved in this practice, and social work educators may be able to include curricular content on organizational development and capacity building. This content could include program planning, program evaluation, budgeting and accounting, and financial development, as well as relationship building among organizations (including those between congregations and other faith-based organizations, other nonprofits, for-profits, public agencies, universities, and funding sources, and possibly many others), and other leadership and management skills.

While capacity-building has been expressed as a valuable development need for these organizations, ways to balance this development with the ability to maintain their organizational mission and identity is another need where social work educators can be of value. This can be a difficult task for any organization, but it is a recurring theme in this research and another place for the contribution of social work educators who can promote critical thinking on the balance that is needed in organizational leadership and development.

**Implications for Social Work Research**

Further research would be valuable in considering the relationship between faith and service, and between organizational development and maintaining an original mission. This inquiry also suggests the value of further research into the role of faith and faith-based organizations that are often involved in local systems of service delivery.

Faith, in terms of theological distinctions and how these are made manifest, does shape organization practice and service delivery, and the role of faith should be paid more attention in future research. Other research questions to be addressed in local systems of delivery have to do with the interorganizational relationships of which faith-based organizations are a part and the value of these relationships for service planning and delivery.

Beyond future research questions, there are specific implications for constructivist inquiry that I have been able to discern in this process. Two specific methodological developments that were offered in this research are the use of a peer review group and the construction of a narrative case study report in a literary or story format. In terms of the peer review group, there have been many positive experiences, but there have also been some limitations. The peer review group was able to serve very effectively in the role of providing support to the researcher, helping to assure rigor in the process, and asking difficult methodological and substantive questions, but less so in terms of being able to do these things with the supervision that an individual reviewer might be able to offer. The tension is that multiple peer perspectives reviewing the process provided another hermeneutic circle and increased the quantity and the quality of critical insights, but there was no single reviewer to review the process constantly and with sufficient depth. This level of analytic review was particularly needed during the data collection phase. The researcher is responsible as the primary data collection instrument, but a readily available single reviewer would have been of greater value than a less frequent, but perhaps more insightful group review. A suggestion for the future use of such a group would be to

have regular peer review group meetings and to have individual group members available to review interview transcripts, to discuss researcher biases, and to raise critical questions during the data collection process.

The narrative case study that I offered as a "thick description" of the research process has proven to be a creative and powerful presentation of interpretations of the data, but also a risky venture. I introduced the interpretive format of the case study in Chapter Four and I used endnotes to tie the story to the data in order to demonstrate confirmability, but the ambiguity between my interpretations and those of participants may present a challenge to some readers. In the process of memberchecks whereby the research participants read the case study, they state an appreciation for the narrative format and they feel their voices were captured in the report.

I believe the challenge of this format has more to do with conventional expectations for a scientific presentation of findings. The narrative case study in a literary format is a truly interpretive document that takes constructivist methods to a place that seems logical. The researcher is a co-constructor of meaning and the interpretation of meaning based on constructivist methods should tell the story of the participants rather than objectify the data. As such, the subjectivist nature of this case study format will prove invaluable to the future of constructivist methods. As the constructivist processes of entering into the research and of data collection challenge the accepted norms of social science inquiry, so too will a truly narrative and literary case study report present a valuable alternative format for presenting the findings of a

constructivist inquiry and for furthering the processes of knowledge building in the social sciences.

There are many other implications for practice, policy development, planning and delivery of services, research and education that can be derived from this inquiry, but the lessons I have learned suggest to me the significance of the actions detailed here. The pragmatic value of this research does not stop with this list, but begins as readers respond to the case study and offer their own suggestions for practice.

## III. A Return to Rorty's Pragmatism

Earlier I discussed Richard Rorty's pragmatic approach to knowledge with its emphasis on solidarity in understanding the value of local truths and its criticism of an epistemology that would seek to discover truth representative of an ultimate reality. I want to return now to this discussion of Rorty's pragmatism as I reflect on this research process and the lessons I have learned. I have presented some of the implications of the understandings that have been articulated in this context, but I want also to consider the implications of Rorty's pragmatism for the work of faith-based organizations given his criticism of religious foundationalism.

