A BAYLOR ISR SPECIAL RESEARCH REPORT

Not By Faith *or* Government Alone

Rethinking the Role of Faith-Based Organizations

in addressing various social ills, including homelessness, crime, addiction, disaster relief, prisoner reentry, and even HIV/AIDS in Africa.

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Rethinking the Role of Faith-Based Organizations

Short Essays on the Faith-Based and Community Initiative

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INTRODUCTION

President George W. Bush signed the first two Executive Orders of his Administration in January of 2001, creating the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) and similar offices within five Federal agencies. The goal was to eliminate government barriers inhibiting partnerships with faith-based and grassroots charities and to strengthen the work of America's armies of compassion in addressing difficult social problems.

Though faith-based initiatives have been active for many decades in America, the last few years have brought about increased visibility and scrutiny of these efforts. Yet, for all the criticism and debate it has received, the FBCI has garnered significant bi-partisan support, especially outside of Washington. A dramatic increase in the extent and prevalence of public-private, sacred-secular partnerships have emerged in communities across the country. It is now the case that State and local governments, led by Democrats as well as Republicans, are collaborating with faith-based organizations in an unprecedented and concerted effort to attack need in America. But beyond this bi-partisan support, what do we know about the reach, capacity, and efficacy of these faith-based efforts to achieve important civic goals and outcomes?

This ISR Special Report brings together scholars from political science, sociology, philosophy, law, criminology, medicine, psychiatry, and education, in order weigh-in on the current state of the faith-based and community initiative, more than seven years after its launch. Rather than long dissertations, this initial ISR Special Report relies upon easy-to-read summaries seeking to provide the reader with an objective account of the impact of the FBCI in far-reaching domains.

In sum, the report confirms the faith-based and community initiative has met the initial goal of removing barriers inhibiting partnerships with faith-based and grassroots organizations. Further, the FBCI has significantly expanded as well as strengthened the reach of faith-based and community organizations in successfully confronting difficult social problems in communities across the country and around the world. Indeed, these collaborations provide preliminary evidence as well as important insights that should help policy-makers and faith-motivated workers to rethink our approaches to various social ills, including homelessness, domestic violence, drug and alcohol addiction, disaster relief, prisoner reentry, and HIV/AIDS in Africa.

Byron R. Johnson

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An Effectiveness Perspective

ONE OF THE LONG-RANGE benefits of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI) may be that it has stimulated additional research on the effectiveness of faith-based and community-based health and social service programs. Only now are researchers beginning the difficult task of answering the question of which types of programs, and under which circumstances, are most effective. Among other researchers attempting to answer this question, my colleague Corwin E. Smidt and myself, both of Calvin College's Henry Institute, will soon complete a study on one organization's response to a community issue.*

The Latino Coalition for Faith and Community Initiatives, based in Bakersfield, California, served as an intermediary organization from 2004 to 2007 between the Department of Labor and 28 on-the-ground faith-based and community organizations seeking to help at-risk and adjudicated youths in five cities. Most of the youths were of Latino background, a notoriously underserved population. My colleague and I received a contract from the Department of Labor to do an evaluative study of this program.

Here I briefly report on one small, but potentially significant, finding. While visiting 19 program sites in the five cities

* *This study was funded by the US Department of Labor. However, this report does not necessarily represent official opinion or policy of the DOL.*

and conducting focus groups with youths at 11 of them, we noted a basic division in the character of the programs. Some of them offered many activities and services in addition to the Department of Labor-funded program and worked to integrate their participants into these other activities and services. Their goal was to establish an on-going relationship with the youths, one that would last indefinitely. They offered a variety of classes, urging youths to become involved in another class as soon as they finished one. They offered trips to sporting events or concerts, had recreational activities (such as ping-pong, video games, and basketball), and urged the youths to just stop by and "hang out." Most of these activities were sponsored by faith-based organizations that would invite the program participants to youth groups at an affiliated church. (It should be noted that any activities with a religious component were purely voluntary on the part of the youths and funded with private money.) The effect of these holistic programs was to create an alternative "family" or community with different norms and values than what the program participants too often encountered in their neighborhoods and schools.

Because of this distinction, we divided the programs into those that took the most holistic, integrative approach and those that offered certain specific services or classes, which were more limited in time and scope. Admittedly this involved some subjective judgment on our part, but based on site visits and focus groups with participants, we are confident this division reflects a real distinction among the 19 separate programs. We found 7 faith-based organizations (FBOs) and 1 community-based organization (CBO) that offered programs of a holistic/integrative nature, while 11 FBOs and 2 CBOs did not.

Here I report on four outcome measures based off comparisons between the experiences of youths in faith-based holistic/integrative programs to those in the more non-integrative programs:

- **Positive employment outcome –** Thirty-seven percent of the youths in faith-based holistic programs had a positive employment outcome, while only 17 percent of the youths in the non-holistic programs did.
- **Positive educational outcome –** Twenty percent of the youths in the faith-based holistic programs had a positive outcome, while only 7 percent of the youths in the non-holistic programs did.
- **Completion of at least 25 hours in the program –** Seventy-one percent of the youths in faith-based holistic programs stayed with the program for at least 25 hours of involvements, while 42 percent of the youths in the non-holistic programs did.
- **Recidivism rates –** Ninety-two percent of the youths in faith-based integrative programs did not have their probation revoked or were not convicted of a crime, while 91 percent of the youths in the non-integrative programs did not.

