Community Ministries Today:
Nine Regionally Dispersed Case Studies

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Introduction

Religious communities have historically been an integral part of the social welfare safety net. However, their role as social service providers has gained increased attention during the past five years. Policy changes and growing concerns about the poor and America's disadvantaged neighborhoods have triggered a renewed interest in their programs and their service capacity.

During the 1990s, debates surrounding welfare reform included a call for religious communities to enlarge the shrinking safety net by expanding their social ministry. To promote this goal, lawmakers included the "charitable choice" provision in Section 104 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA). This provision allows states to partner with religious organizations in certain programs while protecting the religious character of the faith-based organizations and the religious freedom of the services' beneficiaries. Among other concerns, charitable choice stirred questions regarding congregations' ability to increase their involvement and meet the forecasted demands of welfare reform.

In 2001, President Bush announced the Faith-Based and Community Initiative which includes an agenda to expand charitable choice. This announcement fueled the national debate regarding faith-based organizations and their effectiveness, and amplified the need for research of religiously based ministries.

Community Ministries

The term "community ministry" refers to a faith-based social service model, sometimes referred to as "interfaith" or "ecumenical coalitions." Community ministries define themselves as faith-based, but they are separate organizations from the congregations and denominations that provide them with volunteers and financial contributions. The focus of their ministry can range from the neighborhood community to small towns and counties.

The community ministry movement is a significant and fairly recent development in American religious life. Beginning in the 1960s, religious congregations in urban and rural areas began to work together across denominational and faith boundaries in cooperative social ministry. Growing out of this movement, community ministry leaders began to contact and meet with one another during the 1980s to create an informal network that became by 1988, the Interfaith Community Ministry Network (ICMN). In 1994, ICMN was incorporated in Texas with a national board of directors and received its 501(c)3 nonprofit status in 1995.

Community ministries have several strengths that are important to social service delivery and rebuilding distressed neighborhoods. First, as faith-based organizations their mission is to serve the disadvantaged with compassion and flexible programs that are not constrained by rigid policies and strict eligibility requirements. Second, frequently focused on neighborhoods, they can identify concerns and bring needed services to local communities. In addition, networks and community assets are developed and strengthened through their cooperative projects with neighborhood congregations and other stakeholders. Finally, engaged at the local level, they can offer an important perspective for developing realistic and effective social policies.

Goals of the Community Ministry Study

Research interest in faith-based social services has surged as a result of the pressure being exerted on these nonprofit organizations. Most of what we know about religious social services is based on studies of congregations, whereas there has been little written about the structure and work of community ministries. Community ministries have their own resources and governance, however, and often have collaborative partners other than the congregations. Therefore, it is important to include community ministries in the analysis of faith-based social services.

This study addresses the role and capacity of community ministries in supporting and strengthening disadvantaged children, families, and neighborhoods. The research involves nine case studies representing regional and organizational variation. The four major areas of inquiry at each site are:

1. Organizational structure and strategies
2. Programs
3. Capacity of the ministries in terms of budgets and staffing
4. Clients' needs and the impact of welfare reform

Methodology

In addition to regional differences, the nine sites selected to participate in this study vary in terms of community profile, missions and programs, geographic service areas, and resources. The research methods included a survey instrument completed by each ministry with questions regarding organizational structure, staff, supporting congregations, programs, budgets, and client data. One site was selected as a pilot to develop interview instruments. Subsequent site visits involved approximately two days at each location and interviews with the executive directors, most program managers, and some staff members. At least one phone interview was conducted with each executive director prior to the site visit.

The research design originally called for client focus groups, which many sites found difficult to arrange. Therefore, methods for interviewing clients varied at the sites and included one-on-one interviews at 6 sites and a combination of one-on-one interviews and focus groups at two sites. There were no client interviews at 3 sites. Problems that made client focus groups and interviews difficult primarily involved client availability. In addition, it was not appropriate or fruitful for this study to ask probing questions of clients in crisis and those who had limited experiences with the community ministry.

Case Study Sites

The nine ministries selected for this study were United Ministries, Greenville, South Carolina; Northwest Assistance Ministries, Houston, Texas; South Louisville Community Ministry, Louisville, Kentucky; Christian Community Action, New Haven, Connecticut; Northwest Interfaith Movement, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Portland, Oregon; FaithWorks, Redding, California; Schenectady Inner City Ministry, Schenectady, New York; and Capitol Hill Group Ministry, Washington, D.C. Table 1 provides an overview of these nine sites. The following summary briefly describes the ministries and demonstrates the variation among them based on three key characteristics: organizational structure, budget, and programs.

Organizational Structure – Community ministries vary in how they define their relationship to the congregations associated with them and their geographic service areas. Some by-laws define churches as "members" and involve "covenants of support." Others refer to the churches as "supporting" or "affiliated" congregations. The ministries also vary in whether they are interfaith or ecumenical in their cooperative arrangements, and the scope of their service territory. The follow-ing provides a brief summary of the nine sites:

- Five of the 9 sites include congregations as members and one has denominational members. One site acts as a coordinating organization between the county and area congregations that sign a covenant letter with the ministry. The remaining 2 have less formal ties with "supporting" congregations.
- Six are formally defined as "interfaith," however, all nine ministries have cooperated with or received some support from other faith traditions.

Site	Year Founded	2000 Revenues	Percent of Revenues 2000			Paid Staff	Affiliated Cong.
			Gov.	Found.	Cong.		
United Ministries *Greenville, South Carolina*	1970	$1,655,122	0.6	16.4	—[a]	26	120
Northwest Assistance Ministries *Houston, Texas*	1983	$5,253,325	7.3	2.7	2.5	97	46
South Louisville Community Ministry *Louisville, Kentucky*	1976	$806,690	68.7	5.8	18.4	22	58
Christian Community Action *New Haven, Connecticut*	1967	$1,011,560	67.9	12.4	3.5	20	48
Northwest Interfaith Movement *Philadelphia, Philadelphia*	1970	$3,231,199	51.1	44.0	1.0	32	35
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon *Portland, Oregon*	1973	$3,965,753	55.4	17.8	2.2	50	17[b]
FaithWorks *Redding, California*	1998	$225,000[c]	100.0	—	—	5	151
Schenectady Inner City Ministry *Schenectady, New York*	1967	$794,641[d]	34.3	7.8	16.9	18	59
Capitol Hill Group Ministry *Washington, D.C.*	1967	$691,025	48.1	20.3	5.4	20	20

[a] Congregational contributions are unavailable because ministry reports combine them with business and individual contributions, which in total account for 72 percent of the ministry's revenues.

[b] EMO has denominational members.

[c] Revenue data excludes funds for SCFIRE, a special project under FaithWorks' umbrella that between 1998 and 2000 received over $300,000 from the churches.

[d] Revenue data based on 1999 revenues.

- Five sites offer city or county-wide services, however most of these ministries also have initiatives that focus on the local neighborhood level. Four of the ministries identify with and serve a particular community. However, all 4 of these ministries have contracts with either foundations or government agencies that extend their services to all city or county residents.

Budget – Annual revenues for 2000 ranged from $329,000 to approximately $5 million.

- Between 1995 and 2000, revenues increased at 6 out of 7 of the ministries. (One ministry was established in 1998 and one did not have data available for 2000.) Two ministries experienced increases of approximately 50 percent, while revenues at 4 ministries more than doubled. One ministry experienced a decrease of approximately 24 percent.
- As the ministries have expanded their missions, government funding has increased as a source of revenues. In 2000, government funding contributed the largest portion for 6 out of 8 ministries. Between 1995 and 2000, government funding increased by over 25 percent in all but one ministry, which decreased its government funding by 96 percent

and received only .6 percent from the government in 2000. The amount derived from the government either doubled or tripled at several ministries.

- In 2000, foundations were the second largest source of revenue for 5 out of 8 of the sites. Between 1995 and 2000, the amount of revenues derived from foundations increased by over 50 percent at 4 sites, and decreased by approximately 10 percent or less at 3 of the ministries. As a percentage of revenues, income gains from foundations during this time period were modest, increasing by 8 percentage points at one

site and less than 5 points at the rest.

- In 2000, congregational support was the second largest source of revenues for 1 ministry where it represents 18.4 percent.[1] Congregations contributed approximately 5 percent or less of the total revenues at the others. However, in terms of actual dollars, each site received a minimum of approximately $30,000 from congregations and several received close to $100,000 or more. Furthermore, a large portion of individual contributions, another significant source of income for many ministries, is likely from congregational members.

Programs

- Five sites provide emergency assistance with rent, utilities, and medication. Seven assist with food.
- Eight of the ministries provide either shelter or offer programs that directly help individuals achieve stable housing.
- Five ministries offer educational and employment readiness programs.
- Three sites are involved in services directly benefiting youth and the elderly.
- Other program areas include mentoring and case management, HIV/AIDS, health, family abuse, refugee resettlement, and day shelters for the homeless. Community projects include workshops, community forums and celebrations, and ecumenical worship services.

- Two sites develop and spin-off ministries as an integral part of their mission and a third, the newest ministry, hopes to eventually operate as an incubator for new programs.
- Most sites are involved in advocacy projects at the local, state or federal level. Advocacy issues include hunger, housing, welfare reform, tax legislation, child care, and community issues such as racism, police brutality, and transportation. Advocacy projects include networking, participating in collaborative public policy initiatives, testifying before public and legislative hearings, serving on city task forces, and hosting public forums and seminars. Some sites work to actively engage congregations in advocacy or teach clients to advocate for themselves.

In the following case studies, I attempt to capture the "spirit" and mission that makes each community ministry unique and demonstrate the importance of the social context in which they are located.

Simultaneously, I show the rich variation among the ministries in their programs, relationships with congregations, budgets, organizational structure and the role that faith plays in their ongoing operations.

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[1] Another ministry received 46 percent of its total revenues from congregations. However, these funds were earmarked for a special project and funneled to a separate organization; the ministry's remaining funds were received from the government. A second site combines congregational, business, and individual contributions, which totaled 72 percent of their 2000 revenues.

United Ministries

Greenville, South Carolina

In 1990, Reverend Beth Templeton, the executive director of United Ministries (UM), noticed that a few female prostitutes came regularly to UM's *Place of Hope* day shelter for the homeless. After struggling for sometime with how to respond to their particular set of circumstances, she decided to ask the women a question: "If you had the chance to change your life, would you want to do it?" This question sparked the beginning of intense weekly counseling sessions with people ready to change, and a new way of thinking about ministry for the executive director and her staff. Templeton learned from this experience that "when an organization is willing to develop caring relationships with people, to be their best friend and worst enemy, to advocate for them whenever and wherever appropriate, then significant changes can happen."