This is an important consideration because Rorty's pragmatism (1999), while critical of religion, suggests that pragmatic inquiry aims at utility rather than truth. From this pragmatic perspective, it would seem that if the local view of the world is that faith-based organizations are able to partner with government entities in an attempt to provide quality human services that address human needs, then the experienced value of this practice matters more than any objective statements about faith-based initiatives or

church and state relationships. To extend the pragmatist argument, while some reports state objectively that hope is found in the efforts of faith-based organizations addressing society's problems (Johnson, 2002; Green & Sherman, 2002) and others state the need for maintaining complete separation between church and state (ACLU, 2001; Walker, 1999), what matters most to this inquiry is the sense of solidarity in the value of relationships that exist between faith-based organizations and government funding agencies in this local setting. Specifically, in central Virginia, faith-based organizations have demonstrated their capacity and capability to use government funds to plan and deliver effective human services, while offering some of the challenges of government funding, as well. Similarly, as a result of the complexity of these church-state relationships and the variety of expressions of faith and purpose in faith-based organizations, there is no one best way for faith-based organizations and government agencies to work together to address human needs.

The role of faith may have local value and there may even be a sense of solidarity in how faith-based organizations can relate to government agencies and deliver publicly-funded human services, but for Rorty (1999) the very presence of religion in a public policy discourse can be seen as a "conversation-stopper." The process of faith-based organizations partnering with public funding entities to provide human services may be established in a way that safeguards the dignity and worth of persons, but any presence of faith in a faith-based organization assumes a divine foundation for ethics and there is no room for a non-human authority in Rorty's pragmatism. Rorty has an insightful humanistic process for ethically promoting social justice and reducing human suffering

without "backup from supernatural forces" (1999, p. xxix) This suggestion to leave God out of the conversation presents what would be an insurmountable contradiction in assumptions for most faith-based organizations; Rorty's belief that atheism is a requirement for the creation of a moral order seems to be an equally daunting contradiction to his pragmatic assumptions about truth. From his perspective atheism seems to be a matter of truth, but considering that truth is not an important concept to his thought, must atheism be true for everyone working toward liberal social goals?

What are members of a society to do when they are faced with opposing assumptions such as these that seem to prevent their working in solidarity? This is an appropriate question when considering the role of faith in the provision of human services. While there are certainly risks associated with the public funding of faith-based organizations, such as those discussed above and in the case study, faith-based organizations that partner with public entities are able to provide small experimental ways to end injustice that can be brought about through freely achieved consensus among human beings, just as Rorty (1998) would suggest. I believe the situation in central Virginia demonstrates that faith-based organizations can partner with others in a local setting through a process that allows for "unforced agreement with tolerant disagreement" (Rorty, 1991, p. 41).

This interpretation of the role of faith-based organizations, however, may not prove satisfactory to Rorty. The process of knowledge building that I have utilized and the interpretive product that I have offered may reflect Rorty's anti-epistemological assumptions, or rather, his antifoundationalist approach to knowledge. The moral content

of most of the participants' perspectives is based on the ontological presupposition of a divine foundation, however, is less likely to be satisfactory to Rorty's philosophical assumptions. Utilizing methods to inquire into the meaning of a phenomenon through a hermeneutic process that would seem to have value for Rorty, and at the same time identifying the religious nature of the phenomenon that seems to have no value for Rorty has provided an interesting paradox and a final lesson in the inquiry related to the role of pragmatism in religious thinking.

Important to Rorty's writings is the "willingness to talk, to listen to other people, to weigh the consequences of our actions upon people" which means taking the conversation seriously without the need for a rational or a metaphysical foundation for the work of our communities (1980, p. 734). Can some people come to the dialogue with a metaphysical foundation and others without such a foundation and with all parties engaged with a willingness to work toward the pragmatic goal of utility? It may be difficult to imagine applying Rorty's pragmatism to research into the work of faith-based organizations where so many participants in the process offer a divine foundation for their work, but I believe that it is possible. The question of how to do this is a matter of the implications of this research. Such a question is not only important to pragmatist philosophy, but for the profession of social work, and for many Americans struggling to understand the relationships between faith-based organizations and secular government funding agencies.