In all 4 outcome measures, the participants in the 7 holistic FBO programs had a higher level of positive outcomes than the participants in the 13 non-integrative programs. Three of these four outcomes showed noticeable differences between holistic and non-integrative programs; only for recidivism outcomes were the differences very small. On a similar note, the outcomes for the participants in the one holistic CBO tended to fall in between those

for the 7 holistic FBOs and the 11 non-holistic programs.

This pattern—which is only one from a much larger study—suggests when working with troubled minority youths, a key strength of faith-based programs may be the tendency to integrate their program participants into a combination of services and opportunities that keep the youths involved in a variety of on-going activities.

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Faith and addiction in the U.S. and in Iraq

"WHETHER IRAQIS turn to drugs and alcohol has much more to do with what their religion tells them than what their doctor advises!" This challenge was voiced by an Iraqi physician in my short course on scientifically-validated methods of addiction treatment and prevention, which I taught in Irbil to the small band of heroic Iraqi professionals who are battling an incipient epidemic of substance abuse. If my Iraqi colleague was expecting to draw me into a debate, he must have been disappointed: I responded that while I didn't know if he was right about Iraq, I was quite sure that what he said applied in the United States.

Few people are surprised to learn that religion lessens Iraqi substance use, given the Koranic prohibition against intoxication has been taught for over a millennium. But many observers, even addiction experts, are startled to discover how powerfully religion influences substance use behavior and attitudes in the U.S as well. A colleague and I recently reviewed the scientific literature in this area and came upon an intriguing result. If one had to predict whether a newborn baby in the U.S. would someday become an alcoholic adult, the most useful nugget of information would be "Is the child going to be raised as a Jew, Muslim or Mormon?" Any of these would lower the risk of alcoholism by more than two-thirds. More generally, in the U.S., active involvement in any mainstream religion is strongly associated at all ages and at all income levels with lower risk of becoming addicted to nicotine, alcohol, marijuana and other drugs.

Religion is also a significant resource for many Americans who have overcome addictions. A growing body of research attests that while religious involvement by itself rarely arrests an active addiction to drugs or alcohol, many addicted people increase their involvement in religious or spiritual practices after they have ceased using these substances. These practices include explicitly religious activities such as attending religious services, praying and reading religious texts, as well as spiritual activities not linked to any particular faith, for example meditation and attendance at 12-step self-help organizations like Narcotics Anonymous. Even more important, those who seek out such resources once they stop using drugs and alcohol reduce their chances of returning to their former substance using habits.

When I presented the above findings at a scientific conference in the U.S., my colleagues' reactions further illuminated the inter-relationship of substance use and faith. Many attendees hypothesized explanatory mechanisms that could be tested for in future studies. For example, some neuroscientists speculated that

religion and drug use might both give the brain comparable experiences of ecstasy, and the ability to access this brain-state via the former might lessen the need to do so via the latter. The behaviorists pointed out that religion offers contingent rewards (e.g., social approval) for a substance free life, as well as access to enjoyable social and recreational events where drugs and alcohol are not available. Both of these explanations could contain some truth.

Yet the colleagues who made the strongest impression on me were those who were infuriated at the results. One sputtered that my paper "made her skin crawl" and that its conclusions "would be misused and distorted." Another was less visibly upset but seemed determined to find a way to explain away the results, even though he accepted without skepticism other conclusions derived from similar studies. However, these same colleagues were warmly supportive when they learned I had consulted closely with Iraqi religious leaders when trying to help my Iraqi colleagues design drug treatment and prevention programs. Why, I wondered, are some U.S. academics who accept that religion molds substance use patterns in other countries shocked and upset to learn of religion's comparable influence in their own society?

Surveys done over the last 100 years show that relative to all Americans, university professors tend to be less religious, and social scientists particularly so. Many foundational theories in the social sciences, for example those of Marx and Freud, are explicitly negative about religion. As a result, within some parts of the U.S. academy, religion is perceived as a dangerous interloper and an enemy of human freedom to make choices, including choices about gender roles, sexual behavior, voting and yes, use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs. For some residents of the ivory tower, the preference of many Americans to adopt religious approaches to preventing or reducing substance use seems almost medieval, the kind of thing that should only be happening in what they consider less modern countries like…Iraq.

But as the scientific maxim has it, "the data are the data," no matter how anyone feels about them. We have a marvelously well-developed addiction science enterprise in the United States, of which I am proud to be a part. But neither pride nor prejudice should lead scientists to dismiss the well-documented and potent influence of religious and spiritual organizations on Americans' tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use. The accumulating, potentially life-saving research findings on how drugs

affect the brain and body are a product of the human ability to reason, but most people's decisions about substance use are a product of the human ability to believe.

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The Role of the Faith Factor in Reducing Crime and Delinquency

CONTROLLING CRIME continues to remain a concern for most Americans. At the same time, evidenced-based approaches to government initiatives have gained wide support in recent years, even among political foes. Therefore, scientific evaluations and ongoing research of best practices in confronting social problems has become increasingly important. This essay examines and summarizes the state of our knowledge regarding the relationship between religion and crime as well as the current and potential role of religion and religious institutions in crime reduction, offender rehabilitation, and offender aftercare.

Concerning crime reduction, I have recently completed a comprehensive review of studies published on crime and religion between 1944 and 2007. In total, 109 studies were systematically reviewed and approximately 89 percent of the studies (97/109) find a beneficial relationship between religion and some measure of crime or delinquency (i.e., increasing religiosity is associated with lower crime/delinquency). Only 11 studies found no association or reported mixed findings, and only one study from this exhaustive literature review found religion was associated with a harmful outcome. Thus, in studies utilizing vastly different methods, samples, and research designs, increasing religiosity (religiousness, religious activities, or participation) is consistently linked with decreases in various measures of crime or delinquency.