This lesson prompted UM's staff to create a service model aimed at intervention rather than entitlement. Reflective of their new philosophy, UM staff began to speak of clients as participants, people willing to participate in their own recovery. In 1991, UM revised its mission statement to align with their new vision for the ministry: *UM assists poor people in emerging from hurting situations by providing for basic needs and by creating environments which allow people to make positive life changes.*

This re-visioning is just one example of UM's thirty-year history of self-examination and adaptive change. United Ministries was founded in 1970 by the South Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. By 1973, the organization was an ecumenical ministry representing a cooperative effort between Greenville County's churches and faith-based agencies.

During the early 1980s, UM lost approximately $400,000 in federal funding and almost folded. UM reorganized and became more volunteer intensive, which helped strengthen the ministry's ties with the churches and expand its capacity to meet the city's growing emergency assistance needs.

COMMUNITY

UM programs are open to all county residents but many participants come from the area immediately surrounding UM's urban facilities. The Director of Programs gives tours of this neighborhood to UM's congregational supporters to expose them to the extreme poverty of the community and the world of the homeless. The tour passes through narrow, hairpin roads by neglected homes that have no plumbing or heat. Burned-out shells attest to the fire hazards associated with having no utilities and the difficulty emergency vehicles have accessing homes because of the narrow roadways.

As part of this tour, UM programs director points to makeshift camps and holes in the ground where many of Place of Hope's homeless visitors sleep. Encouraging congregational members to recognize the need for social change, he explains to his tour groups: "Laws are written by, and designed from, the perspective of the rich. It is hard to get a job or access services without an address or proper identification…Outreach is reaching out from where you stand to help somebody else.

Servanthood demands that you change where you stand."

PROGRAMS

In 1993, UM adopted a new service model to support the ministry's new mission. This model has three components that are depicted as interlocking circles: survival, stabilization, and barrier removal. Each program area is designed to address one of these three goals but participants may be engaged in more than one program area at a time.

Survival – Helping people become self-reliant is the focus of the ministry; however, UM believes that meeting basic needs is an important first step. In 2000, Emergency Assistance interviewed 6,229 individuals in need of assistance with food or financial support. In support of UM's goal to engage people as program participants rather than clients, UM requires that emergency assistance applicants attend a budgeting workshop before they see a counselor.

In 2000, 647 individuals came to the *Place of Hope* day shelter for a total of 12,332 visits. *Place of Hope* provides homeless people with a place to rest and socialize. Visitors have access to lockers, mailboxes, showers, laundry facilities, a phone, and community service agencies. Most importantly, counselors are available for visitors requesting additional services. Based on their skills, physical and mental health, and their willingness to work at improving their situation, Place of Hope clients may be referred to any one of UM's stabilization or barrier removal programs.

Stabilization – Through its Transitions program, UM provides intensive, long-term case management to help participants stabilize and access services and benefits for which they are eligible. In 2000, case managers helped 131 individuals locate housing and access community services. One example is a stroke victim who still likes to visit Place of Hope although he now has a home. Released from prison after 16 years and without a place to live, Transitions counselors helped him obtain an electric wheelchair and the documentation necessary to be accepted into a subsidized housing unit. Describing how UM has stood by him and helped him gain his independence, he said: "I thought I was at the bottom of the deck—just out of the pen and no family. God put the right people here at the right time. I don't know where I would have been."

Barrier Removal – In 2000, 739 participants completed the workshop series offered through UM's Employment Readiness program. Drug free participants interested in finding employment are given instruction in completing job applications, the interview process, and appropriate workplace attitudes. In 2000, 458 fully prepared participants became employed, many of them in jobs with benefits and an hourly wage of $8 or more.

Currently operating out of space donated by a supporting congregation, UM's *Life Skills* program offers an adult middle school and GED classes with courses in reading, English, and math. In addition, *Life Skills* provides training workshops for stress management, parenting, and computer skills. In 2000, 325 students enrolled in one or more classes and 179 were

awarded certificates of educational promotion. Currently, UM is conducting a $2 million campaign drive to fund the purchase and renovation of a large building to permanently house the *Life Skills* adult education program.

By providing evening classes, transportation, meals, and childcare, UM eliminates many of the obstacles that can prevent lower-income adults from pursuing an education. Students are enthusiastic about their classes and have good attendance records. As one student's comments indicate, the personal attention students receive may be partly responsible: "[The teachers and staff] just open up their arms to you. They know if a student isn't here—they know you and your kid's name—and they see potential in us that we don't even see."

CONGREGATIONAL TIES

UM is not a member organization but has 120 "supporting congregations" that provide financial contributions, in-kind donations, and volunteers. All supporting congregations are Christian except for a Jewish synagogue. Templeton estimates that this support represents approximately one-third of the Greenville church population. She acknowledges that their support comes mostly from moderate to liberal mainline churches and that the more evangelical and fundamentalist churches do not support UM because evangelism is not part of its mission.

Originally, UM was governed by a General Assembly of congregational representatives. This eventually became too unwieldy and in 1988 they added a traditional fifteen-member board and created a two-tier system. UM is very intentional in its goals of maintaining

strong ties with supporting congregations and providing them with ministry opportunities. Strategies for maintaining support and communication include a monthly newsletter, consistent outreach to key lay leaders, church bulletin inserts, a clergy advisory group, and an annual community worship service that celebrates diversity and ecumenism.

Approximately 300 volunteers, many of them from congregations, work at UM interviewing clients in the Emergency Assistance program, operating the food pantry, compiling job lists, and providing administrative support. The *Life Skills* adult middle school utilizes a combination of professional and volunteer teachers; volunteers provide transportation, childcare and meals for the students. UM is piloting a program partly funded by a Robert Wood Johnson Faith in Action grant that utilizes volunteers to monitor and support people with long-term healthcare needs.

BUDGET AND STAFF

UM remains cautious about government funding, which in 2000 represented only .6 percent of its total revenues. Congregational support is pooled with corporate and individual contributions in UM's audit reports. Combined, these three revenue sources accounted for 72 percent of the annual income in 2000. Foundation grants and United Way contributions represented 16 and 9 percent respectively.

UM has a total of 26 paid positions, 18 of which are full-time. The Director of Programs, an Episcopalian deacon who reports to the Executive Director, oversees all programs and supervises four program managers and the program staff. Other positions include a Director of Development, Director of Business Operations, four Assistant Program Managers, program area assistants, and clerical and support personnel.

THE ROLE OF FAITH

Templeton explains that UM does not exist to evangelize but to help people solve problems of poverty. For her, being a faith-based organization is not about participants' accountability as much as it is about UM's: "By being faith-based, we can ask for forgiveness when we do what we should not have, and we can ask for forgiveness when we do not do what we should."

UM's policy prohibits the discussion of religion unless the participant "opens the door" and asks about God or spiritual matters. Templeton points out that the answer a participant gets will depend on the staff member or volunteer they ask. Staff members belief systems represent a wide range on the continuum between fundamentalism and atheism, but to many it is important that UM is faith-based. One program manager explains that he does not evangelize, but faith is still an integral part of what he does: "I am responsible for myself, but my connection to God is essential and I try to let that light shine out."

In a new visioning process, Templeton and her staff recently identified public advocacy as something the ministry has a "moral obligation" to pursue. In a brainstorming document designed to encourage this new venture, Templeton draws heavily on UM's faith roots: "Part of our mission as disciples of Christ is to bring the judgement and gospel of God to bear on the structures, values, and culture of our time. As Christians become involved in ministries of service, it is natural that they should also become concerned about the causes of the problems they are seeking to remedy."

Northwest Assistance Ministries

Houston, Texas

The couple sitting at the large conference table looked weary and bewildered by the circumstances that had left them homeless. Just an hour ago they were downstairs applying for food from the emergency assistance program at Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM). Now their two children were playing quietly on the floor while a NAM social worker offered them a space in the ministry's shelter and case management program for homeless families. Looking wide-eyed at her husband, the wife said: "I think this may be our chance to really get our life together."

Operating out of a single building allows Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM) to offer its clients an array of services with the convenience of "one-stop shopping," an important benefit in Houston's sprawling environment. Since it was founded in 1983, NAM has grown from an emergency assistance ministry to an organization that in 2000 had revenues totaling more than $5 million. Over the years, as the organization and the scope of the ministry expanded, so did its number of locations. In 1997, NAM moved into its present location, a four-story building renovated to meet the functional, technical, and security needs of its programs.

Anais Watsky, NAM's recently retired executive director, acknowledges that owning and renovating an 80,000 square foot building was "harder to pull-off" than she realized it would be, but she still believes it has been good for the ministry. The real estate has proven to be a wise investment that eliminates leasing costs and makes it

easier to manage the organization. Most importantly, it gives clients easy access to all of NAM's services, as well as to WIC, Even Start and many other agencies that have offices in NAM's building.

COMMUNITY

NAM is one of approximately fourteen community ministries operating in Harris County that uses zipcode boundaries to define the geographical areas of service and congregational support. These fourteen community ministries operate independently, although at various times in their histories many have belonged to an umbrella organization that is now disbanded. Coordinating their geographic areas of service is one of the few examples of formal cooperation between Houston's community ministries.

When NAM was founded, its territory was representative of many Houston suburban developments that exploded on the scene and flourished during the city's economic boom during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The com-

munity was affluent and its population almost 100 percent Anglo. An oil related economic recession during the mid-1980s resulted in high unemployment rates that impacted professionals in Houston's energy sector, as well as unskilled laborers.

During the same period, increased immigration flows brought diversity and many undocumented Latinos to the Houston metropolitan area. During the past twenty years, this diversity has spread to NAM's relatively large territory, creating pockets of poverty in the community and an increased number of immigrants, many of whom work in low-paying jobs without private insurance and who are ineligible for public benefits.

PROGRAMS

NAM offers a holistic approach, assessing clients' needs and matching them with NAM's programs and other community services. As part of the intake process, counselors carefully evaluate which of NAM's programs could benefit a

client. A computerized database of client records enhances the efficiency of the intake and referral process and prevents duplicated effort. Staff members make every effort to see referrals as quickly as possible.

The Assistance Program, which is often a client's first contact with NAM, provides help with rent, utilities, medical prescriptions, food, gasoline vouchers, school supplies and clothing, and holiday food and toys. In fiscal year 1998/1999, the Assistance Program served 6,349 families and distributed over $96,000 for emergency shelter assistance. Other NAM programs include a Meals-On-Wheels service that delivered 62,556 hot lunches to seniors in 1998/1999; Sixty Plus, a senior's activity center that includes a gymnasium, bridge club and recreation center; a fully monitored family violence center that provides shelter and social service programs for battered women and their children; and Interfaith Hospitality Network, a day-time facility and case management program that coordinated with member congregations to provide around the clock shelter for 22 homeless families in 1998/1999.