People with diverse social, ethical, and theological perspectives all play an important role in working for social justice, and multiple perspectives are required in

continuing the conversation about how we work together in this process. My personal perspective as a professional social worker includes a passion for social justice that was initially instilled in me through religious organizations. I entered this research with great respect for and interest in the work of faith-based organizations. I have been able to participate in and support the work of faith-based organizations, while I do not share the need for an absolute or metaphysical foundation for truth and ethics that they commonly offer. I also came to this research with serious doubts about the public funding of faith-based human services, particularly those that incorporate the role of faith in a thoroughgoing manner throughout their organization and its programs. After hearing the experiences of many organizations in this research, however, I have learned that it is possible for a range of faith-based organizations to partner in a range of ways with public funders for the provision of human services. I have also learned that many faith-based organizations have been doing this for decades. As a result, I believe it is possible for faith-based organizations to be a part of the process of "achieving our country," (Rorty, 1998) and for them to work with people and organizations of differing assumptions in the process.

Faith-based organizations can learn to take their understanding of truth seriously while also taking seriously the assumptions of others in an effort to work in solidarity. We are all "ethnocentric" in Rorty's (1991) sense of the word, meaning that we all can be criticized for taking our beliefs and values too seriously, whether they are the beliefs and values of our local community or those of our faith community. Social workers take their professional Code of Ethics this seriously, as do people of faith their theology. This may

not be a common understanding of ethnocentricity, but it is a helpful way for us to realize the centrality of our beliefs and assumptions in our work and our lives. Rorty's (1989) suggestion of "irony" may provide a way through this ethnocentrism if we are all willing to allow for doubt in our assumptions and changes in our understandings. Recognition that we never know all that there is to be known and that there is always more that can be learned are lessons that can be valued by leaders of faith-based organizations and atheists alike. We can each be attentive to our assumptions, be willing to engage in critical thinking about them, and open to considering the value and utility of other people's worldviews.

If there are others who are willing to be a part of continuing this conversation (this conversation about faith-based organizations, or any conversation about working for social justice), then it may be of value for social workers to consider the value of a theory or even a theology of pragmatism that always allows others an opportunity to join the dialogue. In this way, a theology of pragmatism may begin with a process similar to the role of praxis in liberation theology. The theological process of historical praxis begins by recognizing people's actions and efforts for good in their local context; the process then moves people to a critical reflection on how beliefs shape actions; and it continues with an increased awareness for people's improved actions. Similarly, a pragmatic theology for faith-based human services based on a model of historical praxis begins with a focus on the actions and efforts of faith-based organizations and the organizations with whom they partner. The process then moves to a consensus building process reflecting on the assumptions of the organizations and participants who address human needs in a

society, on how these participants address human needs, and on the outcomes of their efforts. Finally, the process continues with an increased awareness and improved practices among participants.

This theological method does not begin with an inquiry into beliefs or an analysis creeds or doctrines. As discussed above, there are many diverse theological positions offered by faith-based organizations across religious lines and even within a single religion. This theological method begins with the work of faith-based organizations in their provision of human services. It recognizes the importance of their beliefs and values, as well as the importance of the relationships they have with other organizations, their community, and the people they serve. These relationships of which faith-based organizations are a part may be similar to those between pragmatists and people of faith, where people working together come from divergent backgrounds and have different worldviews, but these relationships do not have to be as divisive as Rorty suggests, they do not have to be conversation-stoppers. In this pragmatic theological method, moving from the work of these organizational practitioners to a consideration of their values and beliefs as they continue to work together will pose challenging questions and concerns, but remaining a part of the conversation when differences arise is an important part of developing improved working relationships and an increased awareness of the perspectives of others with whom we work.