A mounting body of empirical evidence not only confirms religion is a protective factor insulating youth from harmful outcomes like crime and delinquency, but religion also promotes prosocial or beneficial outcomes considered normative and necessary for a productive and civil society. Thus, the beneficial relationship between religion and crime is not simply a function of religion's constraining function or what it discourages—opposing drug use or delinquent behavior—but also through what it encourages—promoting behaviors that can enhance purpose, well-being, and other normative behavior.

These findings support the notion that frequent participation in religious activities helps individuals learn values that oppose anti-social or illegal behavior. It is also possible that participation in certain kinds of religious activity may help steer offenders back to a course of less deviant behavior and, more importantly, away from potential career criminal paths. In this way, religious interventions may be pivotal turning points that profoundly change one's behavioral trajectory. For example, empirical studies addressing faith-based approaches to prison treatment have shown that inmates who regularly participate in volunteer-led Bible Studies or who complete a faith-based program are less likely to commit institutional infractions or commit new crimes following release from prison. In the first

major evaluation study of a faith-based unit launched in 1997 at the Carol Vance Unit (a prison located outside of Houston, Texas), I found that inmates completing the InnerChange Freedom Initiative, an 18 to 24 month long faith-based pre-release program operated by Prison Fellowship, were significantly less likely to be arrested (17% v. 35%) or incarcerated (8% v. 20%) than a matched group of prisoners not receiving this religious intervention. These results came after observing both groups for a minimum of two years post-release.

Though we have solid evidence that religion matters in reducing crime, researchers have spent far less time considering how or why religiosity or religious institutions and faith-based organizations might deter crime and delinquency as well as aid offender rehabilitation or support former prisoner transition back to society. One obvious reason religion matters for many is that religious involvement provides networks of social as well as spiritual support helping people internalize values that encourage behavior emphasizing concern for others' welfare. Such processes may contribute to the acquisition of positive attributes giving, for example, individuals a greater sense of empathy toward others, which in turn makes them less likely to commit acts harmful to others. Indeed, recent research confirms religiosity can help youth be resilient even in the midst of poverty, crime, and other social ills commonly linked to deleterious outcomes.

Churches, synagogues, mosques, inner-city blessing stations, and other houses of worship represent one of the few institutions that remain within close proximity of most adolescents, their families, and their peers. This fact is especially critical in disadvantaged communities and urban centers, where crime and delinquency tend to be most prevalent.

As policy makers consider strategies to reduce delinquency, gang activity, and crime, it is essential for such deliberations to seriously and intentionally consider the role of religion and religious institutions in implementing, developing, and sustaining multifaceted approaches to crime prevention. From after school programs for disadvantaged youth to public/private partnerships bringing together secular and sacred groups to tackle social problems like the prisoner reentry crisis, it is apparent that any strategy will be needlessly incomplete unless faith communities are integrally involved.

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Faith-Based Organizations and HIV Prevention

DURING THE EARLY YEARS of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, many people who worked in HIV prevention believed religious leaders and organizations were intrinsically antagonistic to what they were trying to accomplish. In the minds of many people, the stereotypic religious leader and/or organization was morally conservative, disapproving of any form of sexual behavior outside of marriage, condom use (considered the best way to prevent HIV infection), and sex education in schools. Such generalizations ignore the fact that many faith-based organizations

(FBOs) have been working patiently, compassionately, and effectively for years in AIDS mitigation and prevention. FBOs have initiated, supported, and organized a range of HIV/AIDS activities, both with and without U.S. Government funds.

Examples of these activities include the following:

- Counseling support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families
- Support groups for educating local communities about HIV/AIDS
- Peer educator programs aimed at prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections
- Income-generation and vocational training programs for people living with HIV/AIDS and their dependents
- Care and support programs for children orphaned by AIDS
- Voluntary counseling and testing services
- Alternative employment or income-generation opportunities for girls and women who are vulnerable to or trapped in the sex-trafficking trade
- Other methods of fighting against stigma associated with HIV infection within local communities

Indeed, FBOs are often the only genuine nongovernmental organizations in many rural parts of poor countries, or at a minimum, they are the strongest and most influential. FBOs tend to have a good understanding of local social and cultural patterns, and larger ones may have strong, expansive infrastructures, enabling them to reach rural or isolated areas. Many FBOs have long worked in health care and education and have established thousands of faith-based hospitals and schools in sub-Saharan Africa. In many developing countries, FBOs provide a substantial proportion of primary and secondary education. In addition, FBOs are known to stress and support faith, idealism, and compassion, which are powerful and sustaining motivators for employees and volunteers who work with sick and dying individuals under extremely difficult conditions.

Experience shows that national leadership and open discussion about HIV/AIDS are key factors in attaining stable or declining national HIV seroprevalence rates, but so is the involvement of religious leaders and FBOs in HIV prevention. In countries where religion is important, it makes little sense to mobilize only secular resources. Put simply, part of the challenge now is for health workers to overcome their own biases against FBOs.

Put simply, part of the challenge now is for health workers to *overcome their own biases* against FBOs.

A major debate has been taking place in the United States over the Bush Administration's commitment to supporting faith-based initiatives. The focus of this debate is almost exclusively domestic, centered around a fear that government support of FBOs might undermine the separation of church and state. However, USAID has been working with FBOs in both humanitarian and development efforts for decades, with basically positive results. USAID has

supported these organizations on the basis of their demonstrated capacity to plan and implement services to high technical and ethical standards – not because they are FBOs.