COLLABORATIONS

"Needs always push us" is how Watsky explains NAM's progressive evolution over the years. But she also recommends collaborations as a successful way to expand a ministry's outreach, as long as partners "keep common goals and clients' needs as the main emphasis."

The children's health clinic, which opened in 1994, is an example of how both community needs and collaboration have been instrumental to NAM's growth. Concerned about the lack of available healthcare in the community,

Watsky served on a committee that hoped to spur the development of a county health clinic in the area. They learned however, that a clinic in northwest Houston was not even in the county's ten-year plan, an omission that became NAM's impetus for starting the Children's Clinic.

In collaboration with the University of Texas's (UT) medical school, NAM's Children's Clinic provides primary healthcare to children 0 to 12 years of age who do not have private insurance. The clinic's medical staff includes a full-time pediatrician, a certified pediatric nurse practitioner, 2 registered nurses, 2 LVNs, and a social worker who provides resource assistance and case management for critical cases and those ineligible for public benefits. In addition, the clinic serves as a UT teaching facility to help prepare medical and nurse practitioner students for working with under-served and at-risk population groups.

The clinic encourages well-child exams and has many established patients. Between 1995 and 1999, the clinic's number of patients increased from approximately 1,800 to 2,300 and the number of office visits from 4,560 to approximately 7,500. Many patients suffer from typical upper-respiratory ailments such as ear-aches, coughs and colds. The clinic also treats a relatively large number of asthmatic children because of the dusty and moldy apartments in which they live.

Patient fees are on a sliding scale (with a minimum fee of $5.00) determined by family size and income. UT assists with the collection of reimbursements from Medicaid and Texas' Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which are important revenues for

the clinic. Reimbursements and the clinic's number of Medicaid patients have not kept pace with the clinic's growth. The number of Medicaid patients increased between 1995 and 1999 by only .2 percent, whereas the clinic's patient load increased by 25.1 percent during the same time period. NAM's leaders attribute this to Texas' stringent Medicaid enrollment and eligibility requirements. The clinic also has few patients covered by CHIP. Many at NAM stated that they believe CHIP has the potential to be a good program, but that the state needs to conduct a more aggressive outreach campaign.

In 1998, NAM entered into a collaborative effort with a local community college that received a government grant to help TANF clients prepare for the workforce. The CareerStart program offers a continuing education program that trains its students to work as receptionists and clerical support. NAM, its clients, and the community college all benefit from this collaboration. NAM received 20 computers and the community college's expertise, and the community college acquired a natural setting for reaching its target population. Many of CareerStart's students are referred from on-site programs such as NAM's Rotary Learning Center, which in 1999 provided more than 900 with GED and ESL classes. Many of these students were able to enhance their new GED credentials by completing CareerStart's secretarial training program.

CONGREGATIONAL TIES

NAM has always defined its ministry as interfaith and the original ten congregations that started NAM included a Jewish synagogue.

Today, NAM's 47 supporting congregations include a Unity church and a Baha'i congregation. Originally, a board of trustees that included two representatives from each covenanted congregation governed NAM. As NAM grew, it became necessary to modify this structure so that NAM is now primarily governed by an elected executive board that meets monthly, as well as the board of trustees which now meets only four times a year. An effort is made to insure that the executive board is ethnically diverse and comprised of members from large and small congregations.

NAM utilizes over 2,000 volunteers throughout its operation, most of whom come from the congregations and feel "they are living their faith." Some work regular schedules, such as the nearly 40 trained counselors that interview and serve clients in the Assistance Program and the 555 volunteers that deliver meals. Some volunteers work on a rotational basis such as those who work as congregational hosts for homeless families in the Interfaith Hospitality Network program. Other volunteers work during high-peak periods on projects such as the back-to-school clothing drive and special holiday events. As one program manager states: "We couldn't open our doors every day without volunteers."

BUDGET AND STAFF

In fiscal year 1999/2000, NAM's budget was approximately $5.3 million. Only 7.3 percent of the budget was derived from the government, primarily from FEMA money for emergency assistance with shelter and food and funds for the family violence center. Individuals contributed 22.8 per-

cent and accounted for the largest source of revenues. The ministry's two resale shops, the second largest source of revenues, accounted for approximately 20 percent of the budget. The resale shops are stocked with second-hand items that are donated by members of NAM's congregations and other members of the community to help fund the ministry and provide a clothing closet for NAM's clients. In 1999/2000, foundations and congregations accounted for 2.7 and 2.5 percent respectively.

Watsky first began working as a volunteer at NAM in 1984 and became its director in 1987. Her focused approach, as revealed in the following comment, has been instrumental in shaping the organization's structure and spirit: "I don't want to know how we did it last year—that means nothing to me. I want to know what will make it better. I want us to always be looking at the situation and trying to be reasonable, cost effective and caring." In addition to the executive director, NAM staffs 97 paid positions including an assistant director, a fund development director, a human resources director, and a financial officer, program directors, a resale shop director, funds development personnel, social workers, medical professionals, and accounting and support staff.

THE ROLE OF FAITH

NAM's policy regarding religion is not to discuss it unless clients ask to talk about it. Staff members and volunteers are trained that this policy is necessary because there are so many different faith traditions represented at NAM. Watsky sees this diversity as a benefit for staff and volunteers because "barriers come

down as they interact and begin to understand one another's religion."

Many staff members like working at NAM because it is a faith-based organization and most volunteers come from community congregations. A Christian program manager explains that working at NAM is a "way of serving my God" but also indicates that she would never be disrespectful of another's belief or non-belief. Another program manager summarizes faith's role at NAM: "Religion plays a big, but unspoken role… otherwise, I don't think you would have the same level of dedication, commitment and caring for the individuals that walk through our doors."

South Louisville Community Ministry
Louisville, Kentucky

Three nights a week the nearly deafening din of 100 children can be heard emanating from the refurbished fellowship hall that South Louisville Community Ministry (SLCM) leases from a small church. The children who come to play and eat a hot evening meal live in the nearby Iroquois housing project, the largest subsidized housing complex in Kentucky. SLCM started its *Kids' Café* after the youth services' manager witnessed a small boy rummaging through a garbage dumpster and drinking from a milk carton that he found in the trash.

Community ministries see a need and respond—that is how a Louisville interfaith agency, in its newsletter, describes the mission that has spawned and driven the development of SLCM and fourteen other faith-based coalitions in the city's neighborhoods. With their geographic areas of service and congregational support defined by zipcodes, the challenge becomes to identify needs and find the necessary resources as the neighborhoods change.

Reverend Mike Jupin, SLCM's executive director, meets this challenge by maintaining close ties with SLCM's member churches and listening to his staff. When Jupin learned about the hungry child pulling food from the trash, he solicited support from corporate sponsors and negotiated with the church for space to open the *Kids' Café*. The youth services' manager explains: "*Kid's Café* could not have been here without Mike. He doesn't micro-manage. He lets us run our programs, but he listens to us and pulls things together. He matches our concerns with resources."

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY

In 1976, when SLCM was formed, there were already several community ministries in Louisville and the idea was "kind of in the air," according to Jupin who has served as SLCM's executive director for sixteen years. SLCM actively participates with other Louisville ministries in the Association of Community Ministries (ACM). Founded in 1986, ACM facilitates networking among the community ministries, promotes awareness of their work, and assists the ministries with joint fundraising projects. ACM also acts as a fiscal agent in response to requests from funders who prefer that the ministries submit joint proposals and divide the funds among them.

SLCM also participates in Metro Human Needs Alliance (MHNA), a federation of Louisville social service agencies that advocates for affordable utility rates and provides educational and networking opportunities for local agencies involved in emergency assistance. The community ministries coordinate their service area boundaries through MHNA to avoid duplicated services and to effectively reach under-served areas. Utilizing the community ministries facilitates the equitable distribution of countywide services such as energy assistance funds, and helps clients who have transportation problems to access these services.

SLCM's territory has become increasingly diverse, both ethnically and economically. The Iroquois housing project that is predominantly African American and the Americana Apartments, a community center for immigrants and refugees, have increased the diversity and the need in the area. Community changes have also impacted the neighborhood churches such as one congregation that has been reduced from 300 member families to only seven. An aging Anglo population, ethnic change, and an airport expansion that closed 16 churches in SLCM's area have reduced the vitality of the community's congregations. The challenges these changes have presented have also been the

inspiration behind many of the ministry's programs, such as *Kids' Café*.

One example of this is the Louisville Economic Opportunity Corporation (LEO), a nonprofit subsidiary of SLCM. LEO builds new homes for those whose income is at or below 80 percent of the area's median income. One of LEO's success stories is a charming neighborhood of homes ranging between 1,000 and 1,400 square feet that was developed for families displaced by the expansion of Louisville's airport. LEO successfully negotiated cooperation from nearby residents who were concerned that the lower income development would negatively impact their property values. SLCM also coordinated the process so that former long-term neighbors would still live next door to one another in their new homes. Ten years later, the homes look as fresh and neat as though they were newly constructed.

PROGRAMS

SLCM's administrative work and program services operate out of four different locations, each linked to a member congregation that either donates the space, or leases it to SLCM for a small fee. In addition to emergency assistance, there are three major program areas: 1) Comenzando Bien (Good Beginnings), a prenatal care program for Latinas; 2) youth services; and 3) elders' services.

In 1998, SLCM added a bilingual Latino Coordinator to its staff and implemented Comenzando Bien to address the prenatal needs of the growing Hispanic population. Utilizing materials from the March of Dimes organization, the coordinator provides pregnant Latinas with nutritional informa-

tion and helps them receive prenatal care by acting as an interpreter and assisting healthcare professionals to understand and break through cultural barriers.

Youth Services – The fellowship hall where Kids' Café operates was once neglected and boarded-up. With church volunteers and corporate donations, SLCM transformed the space into a dining hall serviced by a professional kitchen. SLCM is also developing a computer lab with a grant from United Parcel Service, a frequent and generous supporter. In fiscal year 2000, staff and church volunteers provided over 12,000 nutritious meals, as well as gave the children adult hugs and interaction. According to the youth services' manager, a Baptist minister, his staff members can be strict and demanding but they also nurture the children and are known as "safe adults" who the kids can go to for help.

The manager and SLCM also participate in a collaborative effort involving the County Attorney's office that provides intervention programs for first-time juvenile offenders. The primary focus is to direct eligible youth away from the formal court process and into programs that will teach accountability and help them develop the tools they need to stay out of trouble. Participating community ministries have formed the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, a coordinating organization through which the managers have compiled a manual of their successful strategies. MHNA serves as a fiscal agent for the coalition.