This method of pragmatism is not a prescriptive approach to improving the church-state relationships of faith-based organizations. Rather, it is an implication of the lessons I have learned about how organizational relationships may be developed when

there is a concern for the differences between the organizations but a desire to work with others. This implication suggests one direction for moving forward with an attentiveness to differences and a respect for others. People with assumptions similar to those of Rorty's pragmatism will likely continue to believe that the only starting point for social hope is atheistic, or at least secular, and people of faith will maintain a divine foundation for their work. There will be many other assumptions offered by people somewhere in between. Recognition of one's own work and the work of the other is a starting point that will truly allow people of different assumptions to work together. It will allow people who continue the conversation to foster social hope and respond to human needs.

Despite Rorty's criticisms of religion, he has been able to see the work of pragmatists and humanistic intellectuals as analogous to that of clergy and theologians working in the tradition of the social gospel (Rauschenbush, 1917) and liberation theology (Gutierrez, 1971) because of the mutual emphasis on political and practical involvement as well as the inclusive approaches to knowledge building. Rorty does seem to be attentive to the worth of religion in promoting social justice, and so there is hope in this analogy for the role of pragmatism in considering the value of faith-based publicly-funded human services. There are many ways to work for social justice in our communities and members of a community do not have to agree on a place to begin, but be willing to join in the process. Assumptions may differ, but there can be value in working together. If we are willing "to accept the fact that we start from where we are," then I believe we can begin to find a way forward together (Rorty, 1991, p. 29).

## IV. Bringing Closure to the Inquiry

I have presented an interpretation of the experiences of faith-based organizational leaders involved in or considering partnerships with the government in this locality. In presenting my interpretation of these experiences, I have chosen to articulate the relationship between emergent themes that included the services, structure, and identity of faith-based organizations; the role of faith in these organizations; faith-based organizations and public money; relationships and collaborations between faith-based organizations and other organizations; a shared social responsibility for meeting human needs; the prophetic responsibility of faith-based organizations; employment decisions by faith-based organizations; and financial and programmatic accountability within faith-based organizations; and, I have done so in a narrative case study report that depends on the response of readers to give action to the meanings they derive from the story. In considering how I have interpreted these experiences and this relationship of themes, I have expressed a variety of lessons that may prove to be of value for leaders of faith-based organizations and for others interested in their efforts. It is my hope that the implications of these lessons learned in the research process will find value in this context and others as, in the spirit of Richard Rorty, the conversation about relationships between faith-based organizations and public funding continues.

While this study comes to a close, the hermeneutic process and the hope for social justice does not. I hope that the organizational leaders who have participated will continue to reflect on the meaning of partnerships with government entities. I hope that

social workers and others who read the case study will find value in the interpretations offered there. I also hope that the implications of the report will be that increased understanding of church-state relationships for faith-based organizations means improved relationships. I hope the lessons we continue to learn from the case study report and from other experiences are able to help our future be made better than our past. Thompkins (1980) says that "meaning is no longer a property of a text, but a product of the readers' activity." The communities of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers have yet to determine what policies, practices, and other activities will help to make our future better than our past. It is my hope that this text and the meanings derived from it will contribute to that future.

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## Appendix A

## Research Subject Information and Consent Form

**Title:** The Meaning of Church-State Relationships for Faith-Based Organizations

**VCU IRB Protocol Number:** 2534

**Investigator:** Mary Katherine O'Connor, Ph.D.
Jon Singletary, Ph. D. Candidate, School of Social Work

**Purpose of the Study:**
*The purpose of this research is to 1) satisfy dissertation requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work and 2) consider how faith-based organizations understand their relationships, or possible relationships, with government entities.*

**Description:**
This research into church-state relationships will include questions about your understanding of the church-state relationships entered into by faith-based organizations providing publicly funded human services. The study is a constructivist inquiry meaning that it uses qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus groups, to gain a better understanding of the subjective experiences of participants.