In light of the contribution of FBOs to positive behavior change and their possible role in a reduction in HIV and other sexually transmitted infection rates in countries such as Jamaica and Uganda, steps should be taken to overcome any conflict or antagonism between a faith-based approach and a secular, public health approach. Much can be gained by supporting religious organizations to implement their "comparative advantage" —promoting what they call fidelity and abstinence. Forcing FBOs to work in condom promotion risks alienating them from AIDS prevention efforts, and thereby losing the great potential they bring to such efforts. As nations seek ways to beat back HIV and AIDS, FBOs can provide instructive lessons for us all.

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The Contributions of Faith-Based Schools

OVER THE LAST FORTY YEARS, there has been a considerable amount of debate on the effects of religious schools on the academic achievement of children. These studies have tended to show a relatively consistent advantage for youth attending private religious schools over their public school counterparts, even when controlling for race and socioeconomic status (SES). Social scientists differ about the reasons why students from faith-based schools may outperform students from public schools. The most notable of these works was research reported by James Coleman and his colleagues in "Public and Private High Schools." Coleman asserted that religious schools by nature of their culture, scholastic standards, and other factors produced superior academic outcomes to public schools.

Consequently, social scientists have claimed the school culture of faith-based schools do a better job of helping disadvantaged students. An alternative, or supplemental view, is that religious schools promote parental involvement more than public schools. Other researchers believe that students from faith-based schools outperform students in public schools simply because public schools have a high percentage of low-socioeconomic and racial minority children. However, there is evidence suggesting the racial distribution of students in Catholic schools is similar to that found in public schools.

Summarizing the Research on the Religious School Advantage

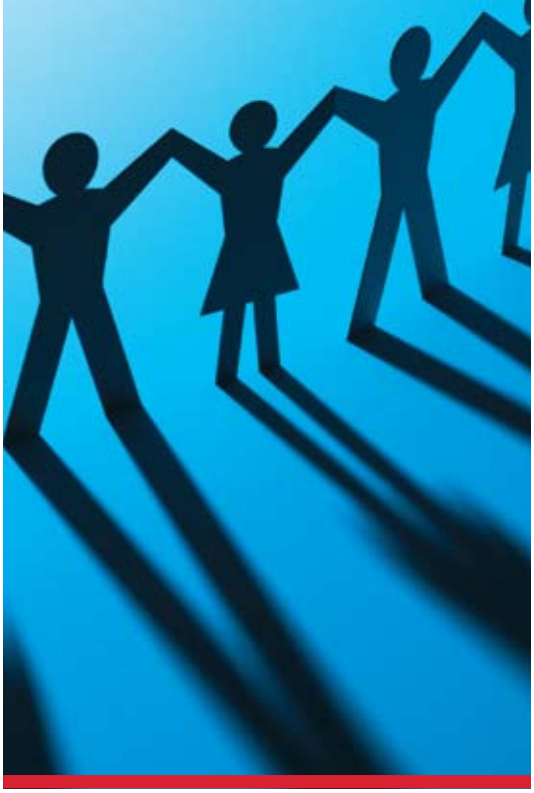
There have been a myriad of studies examining the relationship between faith-based schools and academic and behavioral outcomes among students of low SES background. Fortunately, there is a statistical procedure called a meta-analysis that enables one to objectively review an entire research literature. A meta-analysis statistically combines all the relevant existing studies on a given subject in order to determine the aggregated results of said research. While conducting the only meta-analysis of this research to

date, I found the racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps are about 25% narrower in religious schools than in public schools. In addition, in my analysis of the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), perhaps the most respected nationwide data set in education, I found African American and Latino children benefit even more than white students by attending private religious schools. Specifically, the difference between academic outcomes between private religious and public school students is greater for African American and Latino students than it is for white students.

Further, with regard to the socioeconomic achievement gap, I found that the pattern of data was quite robust in all seven educational outcome measures I examined; students from the lowest socioeconomic quartile benefited the most followed by those of the second lowest socioeconomic quartile, with those from the highest socioeconomic quartile benefiting the least. The fact that this numerical ranking did not vary for any of the educational measures enhances the strength of the findings. Overall, the findings indicate the students who most benefit from attending private religious schools may be those who often need the academic support the most (i.e., students of color and those of low socioeconomic status).

Why Attending Religious School Reduces the Achievement Gap

Based on research findings, it is apparent faith-based schools reduce socioeconomic and racial achievement gaps, raising the question of what qualities of faith-based schools help to explain their advantage in alleviating of these



gaps. Results from the NELS data set support the notion that religious school culture, its encouragement of religious commitment among the students, and its promotion of the family are likely some of the key reasons for this advantage. In fact, drawing upon the NELS data, if comparing highly religious African American and Latino students from intact families with white students, the achievement gap disappears completely.

The presence of religious schools benefits society to a considerable, and perhaps even to an innumerable, degree. Research indicates that on average, youth benefit both scholastically and behaviorally from the existence of faith-based schools. Therefore, it is important for public policy agencies to facilitate the functioning of these schools, as these schools will ultimately produce numerous benefits not only to their students, but to society as a whole.

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Some Basic Facts on America's Armies of Compassion

ACCORDING TO THE 2005 Baylor Survey of Religion, an ongoing in-depth national survey conducted by the Gallup Organization, 111 million Americans devote an hour or more each month to volunteer community service (not counting service done for their church). Imagine the cost even if they were only being paid the minimum wage.