This program is built around developing relationships with the children and teaching them how their actions impact their commu-

nity. Since 1995, approximately 320 teens have gone through the program. The confidentiality of court records has made it difficult for the manager to know about the program's success rate; however, he knows that some of "his kids made it" because they come back to visit him. One of "his kids" has a little boy who he named after the manager.

Elders' Services – SLCM provides three major services for senior citizens: Meals-on-Wheels, outreach services to help senior citizens maintain their independence, and an adult day care center. SLCM volunteers deliver 20,000 meals a year to 100 senior citizens through the government-funded Meals-on-Wheels program. SLCM has not been granted an increase in the number of funded meals in 16 years. Although a local Catholic hospital, Caritas, added a route of 10 meals, there still remains a consistent backlog of 50 or more senior citizens' who usually wait 6 months to one year for a slot to become available because of the community's aging population.

SLCM also operates as a contractor under the Older Persons Act providing Title IIIB outreach services. In 1999, counselors provided 739 elders with information about healthcare and community services, loans of medical equipment, and support during major life changes.

The Adult Day Care Center was implemented in 1999 when SLCM realized that additional services were needed to help keep their aging Meals-on-Wheels' seniors out of nursing homes. The center provides a structured environment where caregivers can safely leave frail elders during normal working hours, five days a week. Large win-

dows and pastel-colored walls create a bright and cheerful space where participants have an active calendar of activities.

CONGREGATIONAL TIES
SLCM has 50 member congregations that have each signed SLCM's letter of intent stating that the congregation subscribes to SLCM's mission and that it will support the ministry with volunteers, financial contributions, and in-kind donations. Member churches each designate one voting delegate to represent the congregation. These delegates are responsible for electing 13 directors who must be either a member or a pastor of a member church, and two additional at-large members from the community.

SLCM's current by-laws state that its purpose is to be an "interfaith association of churches." However, the increasing ethnic and religious diversity of the community has prompted some discussion of amending the by-laws to redefine the organization as ecumenical rather than interfaith.

Jupin considers it an important responsibility of the community ministry to "keep churches connected to the people and people connected to the churches." Approximately 80 to 90 percent of SLCM's 250 volunteers come from the churches. SLCM hired a Volunteer Coordinator with funds from a Robert Wood Johnson Faith in Action grant to recruit and organize more volunteers. Jupin believes that operating out of the congregations' facilities is an important advantage that helps maintain their ties with the churches and solidify their identity as a faith-based organization. Furthermore, SLCM screens emergency aid applicants who are then referred to the churches to receive

financial aid. This helps churches stay involved and "remember that there are people who need help," according to the emergency assistance manager.

BUDGET AND STAFF
In 2000, government funding represented 70 percent of SLCM's revenues, the largest portion of its over $800,000 budget. However, the loss of a government contract to provide job training and mentoring programs for TANF clients reduced this portion to approximately 57 percent in 2001. Congregations are SLCM's second largest source of contributions supplying 18 percent of its revenues in 2000. Foundations and program service fees contributed 6 percent and 3 percent respectively.

SLCM has 22 paid positions, 13 full-time and 9 part-time. Paid positions include 3 program managers, 4 emergency assistance counselors, a volunteer coordinator, care providers for the Adult Day Care Center, and coordinators for the Meals on Wheels and Comenzando Bien programs.

THE ROLE OF FAITH
SLCM policy discourages overt religious expression because the ministry is supported by so many different denominations and because it receives government funding. Jupin argues that this policy is also appropriate because providing direct services is a "worthy goal" and they are not there to evangelize. However, he also believes that providing volunteers with outreach opportunities is a responsibility of the community ministry and would like to offer his volunteers avenues to serve in programs that articulate a faith-based approach.

Like Jupin, SLCM's program managers are all people of faith—one is ordained, another has a Minister of Divinity degree, and the third is a Catholic nun. They each stress that faith plays a strong part in why they are there and that the work they do is "not a job, but a ministry." In discussing SLCM's policy, the youth services' manager acknowledges that he is careful about discussing faith with the children "because of church and state separation issues." He states that he does not feel restricted however, because "you cannot separate the preacher from the person and my faith comes out in the love that I show the children."

Christian Community Action

New Haven, Connecticut

A program co-director at Christian Community Action (CCA) in New Haven, Connecticut, who is also a former welfare recipient, becomes almost breathless in her rush to describe how a CCA program changed her life. She credits CCA with helping her become "empowered" to address community issues and change things that were barriers for herself and her children: "I was always motivated before but there was something missing—it was support. If I stopped [trying] there wasn't anybody pushing me. The lady next door to me was on welfare. Everybody was on welfare…Being an African American woman, my mother said you just kind of accept it and you don't speak out."

The language and ministry of CCA is about affirmation, empowerment and second chances. CCA's executive director, Reverend Bonita Grubbs, believes that the "bootstrap" image of self-improvement is unjust and asks: "How many chances does someone deserve? How open should the door be?"

In the 1960s, CCA was a "kitchen table" organization, born out of a dialogue between Catholics and Protestants who wanted to put their faith into action. The ecumenical gathering found its mission in 1967 when fires left several families homeless. Homelessness and hunger have remained a focal point of the ministry throughout its history.

During the past few years, CCA has broadened its vision and mission. The ministry has always recognized that there are systemic reasons for poverty and combined advocacy with providing direct services. In the past, however,

these direct services primarily focused on meeting individual's emergency needs. CCA's expanded mission now includes providing and advocating for the support people need to overcome adverse social conditions and to move out of poverty.

CCA's programs are open to all New Haven residents. However, most of the individuals they serve are from the Hill neighborhood, one of the poorest communities in the region. Originally settled by European immigrants, "the Hill" population transitioned during the past century to primarily Black and Latino families. Densely populated, the Hill is known for heavy drug trafficking, and many of its residents are on welfare. CCA realized that families need hope and encouragement to help them take advantage of those opportunities that do exist. Through experience, they learned that while individuals must be motivated they also need long-term support to become independent. CCA's goal is to give people a protected environment where

they can safely experience their range of options and "do some work."

MISSION SUPPORTING PROGRAMS

In 1993, CCA revised its mission statement to clearly articulate its triangulated strategy: CCA is an ecumenical social service organization that expresses faithful witness through providing emergency food, housing and support to those who are poor in New Haven, encouraging their efforts to attain self-sufficiency and working to change systems that perpetuate poverty and injustice.

…providing emergency food, housing and support to those who are poor

CCA serves emergency needs through its food pantry, which assisted over 14,000 individuals in 1998, and its Hillside Family Shelter. Hillside Family Shelter (HFS) helps homeless families in crisis to stabilize emotionally, find work, and locate permanent housing. Since 1971, CCA's emergency shelter capacity has grown from four to seventeen furnished apartments that range in size from efficiency to three bedrooms. In 1999, HFS provided 256 families with emergency shelter.

Most of the HFS case managers are not college educated but "talk the language" of Hillside's tenants, an advantage in accurately evaluating the residents and their progress, according to the program's director. One tenant stated that she has felt "like she is home" while at Hillside, partially because many staff members are people

that she knew while growing up in the neighborhood.

Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) is the programs' major funding source. DSS reimburses CCA for tenants who meet DSS eligibility requirements for emergency shelter. DSS also provides a yearly grant to help CCA provide housing for those families who do not meet the eligibility requirements, such as undocumented immigrants. At one time, families were allowed to stay at HFS for 120 days, but this has been reduced to 60 days because of DSS funding cuts. According to the program's director, this has made it difficult for families to stabilize before they leave.

...encouraging their efforts to attain self-sufficiency

CCA learned in a study of former Hillside Family Shelter tenants that many who they had helped find permanent housing remained in that housing for only one year. Therefore, CCA developed the Stepping Stone transitional housing program to give them more time to help the people they serve achieve financial security and lasting change. CCA renovated an abandoned school building and opened Stepping Stone in 1998, funded by a U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant, as well as a small grant from Connecticut Department of Social Services. The project includes eighteen private apartments, common recreational and utility space, and administrative office space for Stepping Stone staff members and other social service agencies.

Case managers work with residents to help them define and reach their goals. Residents, many of whom are referred from CCA's Hillside Family Shelter program,

may stay for 24 months. However, CCA will also grant extensions. A case manager explains that Stepping Stone is built on the foundational principle of "hanging-in there" with people: "This is not a place where three strikes and you're out. It is a place of third and fourth chances."

Staff members want the residents, most of whom have lived their lives with chaos and insecurity, to experience at Stepping Stone what it is like to feel at peace in their own home. One resident expressed how Stepping Stone has changed her perspective: "I have expectations of where I'm going. I know now that I determine my destination. I have power over whether I go back to living in a rat-infested apartment or a decent clean neighborhood."

...working to change systems that perpetuate poverty and injustice

Through its Welfare Justice Project, CCA works with other organizations to monitor and impact social policy. The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven is this program's major funding source. The Welfare Justice Project's two co-directors also provide technical assistance to Mothers for Justice, a self-directed group that CCA founded for women who are either currently receiving welfare or who have received it in the past.

Mothers for Justice members lend the voice of personal experience to the public debate regarding welfare issues and challenge assumptions and stereotypes about the disadvantaged while learning to advocate for themselves. For example, Mothers for Justice members who were participating in a state job's program that was in danger of being cut met with state senators to argue for the program.

Their efforts resulted in a measure that allowed current participants to continue in the program.

Mothers for Justice is also the only source of complaints that have reached the Department of Social Services regarding the late and inaccurate payments to child care providers that have been made by the government's contractor. These payment errors caused at least one member of Mothers for Justice to be dropped by her child care provider.

CONGREGATIONAL TIES

CCA's mission statement defines the ministry as an ecumenical social service organization but it is not a "member organization." Grubbs describes the relationship between CCA and the 48 congregations that support it as a partnership. Although the organization is Christian-based, some of CCA's supporting religious communities are Jewish. The board is composed of community members who volunteer to serve. There are no term limits and several board members have served for many years. Currently, two board members are from supporting congregations.

Grubbs indicates that most of the congregations that support CCA are located in suburban areas, some distance from the urban Hill neighborhood where CCA's office and housing programs are. CCA has one regularly scheduled volunteer who works four hours a week. However, supporters are encouraged to participate in several ways. One example is the Adopt-an-Apartment program that asks for commitments to help maintain an emergency housing apartment and become involved in family events. Currently, nine congregations and three civic organizations have adopted apartments. Most congre-

gational volunteering occurs when churches sponsor a mission day that focuses on CCA. In addition, large numbers of volunteers from the congregations help with CCA's annual Thanksgiving Basket distribution, which served over 1,500 families in 2000.