There will be approximately 50-75 participants in this study. Participants will represent faith-based organizations and other organizations with perspectives relevant to faith-based initiatives, such as those that provide support to faith-based organizations.

**Procedures:**
If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to sign this form after you have had all of your questions answered. Your participation in the research includes being part of an initial interview, as well as a follow-up interview or focus group to clarify information gathered in the initial interview. There may be a third interview to further clarify your understandings or to ask you to read sections of the written case study report.

The initial interview will have an unstructured face-to-face format. I will use some guiding questions to discuss your understanding of church-state relationships for faith-based organizations. At the end of the interview will be an opportunity to clarify my understanding of your perspective. The initial interview will last approximately 60 minutes.

Our second interview will be a more detailed opportunity to discuss further your initial interview responses, as well as other participant's responses to questions about church-state relationships for faith-based organizations. The content of the meeting will

primarily be to follow up on the content from initial interviews. We may also discuss any documents that you believe are worth considering in relation to the topic. This meeting may be an interview or you may be selected to participate as a part of a focus group with participants from similar organizations. This second interview will not last longer than 60 minutes, and may be as brief as 5 minutes.

I may also contact you for an additional interview to continue to assure that I understand your responses and to discuss other participant's responses. This third interview may include reading parts of a case study report that will be written about the various understandings of the topic. If you are asked to be a part of a third interview, this meeting may also be as brief as 5 minutes and may last as long as 60 minutes.

**Risks and Discomforts:**
The interview questions will address political and funding issues concerning faith-based organizations and government funding entities. The primary risk relates to confidentiality, but all possible measures will be taken in data collection and analysis to protect your confidentiality.

**Confidentiality:**
In each situation, your identity will be treated with professional standards of confidentiality. The information obtained in this study may be published, and may be shared with other participants, but your identity will not be revealed. Research records will be maintained with identifying numbers and codes rather than your name. Records will be kept in a secure area and separate from this Form.

No identifying information will be used to connect personal information obtained about you in interviews. No identifying information will be used to identify you in the data analysis or final case study report. Access to research data is limited to the principal investigator and his dissertation committee. The report may be looked at and/or copied for research or regulatory purposes by Virginia Commonwealth University.

While identifying information, such as the names of participants will not be used, in small organizations and in focus groups where it may be possible to determine identities, strict confidentiality cannot be assured. If you represent a small organization or agency, or if you participate in a focus group, it is impossible to guarantee absolute confidentiality, but all measures will be taken to prevent your identity from being revealed.

**Benefits:**
You will not receive financial compensation for participating in this research. Your participation will provide the benefit of enabling social workers and others to learn about the role of faith-based human services and about faith-based organizations' relationships with government funding entities. You may request a copy of the case study report.

**Costs:**
There are no costs to this research except the time being spent as a participant.

**Payment for Participation:**
There will be no payment for participation in this study.

**Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:**
Though this study may be interesting and helpful to you and others, your participation is voluntary, you do not have to participate and you can choose not to continue the study at any time. You may refuse to answer any questions you wish.

**Questions:**
In the future, you may have questions about your study participation. If you have questions you may contact Jon Singletary, MDiv, MSW, at (804) 213-0983, or Mary Katherine O'Connor, Ph.D., at (804) 828-0688. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the VCU Office for Research Subjects Protection at (804) 828-0868 or at 1101 E. Marshall 1-023, Richmond, VA 23298.

**Consent:**
I have read the Research Subject Information and Consent Form. I understand the information about this study. All my questions have been adequately answered. I understand that I will receive a signed and dated copy of this consent form for my records.

By signing this consent form I have not waived any of the legal rights which I otherwise would have as a subject in a research study.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Participant's Name (Printed) | (Signed) | (Date) |
| *Jon Singletary* Investigator Signature | (Signed) | (Date) |

# Appendix B

## Auditor's Report

## A Constructivist Inquiry of Church-State Relationships for Faith-Based Organizations
## by Jon Singletary

### Purpose of Audit

The purpose of this audit is to examine the rigor of trustworthiness in the above constructivist research dissertation. It was agreed that the dimensions of confirmability, credibility, and dependability would be assessed. The guidelines for performing the audit were derived from Lincoln & Guba in *Naturalistic Inquiry* and from Rodwell in *Social Work Constructivist Research*.