These figures reveal one of the basic reasons why President Bush has been so favorably predisposed to faith-based programs of community service. Much of what needs to be done will go undone unless it is done by unpaid volunteers. A closer look at the 111 million who currently do community volunteer work reveals that 92 million did so through their church. Moreover, 15 percent of people who attend church more than once a week report doing more than four hours of volunteer work a month. In contrast, of those who do not attend church, not a single person in the national survey reported doing that much volunteer service. In fact, only a third of those who attend church several times a week do no volunteer work, compared with two-thirds of those who never attend. Quite simply, the communities of faith have been and continue to be the driving force behind volunteerism in America.

Consequently, if any effective work is to be done to connect with each of the more than 700,000 prison inmates who are released each year—to help integrate them into the community and economy—it will have to be done by faith-based organizations, for they alone are able to rally the several million volunteers needed to meet this flood of prisoners in an adequate way. Who else could provide so many people with vocational guidance (including job training and placement), with housing, mentoring, and entry to a caring community? There is a similar role to be played when natural disasters strike. Faith-based volunteer groups show up at once, pouring coffee, finding places for people to sleep, and all the rest, while the paid response groups often take far longer to become effective, and always at a substantial cost. Without the "Armies of Compassion," Hurricane Katrina would have had far more painful effects.

Less dramatic, but perhaps even more imporant, is that faith-based groups are the only plausible source for meeting the immense need for volunteers in the public schools, hospitals, homeless shelters, senior centers, after school programs, mentoring programs for at-risk youth, drug treatment programs, crime and delinquency interventions, and all the rest. To oppose faith-based participation in these programs or to deny faith-based groups small grants to help them organize and coordinate their activities is to oppose those in need. Without faith-based volunteers very little can be done to address many of today's most difficult social problems in any effective way.

Rodney Stark

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Faith-based Delivery of Mental Health Services

CARING FOR THE NEEDY has deep roots in all major faith traditions. Prior to 1850 in the United States, the family and religious organizations provided almost all social and mental health services. Since that time, the role of religious groups in providing such services has been progressively less. To this day, however, they remain a critical resource for delivering mental health services. By mental health services, I include counseling and support for those experiencing emotional or mental distress. Counseling and support may be for short-term emotional problems, or may be directed at severe, persistent, long-term mental illness. Mental health services also include both outpatient and residential treatment programs that provide psychotherapy, pharmacological therapy, or other biological treatments for mental illness, as well as case management and social services needed by those with serious mental illnesses.

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) that deliver mental health services may or may not include religion as part of the treatment they offer, and this helps to distinguish the various FBO categories. FBOs provide either direct care services, or they provide educational, professional, organizational, and networking services. Based on these considerations, FBOs that provide mental health services can be categorized into the following five major groups: local congregations, faith-based organizations that prioritize religious belief and practice (e.g., Pathways to Promise) faith-based organizations that provide services that are largely secular in nature (e.g., Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services), trained religious counselors (e.g., Samaritan counselors or pastoral counselors), and professional counselors emphasizing faith-based therapies (e.g., "Christian counselors"). Due to space limitations, I will look at only one of these groups – local congregations.

... FBOs are going to be more important *over the next three to five decades,* as the aging population needing health services increases dramatically...

Local congregations (churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples) provide counseling and other mental health and social services to members and sometimes to the broader community. Clergy deliver an enormous amount of informal mental health services to needy persons and families, which is seldom recognized or acknowledged by mental health professionals. Consider the following: there are approximately 353,000 clergy serving congregations in the United States who spend between 10 and 20 percent of their 40 to 60 hour work week counseling those with emotional or marital problems. This amounts to 138 million hours delivering mental health services each year, which

equals the entire membership of the American Psychological Association delivering services at a rate of 33.2 hours per week. Not included here is counseling by chaplains or pastoral counselors, nearly 100,000 full-time Catholic Sisters, thousands of Brothers in religious orders, or by clergy from Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and other religious traditions in the United States.

The activities of FBOs listed above are crucial to maintaining the mental health of the population and for ensuring that government services are not overburdened. The vital role played by FBOs is only going to be more important over the next three to five decades, as the aging population needing health services increases dramatically and the Medicare/Medicaid costs skyrocket. Americans are living longer and the projections for the next forty years are dramatic, with some projections approximating 90 million persons over age 65 (three times the number today) by 2040. The critical role FBOs are already playing is only a glimpse of the role they can and almost certainly will have to play in maintaining the mental health of our aging population, especially in the days ahead as baby boomers (with high rates of depression and other emotional disorders) begin to experience the ravages of old age and disability. There is growing research demonstrating that these programs are effective and deserve recognition and support by mental health professionals as well as by government agencies that are concerned about the well-being of their aging populations.

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The Paradoxical Role of Faith in the Faith-based and Community Initiative

MANY CRITICS CLAIM the faith-based and community initiative's focus on religion has been its downfall. This focus included: reaching out to faith-intensive organizations, making federal rules hospitable to religious service providers in the name of leveling the playing field, and, most explosively, defending the freedom of those organizations to hire according to faith. Such controversial actions, they say, predictably mobilized congressional opposition, dooming the centerpiece legislation before the initiative got going.

These criticisms are wrong. The focus on religion has been the engine of the success of the faith-based and community initiative, not its Achilles' heel. Of course, more should be done. Several events have and will continue to systematically assess the level of success. Yet, can anyone seriously doubt there has been a substantial and promising reorientation of American social assistance due to the Bush initiative and the Charitable Choice legislation of the Clinton years?