BUDGET AND STAFF

CCA's annual budget for 2000 was slightly over $1 million. Government funding is the largest source of revenues representing 68 percent of the total budget for 2000. Foundations and individual contributions accounted for 12.3 percent and 5.4 percent respectively. Congregations contributed 3.4 percent to the 2000 budget.

CCA has a total of 20 paid positions. Only two positions, the activities and computer resource coordinators for Stepping Stone, are part-time. Full-time positions include four program directors, four case managers, coordinators for the shelter and the food pantry, and building maintenance and support personnel. Grubbs, who has served as CCA's executive director for 12 years, is an ordained minister and has a master's degree in public health.

In only one year, the size of CCA's staff, which is largely African American and Latino, increased from 12 to 20, but many of the employees have been with the organization for ten or more years. This includes some of the case managers who have grown with CCA and draw on life experiences rather than a formal degree. One case manager explains that she wants to work at CCA because she understands the community and the circumstances that confront CCA's residents: "I remember growing up in the Hill and watching my

father struggle to put food on the table." The case managers report to the directors of the emergency and transitional housing programs who are both professional social workers.

THE ROLE OF FAITH

While Grubbs believes that it is important to leave proselytizing out of CCA's ministry, she also believes that "faith lived out" is more beneficial for both the people who CCA serves and the people who work at CCA. This expression of a "faithful witness" involves staff members' relationships with the people they serve and the ministry's commitment to social justice. Many staff members describe how personal faith motivates their work. For example, one program director explains that he likes working at CCA because a social service agency devoid of spirituality was like "trying to do the mission without the Person who assigned the mission."

At their best, Grubbs believes that faith-based organizations can offer people hope and a pathway out of their circumstances because they are more able than secular organizations to talk about "being-related" issues such as self-esteem, faith, and love. This involves treating people with dignity and being open to "whatever source of power they tap into for strength."

Grubbs argues that faith-based organizations can make a unique contribution to the language of social change and she frequently testifies before the state legislature. For example, Grubbs and a Mothers for Justice representative recently spoke at a press conference where advocates were pushing for a

state earned income tax credit. Demonstrating her passion and willingness to inject faith into the dialogue, Grubbs explained her position: "I am convicted by my own faith that poor children do matter. Therefore I cannot give up on fighting for economic justice."

Northwest Interfaith Movement

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Volunteers are busy in the church kitchen, finishing the last bit of cooking while Elder Diners' regular customers begin to gather for lunch. Visitors today at the church's weekly lunch for neighborhood seniors include the church's pastor and his wife, as well as the representative from Northwest Interfaith Movement (NIM) who helped the church establish the program.

Reverend Richard Fernandez, NIM's executive director, believes that "geography and environment determine a very large part of who you are and what you might become," both as an individual and as an organization. Strong congregational identities in the Northwest community and Philadelphia's vibrant volunteer spirit have led NIM to develop decentralized and congregational-based services rather than centrally controlled programs exclusively. Therefore, NIM operates as a resource organization that helps establish and support independent programs, as well as a direct service provider.

SERVING AS AN INCUBATOR AND A CATALYTIC AGENT

NIM was founded in 1969 as a coalition of Presbyterian churches in the Northwest area. It quickly became an interdenominational effort and incorporated in 1970 as an interfaith ministry. The organization initially focused on building positive race relations and promoting a Jewish/Christian dialogue. In 1974, NIM started the Northwest Meals on Wheels program, which became an independent organization in 1976.

During its thirty-year history, NIM has created and spun-off several programs including:
- Central Germantown Council, a neighborhood coalition of businesses and nonprofit organizations that concentrates on economic development in the racially diverse Central Germantown area
- Northwest Victims Services, a citywide program that provides support services to crime victims
- Germantown Interfaith Housing, 96 units of affordable housing for elderly and disabled persons that were developed with funds from the U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development.

NIM also acts as a "catalytic agent" providing technical assistance, coordination, and support for congregations and nonprofit organizations engaged in efforts that further NIM's mission "to build a more just and sensitive community through advocacy and service." Accomplishments in this area include:
- Philadelphia Religious Leadership Development Fund (PRLDF), supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts, which awarded grants between 1988 and 1998 that totaled $2.1 million to 710 congregations engaged in outreach and service to less advantaged neighborhoods
- The Reinvestment Fund, a fund created through a collaboration between NIM and other civic leaders which pools invested dollars and makes low-interest loans to neighborhood organizations for the development of low-income housing and small businesses.

PROGRAMS

Philadelphia is often referred to as a "city of neighborhoods." In the historic Northwest community that NIM serves, integrated neighborhoods with African American and Anglo households have been a stable characteristic for decades. Recently, more Hispanics have

been moving into the area. The community also represents a wide range along the socioeconomic spectrum with affluent, middle class, working class, and impoverished neighborhoods. In the Northwest community, neighborhoods located within city blocks of one another may have housing values that vary from $30,000 to $700,000.

NIM has been involved in services for the elderly since its early days, but a survey of NIM's supporters conducted in the 1980s identified children's issues as also a primary concern. Therefore, NIM currently maintains three core program areas that focus on services for both children and the elderly. These program areas are Neighborhood Child Care Resource Program (NCCRP) for child care providers, School Age Ministry for congregations serving children in less advantaged neighborhoods, and Long Term Care Program for the elderly. Through these direct services, NIM extends its role as an incubator and catalytic agent by promoting the development of congregational-based services and working collaboratively to improve child and elder care.

Serving Children – NCCRP's key mission is to improve the quality of child care in Northwest Philadelphia through public policy advocacy and services that target child care providers. These services include training for child care providers and a lending Resource Room. Resource Room items include research materials and teaching guides, games, toys, motor skill equipment, and theme kits filled with teaching aids targeting specific topics.

NCCRP also promotes networking and information sharing

through support groups and a Family Resource Directory of community services. Access is not limited to low-income providers, however, NCCRP's services reach a large number of less advantaged child care workers in the working class neighborhoods of the Northwest area. Welfare reform has increased the demands placed on the child care system and the number of ill-prepared and inexperienced workers that enter the field, according to NCCRP's director. Through training and special projects targeting issues such as literacy and nutrition, NIM works to guide child care providers into developmentally appropriate practices. By offering services at child care provider sites, NIM is able to reach all workers, including isolated, at-home Family Day Care providers.

The School Age Ministry (SAM) program, initially funded by a four-year grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts, has three goals: 1) to assist and encourage congregations city-wide that wish to establish after-school programs; 2) to provide ongoing technical assistance, training and support for NIM-affiliated after-school providers; and 3) to insure that NIM-affiliated after-school programs are licensed. Between 1995 and 2001, SAM helped start 52 after-school programs that provide care five days a week for approximately 1,200 children, aged 6 to 12. Currently, 21 of these programs are licensed.

Serving the Elderly – NIM began its first volunteer program for nursing homes in 1974 and was, therefore, well prepared to become part of the Philadelphia Long Term Care Ombudsman program established by the Older Americans Act. In 1981, NIM was granted the Area's Agency on Aging contract for

Northwest and Northeast Philadelphia nursing homes. The ministry now employees three trained ombudsmen who visit and resolve complaints from residents of 34 nursing homes and 62 licensed personal care homes in these communities, which represents half of all such homes in the city. Ombudsmen's first responsibility is to advocate for individual residents, but NIM's ombudsmen are also involved in advocating at the policy level on issues such as establishing tighter regulations for personal care homes.

NIM's Neighbor to Neighbor Project trains and assigns volunteers from high schools and congregations to visit residents in 45 nursing and personal care homes. NIM's Older Adult Volunteer Initiative was started because its community survey indicated that helping senior citizens maintain their independence was a major concern. The focus of this newest project involving elder care is helping congregations address barriers that prevent seniors' from enjoying independent living. *Elder Diner* is one cost-effective and manageable way for the churches to get involved, and the weekly low-cost lunches address the isolation and end-of-the month food needs experienced by many aging adults. NIM assists interested churches with start-up costs, menu tips, and supplies, and maintains an active interest in the program.

COLLABORATION

NIM's services primarily focus on the Northwest community; however, participating in collaborative efforts has expanded NIM's sphere of influence to the city at large. The Philadelphia Early Childhood Collaborative (PECC), a partnership between NIM and two other neigh-

borhood-based childhood resource programs, is an example of this strategy. NIM functions as the lead partner with Fernandez serving as the Project Director. In this role, Fernandez supervises four PECC employees located in NIM's offices who coordinate resources and training for child care providers citywide. In 2000, the PECC partners provided 363 training events for 5,644 child care workers and 71 networking opportunities that attracted 708 attendees. The partners' Resource Rooms received an average of 288 visits a month from child care workers.

PECC was implemented at the suggestion of a local foundation and enhances the partners' access to funding. It also strengthens their ability to advocate for policies that affect the quality of child care throughout the city. PECC's agenda targets policy changes that will reduce the number of "underground" providers by removing barriers to financial viability. This effort resulted in reduced city licensing fees, the creation of Philadelphia's Office of Child Care, and a sustained six-year battle to increase the number of children that Philadelphia allows in Family Day Care programs from four to six.

CONGREGATIONAL TIES

NIM's supporting churches are referred to as "affiliated congregations." Requirements restrict affiliation to congregations located in the Northwest area in order for NIM to remain actively engaged with the congregations. The NIM alliance, which originally included approximately 14 congregations, has grown to 36 Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish congregations.

In 1980, NIM instituted a self-governed board comprised of 24-28 members who each serve four-year terms, with a two-term limit. Prior to this, affiliated congregations each appointed two representatives to the board, but the representatives were often not really interested in, or equipped for, serving on the board. The board must include representatives of at least fifteen affiliated congregations and all board members are from the Northwest community.

NIM utilizes approximately 400 volunteers including nearly 250 in its Neighbor to Neighbor project. Through SAM and the Neighbor to Neighbor programs, NIM maintains ongoing relationships with congregations including brainstorming sessions for stimulating congregational outreach. In addition, NIM frequently helps sponsor workshops and presentations for congregations and the larger community on topics such as welfare reform and racial reconciliation.

BUDGET AND STAFF

In 2000, NIM's revenues were over $3.2 million with government funding representing 51.1 percent of the total. In addition to NIM's government contract for the ombudsman program, government funds were channeled to the Neighborhood Child Care Resource Program through the PECC partnership. Private foundations are also a significant resource accounting for 44 percent of 2000's revenues. Two large Philadelphia-based foundations, William Penn and The Pew Charitable Trusts, are frequent and significant contributors to NIM's programs. Congregational support accounted for 1 percent of NIM's income in 2000.