### The Audit Process

I met with Jon Singletary from 10:30 am - 6:30 pm on Monday, March 31, 2003, in my home in Falls Church Virginia. During the first part of our session Jon described the study, his preliminary thinking about the scope and goals of the proposed audit, and the multiple dimensions of the audit trail. I reviewed the written materials Jon brought for the audit and determined that they were complete enough and comprehensible to begin the audit. The audit trail material included: the original participants' surveys, the transcribed interviews entered into the Atlas.ti computer software program, the index cards containing all the data used in the case report, his reflexive and methodological journals, peer reviewers notes, and the case report. The documents missing were the member checks and the index cards of data not used in the case report. It was agreed that Jon would provide these documents at our follow-up meeting. Together Jon and I

developed an audit contract. In the contract we agreed that the audit would include an assessment of the inquiry's trustworthiness, specifically the dimensions of confirmability, credibility, and dependability.

I began conducting the audit in the early afternoon. Much of the focus was on assessing the confirmability of the case report. Jon needed to take his laptop computer home and the participants' transcribed interviews were in his Atlas.ti software program. Throughout the afternoon Jon made himself available to answer my numerous questions. By early evening Jon left. I had completed the necessary work involving his computer and Jon had clarified numerous questions regarding the audit material that I was to review prior to our follow-up meeting. Throughout that week I read the case report and conducted a preliminary audit with the materials at hand. Jon and I meet the following Monday, April 7, 2003, from 9 am-10 am in his VCU office. Much of the focus centered on Jon providing specific evidence on several aspects of credibility and dependability. In addition, Jon provided me with his write-up of the member checks and the index cards of unused data. Below are the findings of the audit.

**Statement of Findings**

**Confirmability**

Confirmability assessed whether the case study was grounded in the data and the inferences were logical. I can attest that the case study report is grounded in the data. More than two dozen endnotes were selected at random for this assessment. Using Atlas.ti the audit trail began with a selected endnote which was then traced back first to the relevant section in the case report and then to the attributed participant quote in her or

his transcribed interview. For several of the endnotes I also traced the transcribed interview to the handwritten interview notes taken during the actual participant interview. Exact participant quotes were not used in the case report, however I can attest that the meaning of the participants' statements remained accurate. In a few cases, Jon added his assertion within a character's quote in the case report. This does not appear to hamper the accuracy of the participants' quotes as none of the member checks perceived this as a problem in their written comments. It is also easy to identify Jon's assertions as, except in the few cases noted above, they are contained in stand-alone quotes without endnotes in the case report.

Furthermore, I can attest to the strength of the logical inferences of the sub-themes and themes that emerged from the data after having reviewed the data units. Based on my review of the data units there were about 68 groupings which were sorted into 12 sub-themes and 5 themes. When I assessed the unit groupings, each sub-theme and theme appeared to be discrete and hang together as a cohesive unit. I did not find any new themes emerge in my review of the data units included or excluded from the case report. In addition, I found all sub-themes and themes included in the case study report. I also reviewed several of the unit data groupings and can attest that a grouping of a data unit remains a unit within the case study report.

**Credibility**

Credibility assessed whether participants' perspectives were accurately captured in the case report. I can attest that the inquiry process and case report appear to accurately reflect participants' voices. All nine of the participants who responded to Jon's request to

review their interview transcript stated that Jon had captured their voice accurately. Comments included such statements as “I think you understand where I’m coming from,” or “the way you presented it is pretty much like it is,” or “it looks like what we said.” In addition, Jon conducted a final member check asking participants to make sure their perspective was reflected in the case report. None of the eleven participants responding to Jon’s request stated that their perspective had been ignored or misrepresented in the case report. Comments included, “I felt present during the narrative,” or “sounds like what we try to do in our church and in our community.” It was unfortunate, however, that only about half stated explicitly that they believed their perspective was captured in the case report and three of the final member checks never even tangentially addressed the issue. Although not reflected in Jon’s reflexive or methodological journals nor in his peer review notes it seems as if Jon worked closely with participants throughout the inquiry process to ensure accuracy and inclusion of participants’ voices in the case report based on discussions with him.