Dramatically different than a dozen years ago, for instance, is our understanding now of who serves the needy, how important religion is to the safety net, the vital service of grassroots organizations, the value of sacred-secular collaborations, the dependence of government on a great diversity of private providers, and the positive role of religion for avoiding and overcoming social problems. More generally, civil society has come into its own. In the emerging

pattern, government acknowledges the vital work of civil society organizations, supports their independent efforts, and when it collaborates with them, treats them as partners, not mere vendors of services.

How is religion central to this new respect for civil society? Not as the central or sole beneficiary. Instead, the playing field really has been leveled, not just reserved for religion. There is no pot of money for favored faiths (although, as always, some funding decisions no doubt have been biased). Rather, religion has been a central focus of the many changes made to the rules governing the award of taxpayer funds to private service providers.

It is here, in the public funding of social services, that governmental concern and control are especially intense, due to the constitutional strictures about funding religion. The concern in the past led to restrictions on religion making government grant programs "relentless engines of secularization," in Michael McConnell's words. Government control and concern has not now vanished, of course, but the federal approach to social services has been revised to better accommodate the distinctive characteristics of faith-based providers. The new attitude entails more respect for civil society organizations in general.

Nevertheless, the changes related to faith-based organizations have been highly contested. In Bush-era regulations, as in Clinton-era Charitable Choice laws, the religious identity of faith-based providers is safeguarded, as is their freedom to offer privately funded and voluntary religious activities even while they deliver government-funded services. They also, unless a program's law says otherwise, maintain their freedom under the 1964 Civil Rights Act to hire only those committed to their religious mission. Yet under a new federal rule, they must serve beneficiaries without religious discrimination. They still serve the common good, but with more independence.

In many other ways, too, government has revised its relationship with civil society organizations to be more supportive and less controlling. The Compassion Capital Fund strengthens small organizations, improving their management and services with no requirement to agree to run government programs. Homeland Security regulations and operations now draw religious and secular grassroots organizations into the public networks for disaster preparedness and response, groups that had been previously ignored. Tax law changes have increased the flow of private funds to charities. To facilitate collaboration between big government and grassroots

providers, federal officials are using intermediaries—larger organizations that bear the administrative burden of government rules on behalf of small groups. Vouchers for federally funded programs concerning social issues like drug treatment and mentoring the children of prisoners enable faith-infused services to be among the available options, while facilitating the participation of smaller providers, whether secular or religious.

In making government more respectful of religion, the faith-based and community initiative *has made government more respectful* of civil society organizations...

In making government more respectful of religion, the faith-based and community initiative has made government more respectful of civil society organizations, all of which need to be free from excessive government control. The religious reforms, notwithstanding heated disputes, have not doomed the effort to improve the nation's care of the needy. Rather, they have impelled, inspired, and required government to adopt a more respectful and supportive attitude to civil society.

Post-Bush administrations desiring further improvement on behalf of the poor and needy will strengthen, not weaken, the reforms that have made government more hospitable to faith-based social services.

Stanley W. Carlson-Thies
Director of Faith-Based Studies
Center for Public Justice

The FBCI and the Return of the Sacred in the Academy

IN 1994, DURING my first year of graduate study in the Princeton University Department of Sociology, I mentioned to one of my professors that I was interested in studying religion. This professor, who was unusually adept at anticipating and then riding the latest wave of academic fashion, tried to dissuade me from pursuing the academic study of religion. "Religion is a dead end," she told me.

Six years later, I heard she was lecturing on religion and racism at a conference at Yale University. To me, this was definitive proof that the longstanding marginalization of religion in the American academy was coming to a close. If this professor was turning her scholarly attention to religion, I thought, surely the academic study of religion was making a comeback.

Indeed, as sociologists John Schmalzbauer and Kathleen Mahoney pointed out in a recent issue of Contexts, the last decade or so has witnessed a veritable explosion in religion scholarship. For instance, from 1990 to 2005, membership in the American Academy of

Religion almost doubled from 5,500 to 10,300. The number of medical schools offering religion courses rose from five in 1992 to 86 in 2002. And more than a dozen major research centers dedicated to the academic study of religion—from Baylor University's Institute for Studies of Religion to Boston College's Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life—were founded in the last decade.

"Marginalized for the better part of a century, the study of religion is making a comeback in American higher education," wrote Schamlzbauer and Mahoney. "In this postmodern era, growing numbers of scholars are challenging the boundary between faith and knowledge, as well as acknowledging the importance of religion as a social phenomenon."

How can we account for the return of the sacred to the groves of the American academy? Certainly 9/11, the influence of religious conservatives in presidential politics, and dramatic increases in Christian faculty at our nation's colleges and universities have all conspired to help foster this renaissance in religion scholarship. But so too has President George W. Bush's 2001 Faith-based and Community Initiative (FBCI), as well as the 1996 Charitable Choice legislation that paved the way for the FBCI.

These two government efforts, which have sought to both open the door to government partnerships with faith-based organizations (FBO) and, in so doing, to more effectively fight our nation's biggest social problems, have spurred religion scholarship for at least two reasons. First, scholarly proponents and opponents of federal and state efforts to increase governmental and FBO cooperation have conducted hundreds of studies on the effectiveness of government-FBO partnerships or religious efforts to combat social problems like homelessness, criminal recidivism, and drug use in an effort to determine if the FBCI and Charitable Choice are wise ideas. Second, governments, think tanks, and universities have sponsored dozens of conferences to evaluate the FBCI and Charitable Choice, thereby encouraging academics to turn their attention to public-FBO partnerships, and, more generally, to religion's influence on American life.