NIM has a total of 26 paid positions, 22 full-time and 4 part-time. In addition to the executive director, three program directors oversee NIM's core program areas. Additional positions include a development director and part-time grant writer, a project director responsible for NIM's Neighbor to Neighbor Volunteer program, and coordinators and associates who assist with the services provided in NIM's youth and elder care programs.

THE ROLE OF FAITH

The importance of faith in NIM's work is evident in its efforts to engage congregations in service to youth and senior citizens. One staff member pointed out that "faith comes up" because many of NIM's actual clients are churches that receive technical assistance from NIM. However, religion's role in programs that NIM helps initiate, such as the *Elder Diners* and after-school programs, is determined by the individual congregations.

Working at NIM allows many staff member to integrate their personal beliefs and passions with their professional lives. Several staff members expressed feelings of an intense calling to work with the client group they serve, such as one ombudsman who stated that her "heart is in working with the elderly." Many have professionally prepared for their work and were not necessarily attracted to NIM because it is a faith-based organization. Regardless of their motive for coming to NIM, many find that its religious roots create a warm and open environment in which to work, such as one staff member who explained: "Faith did not draw me here, but it is keeping me here."

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Portland, Oregon

In 1996, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) acquired Patton Home, a residential center for low-income older adults and people with disabilities. EMO hosted community meetings to decide how to utilize and renovate the building. In this open forum, residents, pastors, and government agency representatives were asked: "What does Patton Home mean to you? What does the facility mean for the immediate neighborhood?"

As a result of these forums, Patton Home is still a residential center, but with a stronger commitment to community outreach. EMO has built a community room for neighborhood groups to use, and the top floor, when completed, will be a center for many of EMO's programs and other community social service providers. EMO also hopes to use the space for internships and the academic study of urban ministry to raise congregations' awareness of the needs. A primary goal is to obtain a capacity building grant to learn about the services that congregations are already providing.

This is just one example of how EMO involves community stakeholders, and serves as a bridge to link local issues with statewide initiatives. Formed in 1973 through the merger of both the Oregon and Portland church councils, EMO is now a voluntary association of 17 denominations. David Leslie, EMO's executive director, describes it as a "hybrid of a state ecumenical organization and a metropolitan coalition" that provides local services. EMO will always have a "larger, state focus," he explains, but sustaining and promoting cooperative ministries at the local level is also part of its mission.

EMO'S MISSION

Three intertwined "streams of ministry" inform one another at EMO, according to the Director of Community Ministries, Rick Stoller:

- *Community Ministry* – providing direct social services that are located in and serve the Portland metropolitan area. In addition, this area provides support and technical assistance for individual ministries throughout the state, a role EMO plans to expand.
- *Public Policy Advocacy* – collaborates with community ministry personnel to provide relevant policy recommendations based on the day-to-day experiences of clients, as well as documented research.
- *Theology and Education* – bringing a spiritual perspective to community concerns and public policy issues, this ministry helps EMO serve as an "agent of reconciliation" in the diversifying community.

COMMUNITY MINISTRY PROGRAMS

When EMO began adding direct social services in the late 1970s, the programs were centered in the Portland metropolitan area, EMO's headquarters and Oregon's primary urban center. The Portland religious ecology made it difficult to create neighborhood-based ministries; therefore, EMO's social services have developed with a citywide focus.

The community ministry programs are organized into three major divisions: Compassionate Care and Education, Basic Human Needs, and Refugee and Immigration Ministries (RIM). EMO partners with field experts in several of its programs, insuring that their services are "state of the art." This also enables ministry staff and volunteers to focus their efforts on meeting clients' needs for relation-

ship and compassion, and on building bridges of understanding between the community and clients.

Compassionate Care and Education – EMO's Hopewell House Hospice Center provides care and support for terminally ill patients and their families in a 15-bed facility that offers a lush garden setting and serene living spaces. EMO collaborates with the Legacy Visiting Nurse Association, an organization with the scope and experience to provide cost-effective medical care. This partnership allows EMO to focus on training spiritually sensitive volunteers and educating clergy and the community about end of life issues. Volunteers who are comfortable with the diverse beliefs represented at the hospice offer compassion and serve as a liaison between patients and clergy.

Basic Human Needs – Oregon's housing crisis is one area where EMO's advocacy group is focusing its efforts. They argue that a combination of rising housing costs and the growing gap between the poor and upper-income population groups is partly to blame. EMO's staff reports that gentrification is displacing families from their traditional neighborhoods, and will soon lead to the loss of 135 Single Room Occupancy units in the downtown area. A large homeless population also contributes to Portland's housing problems and a hunger crisis. In 1999, the U.S. Department of Agriculture declared Oregon the sixth lowest state in terms of food security. EMO offers several programs designed to meet individual's basic needs and to compassionately intervene in the complex issues associated with poverty.

Shared Housing is a computer-aided matching and referral service that brings together those who have homes and need help with rent, household chores or personal care with those who are in need of affordable housing. Contracting with Portland's Bureau of Housing and Community Development, Shared Housing facilitated 129 home-sharing agreements in fiscal year 1999.

Honored by the Points of Light Foundation, EMO's Parent Mentor Program partners with addiction recovery and transitional housing centers. EMO trains and assigns volunteer mentors to assist and affirm mothers struggling against addiction and family violence. In fiscal year 1999, EMO's volunteers mentored 140 mothers helping them to develop better parenting skills, build positive support networks, and access community services.

Two programs, the Northeast Food Pantry and the HIV Day Center, use facilities provided by congregations. The director of EMO's Northeast Food Pantry estimates that two-thirds of the over 12,000 guests served in 1999 were among the working poor who have only low-waged, part-time or seasonal employment.

Utilizing Ryan White federal funds, the HIV Day Center provides meals and opportunities to socialize for people living with HIV/AIDS. In addition to providing 16,000 hot meals at the center, volunteers prepared and delivered 40,000 meals to homebound HIV/AIDS patients in a six-county area during fiscal year 1999. The clients, many of whom face extenuating circumstances such as addictions, mental health problems, poverty, and housing issues, report that the center provides a safe place to network and helps combat their isolation. The center uses innovative methods to engage clients in recovery work and community-building exercises such as two original games that they call Recovery Trivia and Therapeutic Bingo.

Refugee and Immigration Ministries (RIM) – EMO first became involved with direct services in 1978 when it started Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR), a local affiliate of Church World Service. During the past two decades, SOAR and its volunteering congregations have brought a rich diversity to Portland by helping refugees, primarily from Southeast Asia, Cuba, Russia and Eastern Europe, to resettle and become self-sufficient. RIM's services have expanded as diversity has grown in this refugee-friendly city and now includes Russian Oregon Social Services (ROSS), formed to help Russians make a smooth transition into the community. Volunteers play a key role in these programs providing homes, tutoring, and transportation, and often, long-lasting friendships.

In 1993, EMO partnered with the Portland School District to establish the Portland International Community School (PICS), an alternative high school that provides a culturally sensitive environment for refugee, immigrant, and first generation American students. The school's mission is to reduce dropout rates among these students, many of whom come to PICS after being dropped from the public schools for attendance or behavioral problems, or for academic failure. PICS' faculty finds that ethnic divisions fade as stu-

dents are given a safe place for open dialogue. Despite serious funding challenges, PICS has received accreditation and is able to provide approximately 100 students with the creative environment and smaller teacher-to-student ratio that they need to succeed.

DENOMINATIONAL AND CONGREGATIONAL TIES

Oregon has been described as the "least churched state," a characteristic that presents both difficulties and opportunities, according to Leslie. "The institutional church does not have the prominent place that it may have in other places in the country," he explains, but the absence of "mega-churches" has prodded denominations to work together. EMO's 17 member denominations represent approximately 1,300 congregations. Individual congregations become involved in EMO's work through committees and the approximately 1,500 volunteers that serve in the ministry's programs. However, Stoller hopes to strengthen EMO's relationship with congregations through communications, workshops, and community events.

The by-laws require a board comprised of 15 to 21 elected members that represent each of the member denominations. Appointed board members sit on four standing committees responsible for fund raising, financial audits and reports, nominations, and personnel policies. In addition, each of EMO's three streams of ministry has an advisory committee that oversees activities. Each social service program also has an advisory council composed of church members and representatives of community organizations.

Although EMO remains a Christian organization, bridge building extends beyond ecumenical gulfs to include interfaith dialogue and cooperation. For example, committee members include representatives from other faith traditions, and the Muslim community partnered with SOAR to help Kosovar refugees. Leslie states: "EMO is an ecumenical organization that is operating in an interfaith fashion."

BUDGET AND STAFF

In 2000, government funding accounted for 55.4 percent of EMO's nearly $4 million in revenues. Foundation grants and program service fees supplied 17.8 percent and 13.9 percent respectively. In 2000, judicatories and congregations contributed 2.5 percent and 2.2 percent respectively.

The executive director has overall responsibility for all three streams of EMO's ministry with direct responsibility for Theology and Education. Two directors for the Community Ministry and Public Policy Advocacy areas report to the Executive Director. The Community Ministry area has approximately 50 paid employees involved in the delivery of direct social services. This includes 3 division directors and 10 program managers that report to the Director of Community Ministries. Staff positions in the service program areas include case managers, teachers, cooks, and support personnel. Centralized administrative positions that report to the executive director include 2 fiscal managers and a personnel manager.

THE ROLE OF FAITH

EMO's programs focus on meeting needs and not proselytizing. Stoller states very clearly that EMO is a religious organization but that it does not discriminate based on religion in either its hiring practices or its services. He only requires that staff members understand EMO's values and be willing to be "part of EMO." The role of faith becomes more relevant for EMO's volunteers and staff members at the HIV Day Center and Hopewell House Hospice where participants and patients dealing with the realities of chronic illness and end-of-life issues frequently invite them into spiritual discussions.

Although EMO is an ecumenical organization, its efforts include engagement with the wider interfaith community. One example is EMO's sponsorship of *Compassion Sabbath*. This initiative encourages all faith traditions on a common weekend to focus their prayers and worship on end-of-life issues and unite to bring a faith perspective to the "needs of dying people, their families and their caregivers."

Such interfaith cooperation is one example of how community ministries enable small and large congregations to put their faith into action and do more than just the "healing of people or serving needs." According to Leslie: "It is also about putting out a fairly bold witness about the nature of community in that disparate parties can work together on common issues—which may be just as important as the service that is done."

FaithWorks
Redding, California

Seated at a local restaurant, several FaithWorks leaders gather for one of their frequent breakfasts. Despite the early hour, the diner is full and several folks stop to chat and pass along news about friends that they all share in common. The three men, one an Episcopal priest, one an ordained minister from the Baptist tradition, and another the pastor of a non-denominational church, learned long ago they were more interested in lifting people out of poverty than debating doctrinal differences.