**Dependability**

Dependability assessed whether the inquirer’s decisions and methodological shifts were appropriate to constructivist methodological practices. I can attest that the inquirer’s decisions and methodological procedures were appropriate. Such standard procedures as an emergent research design, purposive sampling, and inductive data analysis were used. I would, however, have liked to have seen greater discussion in his methodological journal regarding his rules on sampling and analysis as well as his methodological shifts

throughout the inquiry process. But this concern in does not negate my assertion of dependability of the inquiry.

Evidence of Jon's use of purposive sampling was seen in his methodological journal when he wrote that he changed the initial five stakeholder groups to four because two of the groups appeared similar and so were combined. This he stated would permit him to increase the number of organizations within each of the four groups which "may be another way to seek maximum variation." In comparing Jon's initial list of organizations to be included in the research to his final list it is evident that Jon increased the number of organizations within the four groups. In terms of ending the data collection process Jon reported in his method journal that he stopped interviewing people after his forty-second interview. He stated that he had reached saturation on both the existing themes and emerging ones, and reached maximum variation in faith based organizations that provide human services.

Evidence of Jon's use of an emergent research design was seen most clearly in the shift in interview questions between the initial foreshadowed questionnaire to the final questionnaire. The initial foreshadowed questionnaire focused on Jon's original three themes: the role of FBO, discrimination in employment, and accountability. In his final questionnaire the focus had been expanded to include common good, the pastoral and prophetic roles of the church, and collaboration. During data collection the emergence of these three themes were also discussed in the peer review meetings as noted in the peer review notes.

Evidence of Jon's use of an inductive data analysis was most evident in his "lumping" of the data units on index cards. It is apparent that Jon used constant comparison, a method of grounded theory, to analyze the data by unitizing and categorizing the data from his expanded interview notes. He made several configurations of his lumping of themes as seen in the shifts within his five diagrammatic illustrations attached to his methodological journal.

Finally, Jon's case report is certainly evidence of his use of constructivist practices. It is a thick description on the topic of church-state relationships for FOBs. The case report creatively captures the multiple perspectives of stakeholders, explores the finding's themes and sub-themes as patterns of association rather than as patterns of causality, while remaining a research report.

**Summary**

In summary, based on a thorough examination of the audit trail, I can attest to the confirmability, credibility, and dependability of the case study in the dissertation "A Constructivist Inquiry of Church-State Relationships for Faith-Based Organizations."

Patricia McGrath Morris Date: 4/15/03

Patricia McGrath Morris is a PhD candidate in Social Work at Virginia Commonwealth University. Among her research projects, Morris has conducted a constructivist research inquiry on the meaning of social justice in the academic communities of social work, philosophy, and economics. Previously, she spent more than a decade conducting public policy research in both the private and public sectors.

**Appendix C**

What follows are the notes that refer to the raw data source for each reference in the case study. Each note includes one or more unit of data that can be quickly obtained using my Dissertation Hermeneutic Unit in Atlas.ti. The first numeral in the note refers to a specific interview transcript, or primary document. The second numeral/s refer to the unit numbers within that primary document. The Hermeneutic Unit contains a specific window that lists the units in this format. A reader who has Atlas.ti and this Hermeneutic Unit could click on unit 38.10 and go directly to that data unit.

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[32] 9.14
[33] 16.2; 13.35; 9.15
[34] Personal communication via e-mail with Robert Tuttle and Ira Lupu (see Lupu & Tuttle, 2002).
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