Thus, I must conclude that one of the Faith-based and Community Initiative's most enduring contributions to our national life is that it has played a signal role in returning religion to a central place as an object of study and reflection in the American academy. Given the generally secular character of America's colleges and universities for much of the last century, and given all the ways that scholars in the natural and social sciences are now discovering that religion matters for the welfare of persons and societies, this is no small accomplishment.

W. Bradford Wilcox
Associate Professor of Sociology
University of Virginia

Unto Others – A Path to National Happiness and Wellness

THE FAITH-BASED and Community Initiative (FBCI) has done an immense amount to enhance the opportunities for people of faith, or even of no faith, to do "unto others" through acts of compassion and charity. Not only has this benefited

the recipients of such actions, but it has also benefited those who give of their time, energy and talents. This is accomplished in a manner that does not discriminate against people on the basis of faith tradition or the lack thereof.

The convergence of evidence strongly supports the hypothesis that benevolent emotions, attitudes and actions centered on the good of others contribute to the happiness, health, and even longevity of the giver. Because no research methodology is perfect, researchers in the social sciences and health outcomes look for consistent results across a variety of methods before reaching a conclusion as to the truth of any hypothesis. The evidence that "doing unto others" is good for the giver has reached this level of consistency.

A healthy life is, of course, the result of good diet and exercise and abstaining from smoking and other bad habits. However, it is also linked to generous and loving actions, emotions and thoughts. We need such a positive lifestyle in addition to all the good physical habits. One of the healthiest things a person can do is to step back from self-preoccupation and self-worry by focusing attention on helping others. When we get started young, this transformation has life-long health benefits, but there are benefits whenever we get started, even as older adults. The experience of helping others provides meaning, a sense of self-worth, a social role, and generally enhances health.

The FBCI has encouraged and supported the work of tens of millions of faith-motivated Americans and grassroots community organizations dedicated to helping those in need. As the saying goes, "if you help someone up the hill, you get closer yourself." There is also a rich research literature on the positive state called "the helper's high," a pleasurable and euphoric emotional sensation of energy and warmth. The "helper's high" was first carefully described by Allen Luks in 1988. Luks, in a survey of thousands of volunteers across the United States, found that people who helped others consistently reported better health than peers in their age group, and many stated that this health improvement began when they started to volunteer. Indeed, research of retirees confirms that volunteers scored significantly higher in life satisfaction, will to live, and had fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety.

The idea that giving "unto others" is, with certain qualifications, good for the giver, is not news in the sense that it echoes perennial moral and spiritual wisdom. Key spiritual and religious texts have long acknowledged the benefits of giving. Generally speaking, religious people are more generous and likely to volunteer than non-religious people. This enhanced altruism may explain any greater average longevity among regular worshippers.

The 9th-century sage Shantideva wrote, "All the joy the world contains has come through wishing the happiness of others." Proverbs 11:15 reads, "those who refresh others will be refreshed." In Acts 20, we find the words, "'Tis better to give than to receive." Now science confirms these truths.

Stephen G. Post

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About the Authors

Stanley W. Carlson-Thies is Director of Faith-Based Studies at the Center for Public Justice, a Washington, DC-area public-policy and leadership-development organization. Based on its ecumenical Christian perspective, the Center advocates for public policies that treat equally people and institutions of all faiths and no faith, and that protect and support the ability of nongovernmental organizations to carry out their services and missions. Carlson-Thies' focus is consulting, research, and advocacy in the area of government policy concerning faith-based organizations. He served with the White House Office of Faith-Based & Community Initiatives from its inception in February 2001 until mid-May 2002. He assisted with writing "Unlevel Playing Field: Barriers to Participation by Faith-Based and Community Organizations in Federal Social Service Programs," a report released by the White House in August 2001, and "Rallying the Armies of Compassion," the initial blueprint for President Bush's faith and community agenda.

Edward C. Green is a medical anthropologist and Senior Research Scientist at the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, part of Harvard University's School of Public Health. Green has 30 years of experience in developing countries in project design, implementation and evaluation, as well as in basic and operations research, social marketing, behavior change & communication, health education, and indigenous, non-Western medicine. His research experience includes AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, family planning, primary health care, maternal & child health, children affected by war, child nutrition, water and sanitation, environmental health, U.S. minority health, biodiversity and conservation, and cancer programs. Edward Green is a specialist in integrating indigenous and "modern" health systems. He has served as team leader on numerous USAID project designs and evaluations. Author of five books, editor of one book and author of over 250 peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters, conference papers, or commissioned technical reports.

Keith Humphreys is a Professor (Research) of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. He is also a Center for Health Policy/Primary Care and Outcomes Research associate at Stanford and the Director of the Program Evaluation and Resource Center at the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System, which is devoted to evaluating the quality and accessibility of public-sector services for addictive and psychiatric disorders. A clinical/community psychologist by training, he is currently studying the extent to which treatment research samples differ from patients seen in everyday clinical practice. His other current projects focus on the role of science in developing federal policy and on the effectiveness of consumer-intensive health management programs (such as self-help groups) in different countries. Dr. Humphreys is a fellow of the American Psychological Association and a Presidentially appointed member of the White House Advisory Commission on Drug Free Communities.

William H. Jeynes completed his graduate studies at Harvard University and the University of Chicago. Dr. Jeynes is one of the nation's leading researchers on the influence of religiosity and attending religious schools. He has conducted the only meta-analysis ever undertaken examining these issues in a series of journal articles and in his book, "Religion, Education, and Academic Success." He is the author of a number of books on education and has written dozens of academic journal articles. His research has focused on meta-analyses, educational attainment, the achievement gap, and comparisons between public and religious schools.

Byron R. Johnson is Professor Sociology and Co-Director of the Institute for Studies of Religion (ISR) as well as director of the Program on Prosocial Behavior, both at Baylor University. Johnson has directed research centers at Vanderbilt University and the University of Pennsylvania and is currently conducting a series of studies on the role of religion in prosocial youth behavior. He is recognized as a leading authority on the scientific study of religion, the efficacy of faith-based organizations, domestic violence, and criminal justice. Recent publications have examined the impact of faith-based programs on recidivism reduction and prisoner reentry. Along with other ISR colleagues he is completing a series of empirical studies on religion in China. Johnson's research has been used in consultation with the Department of Justice, Department of Defense, Department of Labor, and the National Institutes of Health.

Harold G. Koenig completed his undergraduate education at Stanford University, his medical school training at the University of California at San Francisco, and his geriatric medicine, psychiatry, and biostatistics training at Duke University Medical Center. He is board certified in general psychiatry, geriatric psychiatry and geriatric medicine, and is on the faculty at Duke as Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and Associate Professor of Medicine. Dr. Koenig is co-director of the Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health at Duke University Medical Center, and has published extensively in the fields of mental health, geriatrics, and religion, with over 250 scientific peer-reviewed articles and book chapters and 28 books in print or in preparation. He is editor of the *International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, and is founder and editor-in-chief of *Science* and *Theology News.*

Stephen V. Monsma joined the Paul B. Henry Institute for the Study or Christianity and Politics at Calvin College as Research Fellow in 2004. He is a former professor of political science and director of the Washington, D.C., Internship Program at Pepperdine University where he held the Blanche E. Seaver Chair in Social Science. He is a nonresident fellow at the Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion and at the Center for Public Justice. He has taught at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan (1967-1972), and served in the Michigan House of Representatives (1972-78) and Michigan Senate (1978-82). He also was a member of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission (1983-85) and a member of the top management team in the Michigan Department of Social Services (1985-87).

Stephen G. Post is Professor of Bioethics, Philosophy and Religion in the School of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University. He is recognized internationally for his work on the unselfish compassionate love at the nexus of science, ethics, religious thought, and behavioral medicine. He is a recognized expert on the spiritual and ethical aspects of caring for persons with dementia. Post has published over 130 articles in peer-reviewed journals such as *Science, International Journal of Behavioral Medicine, Annals of Internal Medicine, The Journal of Religion, American Journal of Psychiatry, Journal of the American Medical Association,* and *The Lancet.* He has written seven scholarly books on love, and is also the editor of eight other books, most recently including "Altruism & Health: Perspectives from Empirical Research, and Altruism" and "Altruistic Love: Science, Philosophy and Religion in Dialogue," both published by Oxford University Press. He is also editor-in-chief of the definitive, five-volume "Encyclopedia of Bioethics."

Rodney Stark grew up in Jamestown, North Dakota, and began his career as a newspaper reporter. Following a tour of duty in the U.S. Army, he received his PhD from the University of California, Berkeley, where he held appointments as a research sociologist at the Survey Research Center and at the Center for the Study of Law and Society. He left Berkeley to become Professor of Sociology and of Comparative Religion at the University of Washington. In 2004 he joined the faculty of Baylor University. He has published 30 books and more than 140 scholarly articles on subjects as diverse as prejudice, crime, suicide, and city life in ancient Rome. However, the greater part of his work has been on religion. He is past president of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and of the Association for the Sociology of Religion. He also has won a number of national and international awards for distinguished scholarship.

W. Bradford Wilcox is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia and a member of the James Madison Society at Princeton University. He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia and his PhD at Princeton University. Prior to coming to the University of Virginia, he held research fellowships at Princeton University, Yale University and the Brookings Institution. Mr. Wilcox's research focuses on marriage and cohabitation, and on the ways that gender, religion, and children influence the quality and stability of American family life. He has published articles on marriage, cohabitation, parenting, and fatherhood in *The American Sociological Review, Social Forces, The Journal of Marriage and Family* and *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion.* His first book, "Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands," (Chicago, 2004) examines the ways in which the religious beliefs and practices of American Protestant men influence their approach to parenting, household labor, and marriage.

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~ A CALL FOR EVIDENCE OF ACTION ~

Faith & Works: A Call for Evidence of Action is an interactive conference designed to bring together leading researchers, faith based volunteers and organizations, clergy and lay leaders, and policymakers This annual conference seeks to raise awareness among faith motivated practitioners of the need and value of objective evaluation research. The conference is also designed to create an active dialogue between researchers and faith based organizations with a view to understanding possible ways they might consider working together in respectful yet independent ways. Faith and Works will provide a unique venue to platform methodologically rigorous research examining the influence of religion and faith based efforts in addressing social problems as well as promoting prosocial behavior. Finally, the conference will shed light on the practical implications of research on religion and faith based initiatives for practitioners and policymakers alike.

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The Need for Faith, Community & Research Based Intermediaries • Religion and Civic Engagement, Charity, and Philanthropy

FEATURED SPEAKERS

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PROFESSOR OF HISTORY & RELIGIOUS STUDIES

JAY HEIN
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT, AND DIRECTOR OF THE OFBCI

STEPHEN G. POST
PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

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CO-DIRECTOR, BAYLOR INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES OF RELIGION

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