Founded in 1998, FaithWorks serves as a liaison between Shasta County's Department of Social Services and the religious community. Its primary mission is to identify and develop the county's faith-based resources, and connect interested welfare clients with mentors from the local congregations. The vision behind FaithWorks, according to Mike Evans, one of its founders, is that being part of a church community "enhances clients' reconnection with society by helping them feel accepted and to have a sense of belonging—someplace where they are not just another case or file."

As a county contractor in this post-welfare reform era, FaithWorks is responsible for helping the county improve its collaborative ventures with the religious community and other major stakeholders engaged in the delivery of social services. Reverend Skip Tyler, FaithWorks' executive director, points out that the organization's role as an intermediary between the county and the area's many churches requires that they "establish rapport between groups that

normally do not hold to the same views."

This bridge-building endeavor actually began before FaithWorks was founded and was instrumental in its creation. Several factors in Shasta County created an environment conducive to the development of partnerships between diverse religious congregations and the Department of Social Services.

COMMUNITY

Shasta County, with a population of 166,000, is geographically isolated from an urban center. Redding is its largest city, with a population of only 70,000 individuals. In this rural region, community ties reach beyond city limits, and Redding and the smaller towns that surround it share common challenges and resources. Barbara McKend, Deputy Director of the Department of Social Services, notes that the natural beauty of the area and the county's location along the Interstate 5 corridor is an asset, but

states that these factors have not been sufficient to attract businesses to the area. The service sector, with its traditionally low wages, is the largest industry in the area making it difficult for the county's welfare-to-work clients to become self-sufficient.

Shasta County is also a conservative area, according to Tyler, where "even those who aren't church-goers tend to accept faith-based activity." McKend agrees, pointing out that religious organizations are more integrated into the community in small, rural settings such as Shasta County than they are in metropolitan areas.

Several ministerial alliances involved in ecumenical dialogue and emergency social services formed across the county during the 1980s. These alliances were drawn around common theological lines with different organizations for mainline and evangelical churches. However, networks with-

in Shasta County's religious community helped the dialogue expand beyond these boundary lines enabling several leaders to discover common ground and a growing sense of purpose.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Concerned about the impact of welfare reform, the Shasta County Director of Social Services convened a forum to discuss implementation strategies for a welfare-to-work plan that would tap into all of the community's resources. The DSS director had informally worked with community partners in the past to expand the county's safety net to help its General Assistance clients. Energized by the success of this collaboration, the director established a multi-tiered welfare-to-work task force that included representatives from the faith community, education, local nonprofit organizations, and government social service agencies. The task force identified mentoring relationships as an inherent strength of faith-based communities and an important way to help the county's welfare clients achieve independence.

Looking for a way to forge a formal partnership between the county and faith-based organizations, a key lay leader learned about Section 104, the "charitable choice" provision of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The DSS director was also interested in a partnership, but reluctant to evaluate and select one congregation or denomination over another, he encouraged the faith community to collaborate on a proposal. FaithWorks was founded in 1998 with funding from a contract that cites the charitable

choice provision as a "major feature" of welfare reform. The organization was named to complement California's welfare-to-work program, CalWorks.

EVOLVING MINISTRY

The first year of the ministry, FaithWorks focused on referring clients to existing organizations while it recruited and trained church volunteers. The second year, the emphasis was on linking clients to individual mentors. Tyler states that they have learned that it is difficult to get individual mentors to commit to a year, and that churches "work as a family." Therefore, they recently revised their strategy and now help clients connect with churches that serve as "mentoring communities" rather than assigning them to individual mentors.

Since July 1998, FaithWorks has assisted and given referral services to over 1,400 individuals. The intake process involves a "faith background checklist" that asks clients' about their church history and preferences. Clients interested in being connected to a congregation are assigned to a church based on their own church background and geographic location. Since FaithWorks was established, 16 individuals who requested it were matched with individual mentors from the churches and 52 interested clients were assigned to churches that use a faith-based approach to assist clients as a church community.

A tremendous number of clients need food, clothing, and shelter and are initially referred to other service organizations to meet these physical needs. Intake counselors have learned that it is critical to first meet clients' most pressing needs and establish a trusting rela-

tionship. One intake counselor notes: "My most difficult challenge is pinpointing the one area that will be a positive for them so they will feel confident that they can go on to the next step." Former clients indicate in surveys conducted by FaithWorks that respect and encouragement helped them to achieve the confidence, focus, and practical help they needed to work through their problems.

The county refers interested CalWorks clients to FaithWorks offices and the ministry also recruits participants at several government-funded job centers in the area. Restoration Enterprise, a case management program that coordinates with the county's probation department to reduce recidivism, also refers clients who are interested in faith-based services to FaithWorks. Located in a downtown shopping mall, FaithWorks also receives a large number of walk-ins. Most clients are looking for employment, and FaithWorks' office includes a resource room that offers job listings and access to a phone, fax, and computers. In addition, staff members will help clients with resume preparation.

FaithWorks also serves as an umbrella organization for the Shasta County Fire Interfaith Relief Effort (SCFIRE) that is directed by Tyler. One of Shasta County's frequent brush fires left many homeless in 1999. Funded primarily by Church World Services and local congregations that contributed approximately $300,000, SCFIRE has helped uninsured victims rebuild 7 homes and replace 14 mobile homes.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Expansion and sustainability are both foremost in the minds' of FaithWorks board members. Other counties frequently ask FaithWorks' board members for assistance in replicating the program. This work is important to their vision for the ministry, but the costs they incur are not funded by their contract. Furthermore, three years has taught them that many individuals needing assistance do not meet the eligibility requirements of their government contract. FaithWorks' leaders want the ministry to be engaged in community service beyond its current focus but have questions about how best to accomplish this goal.

As FaithWorks' leaders consider future strategies, two different models for the organization seem possible: 1) Continue to serve as a facilitator and referral source and act as an "incubator" encouraging others to develop programs, or; 2) expand FaithWorks' programs, which bears the risk of becoming a "super-agency." A primary concern is that the organization not develop into a large bureaucracy or have its faith-based mission altered.

Funding is a critical factor for both sustaining and expanding its outreach. Currently, the organization is funded solely through its CalWorks contract, and local options for broadening the ministry's financial base are limited.

CONGREGATIONAL TIES

FaithWorks' twelve-member board of directors is composed of several of its early founders and pastors from participating churches. FaithWorks has identified and contacted 200 congregations in the county, including one Jewish synagogue. Approximately 25 percent are actively working with the min-

istry and about 50 percent of the churches are supportive of FaithWorks' mission but lack the manpower and budget to participate. The remaining 25 percent of the churches are "isolationists" and not interested in participating because of their "tight theological position," according to Tyler.

FaithWorks' relationship with congregations is informal but they do have a covenant letter. FaithWorks is currently concentrating its capacity building efforts on its most active churches. FaithWorks' leaders will work with seven congregations at a time, using their "testimonies" and the success of their programs to motivate each successive, cohort of congregations. Often selected by clients because of their geographic location, FaithWorks most active churches are those with the fewest resources. However, their locations in their clients' communities equip them to relate to clients' needs and their lifestyles.

No funds are either channeled to, or solicited from, the congregations. Tyler acknowledges that not asking for funds makes it easier to establish contacts, and one board member emphasizes: "FaithWorks' role is to support the churches, not ask how the churches can support FaithWorks."

BUDGET AND STAFF

In 2001, FaithWorks completed the first year of a second contract with the county that provided annual revenues of $225,000. FaithWorks has a small staff that includes an office manager and two intake counselors (one full-time and one part-time), in addition to the executive director. Two employees are former FaithWorks' clients.

THE ROLE OF FAITH

Many of FaithWorks' clients never request to be assigned to a mentor or a church and only receive assistance at the FaithWorks office. FaithWorks' staff members want clients to experience the organization as a "safe place" where they know they will not be judged. Christianity is not pushed on clients but staff members will pray with a client if they "sense the client is open to it." One intake counselor explains that she is slow to introduce clients to the idea of a church mentor but also believes that "the spiritual connection is what is going to resolve the other problems."

Tyler stresses that faith and God's calling is why FaithWorks is there: "Jesus did not say pray for the poor—He said feed the poor…You don't have to be a believer but you do need to know that the reason I am doing this is because of Jesus." Tyler hopes, and believes, however, that clients will undergo a "change of heart" by seeing people motivated by God's calling to help the needy, and by experiencing in their own lives what "God can do."

Schenectady Inner City Ministry

Schenectady, New York

When a neighborhood resident heard the name, Schenectady Inner City Ministry (SICM), she exclaimed: "SICM—now that is the kind of organization that if it weren't here you would feel it!" SICM's work is woven into the fabric of the community because of its collaborative efforts and its engagement with the social and economic institutions that impact community life.

SICM's origins are rooted in the ecumenical movement of the 1960s. The pastors of the ministry's original cluster of churches achieved a true fellowship after Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination deepened their dialogue and commitment. Also, there were concerns about the urban crisis being created by suburbanization and a desire to build a sense of "spiritual unity" in the community. In February 1967, church leaders hosted a meeting to discuss the mission of the church and began shaping the specifics of an ecumenical inner city ministry.

Four strategic decisions that were made during SICM's formation remain central to its operation today. The first was the decision to implement a covenant that SICM's member congregations adopt as a pledge of their support, and which establishes the ministry's Christian roots. SICM has chosen to remain within these religious boundaries, although the ministry and its committees operate in an inclusive manner. The second element of SICM's structure is the emphasis given to lay involvement, a capacity building strategy that also expands member congregations' outreach opportunities.

A third decision that has defined SICM is its strategy of spinning-off programs. As Reverend Phil Grigsby, SICM's executive director, explains: "We want SICM to be light-weight and free to develop new things. This way we keep our flexibility and are not bogged down with the administrative issues of a big agency. We can get more involved as a convening agent to promote dialogue and action, without the appearance or baggage of having a vested interest in the issue."

Finally, it was decided early in SICM's formation that there should be an "urban agent," a paid director who could focus solely on the ministry and serve as the agent of the churches in the urban setting. The "urban agent" concept is critical to understanding Grigsby's role in the community, a role that is shaped by his two-fold vision of SICM's purpose. First, this vision outlines SICM's commitment to the "development or redevelopment of community." Second, it challenges SICM's supporters to grapple with the "full range of social ministry," which includes charity, but also demands that people of faith understand and take action against the underlying causes of hunger and need.

COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATION

Schenectady's urban center has been decimated by a depressed local economy and population decline. In the last few decades, approximately 15,000 jobs were either eliminated or moved elsewhere by General Electric, the area's major employer. At the same time, suburbanization and white flight have further drained Schenectady's urban neighborhoods of their economic resources and leadership. Hamilton Hill, one of the hardest hit of these neighborhoods, has emerged as one of the most impoverished and troubled in the county—a setting of street-corner drug deals and drive-by shootings.

SICM has taken the lead in projects that address fundamental barriers to redeveloping Schenectady's urban neighbor-

hoods into healthy communities. These projects include attracting a credit union to the Hamilton Hill neighborhood to discourage predatory lending practices and successfully advocating for laws that make it illegal for sexually oriented businesses to operate outside of the city's industrial zone.

By actively advocating for social justice, Grigsby has given the religious community a voice in city politics. In this capacity, Grigsby has been asked by the mayor to sit on city task forces dealing with issues such as the development of a citizens' police review board and the creation of a housing program that promotes owner-occupied housing and a fair-bidding process on tax-delinquent properties. These efforts earned SICM a National "Best of the Best" Best Practices Award of Excellence from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

SICM's collaborative projects include the Schenectady County Embraces Diversity (SCED) study circles; Appliance Matching, which links people with unwanted appliances with those who need them; and the Community Crisis Network (CCN). CCN is a collaborative effort involving both faith-based and secular nonprofit organizations, and the only nonprofit emergency assistance program in the county. With a lack of funding and no other nonprofit organizations to assist, the program finds it difficult to meet rental assistance needs.

SPINNING-OFF MINISTRIES
Part of SICM's mission is to support ministries that may lack the financial resources or organizational strength to make it on their own. Program managers are helped with organizational development and

fund raising, but they are also given a great deal of autonomy so they will be prepared when the program is later spun-off. Past projects have resulted in SAFE House, a shelter for run-away youth to deter street life and prevent sexual exploitation, and Bethesda House, a drop-in center for the homeless. Current initiatives include a neighborhood job center, an after-school program, and Damien's Center, an HIV/AIDS drop-in center.

SICM acts as lead agency for Jobs, Etc. which is a consortium of twelve community organizations. By providing flexible services, job applicant workshops, and a user-friendly neighborhood job center, Jobs, Etc. has served over 2,000 participants and placed over 1,000 individuals in jobs since February 1996. Each week, Jobs, Etc. hosts its Tuesday at Ten meeting for those searching for work. At this meeting, participants receive practical instruction on topics such as job interviewing and appropriate workplace behavior. In addition, community employers are given an opportunity to answer questions and share information about their current job openings.

COCOA (Children of Our Community Open to Achievement) House came under SICM's umbrella in 2000. Operating out of a struggling church, COCOA House is a sanctuary in the rough Hamilton Hill neighborhood where 30 children can discover and develop their potential. As part of the SICM organization, COCOA House's manager serves on two task forces, one that offers support for other budding after-school programs and another that coordinates service projects for youth groups.

Acquired in 1994, Damien's Center provides persons infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS with a warm environment, complete with over-stuffed living room sofas and big kitchen tables where guests love to sit and chat. There is even a doorbell, and just like home, when it rings you will hear someone holler, "I'll get it." In 2000, 150 guests experienced the peaceful dignity of community life at Damien's Center.

ADDRESSING HUNGER
SICM's strategy of spinning-off ministries is counter-balanced by its nearly twenty-year commitment to a food pantry that was originally started by a neighboring congregation. The food pantry supplies 60 percent of the emergency food given in Schenectady County, serving over 21,000 individuals in 2000. The food program's manager estimates that approximately 40 percent of their guests work. To accommodate working guests' schedules, the pantry's community advocate will arrange to meet clients early in the morning or leave food bags out for them. SICM also supports the Save and Share Food Buying Co-Op, an outgrowth of the food pantry designed to help people toward greater self-reliance. In 2000, the co-op enabled 550 families, many ineligible for government assistance, to purchase food units valued at over $25 for only $16.

SICM's outreach focus includes the annual CROP walk, a national fund-raising event to benefit the hungry around the world. Through SICM's leadership, Schenectady's CROP walk has become a community building event and the 19th largest in the country in terms of money raised.

CONGREGATIONAL TIES

Approximately 55 congregations, which Grigsby estimates to be nearly 50 percent of the county's churches, are members of SICM. This includes 13 actively involved Roman Catholic churches, for which Grigsby credits an ecumenically supportive Bishop. SICM's covenant with the congregations insures that member churches feel a sense of "ownership" for the organization, rather than viewing it as a separate mission to which they send money. Changing demographics and declining resources have left many of SICM's urban churches struggling to survive. The inner-city churches have remained involved, however, through volunteers, in-kind donations, and by sharing their facilities. Wealthier suburban congregations committed to inner-city ministry and ecumenism have also become part of SICM.

Three different levels of governing bodies oversee the ministry: 1) the assembly; 2) a 15 to 16-member steering committee that functions as a board of directors; and 3) standing program committees that serve as advisory councils. To maintain congregations' involvement, the assembly continues to meet once a month and includes two delegates and a clergy person from each church. According to Grigsby, assembly meetings are problem-solving sessions that are "80 percent celebration of what they have accomplished and 20 percent business." Regular attendees represent about 20 to 30 member congregations.

As the community has diversified, SICM has elected to remain a Christian organization, but Jews, Muslims, and Hindus, as well as persons of no faith participate as volunteers, including serving on these committees. SICM utilizes approximately 400 volunteers, over one-half of which work at the food pantry.

BUDGET AND STAFF

Grigsby points out that SICM's funding sources are relatively balanced. In 1999, SICM's nearly $800,000 income was partly derived from the following sources: 34 percent from the government, 17 percent from the churches, 11.7 percent derived from the food co-op, 9.5 percent from individuals, and 8 percent from foundations. A large portion of SICM's corporate donations is derived from General Electric matching funds.

SICM's 18-member staff includes 5 program directors, a development and public relations associate, program staff, and office assistants. In addition, SICM employs an assistant director who utilizes his background in state government to help Grigsby with strategic planning and resource management.

THE ROLE OF FAITH

Grigsby explains that faith is a guiding principle for the organization and the staff: "We do this because of our faith. It is a sense of calling and a witness of our faith—but in a way that is not heavy-handed." Directors indicate that faith is not part of the discussion with the clients they serve but more in how they interact with them. For the director of the food pantry, this expression of their faith is evident in how the guests are shown respect and never asked about, or criticized for, their lifestyle choices. In addition, faith moves SICM to reach out to all "for whom Christ died," including groups such as street people, prosti-

tutes, and the mentally ill, whom others have shied away from helping.

Evangelism is not the issue for the director of COCOA House, the daughter of a Pentecostal minister. Operating out of her father's church in the midst of a drug-ridden neighborhood, she is more concerned about addressing the things that affect the children on a day-to-day basis by providing a consistent program and positive, long-term relationships.

Damien's Center is the one program that offers a direct spiritual component, primarily through a Catholic priest who visits regularly and facilitates a Bible study for the guests. Many of the guests, who report that they have felt rejected by the church, find reassurance in SICM's support of Damien's Center. The center's director believes that SICM's involvement is symbolically important for the AIDS' cause and its victims: "This program is a true Christian ministry to one of the most downtrodden, oppressed groups in the community. If 'What Would Jesus Do' is answered by people who believe in Christ, then there's only one answer—you embrace them!"

Capitol Hill Group Ministry

Washington, D.C.

Gathered in a church parlor, the staff of Capitol Hill Group Ministry (CHGM) participates in a brainstorming session as part of an organizational development workshop. In a free exchange, staff members search for the words that will best describe the goals of their ministry. Honing their thoughts, they seem close to a consensus after one group member suggests that their goal is to "empower families." Then all finally nod in agreement when someone says: "No, they *have* the power, it is helping them *realize* their power and cultivate the family's strength."

CHGM grew out of clergy meetings that began in 1966. Formally incorporated in 1967, early group ministry activities included youth social development programs, clergy retreats and lay conferences, and Vietnam War protests. In the 1970s, increased lay participation was instrumental in the start of a free tax clinic for low-income residents, CHGM's longest running program. During the 1980s, denominational support dwindled and CHGM became closely associated with a congregation-based soup kitchen and working with the homeless. CHGM eventually partnered with a second ecumenical coalition to hire a part-time social worker for the soup kitchen and in 1991, the social worker became a CHGM employee.

CHGM is at an interesting and pivotal point in its thirty-year history, as one long-term staff member notes. In the mid-1990s, the ministry hired its first full-time executive director and entered a period of rapid expansion, adding several new programs and staff members in the course of just a few years. The new programs focus on homeless and under-housed families and were developed in response to specific requests from the community that they serve. Last year, CHGM also hired a new executive director, Angelia Baker-Matthews, who understands and is committed to CHGM's expanded mission. She explains that it represents a natural migration away from "feeding programs" to services that address the underlying problems that cause families to continually live on the edge.

COMMUNITY

As the only living space "near the pulse of the government," the Capitol Hill area is a fast-paced, congested, and densely populated environment. "The Hill" community is a diverse mix of low-income and affluent households. Baker-Matthews explains that the return of suburbanites to the center has dramatically increased property values, creating a housing crisis for seniors living on fixed incomes and for others who can no longer afford the area. Also, just three blocks away from households with triple-digit incomes are public housing communities with residents living below the poverty level. Baker-Matthews explains that most CHGM clients are part of the large African American population in the community.

CHGM staff members argue that the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Hope 6 project is further threatening housing security for the area's poor. Hope 6 project goals include the redevelopment of public housing communities to re-create them as mixed-income complexes. As a result of a Hope 6 project, the Capper/Carrollsburg public housing community where many of CHGM's clients live is slated to lose 55 percent of its subsidized units, according to CHGM staff members.

PROGRAMS

CHGM's Congregation-Based Shelter Program (CBSP) offers an alternative for D.C.'s homeless families waiting for emergency shelter. The waiting list is coordinated by Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness (CPPH), which serves as the district's centralized point for assessing the needs of homeless families and allocating government funds to service providers such as CHGM. With units available for only 140 families, emergency shelter is one of the largest unmet needs in the district. In 2000, CHGM coordinated the efforts of ten churches that provided emergency shelter at each of their facilities for 63 families.

The program's manager points out that many congregations are reluctant to get involved in the program and that their most active congregations are in an affluent area some distance from the Hill and the families' usual networks. CHGM provides the families with the Day Hospitality Center, located in the Hill area, where they can talk with case managers who help them develop goals and achieve self-sufficiency.

Two of CHGM's programs were initiated at the request of two public housing residents who each serve on their housing project's community council. These programs are Mission Possible, an after-school program at the Potomac Gardens Public Housing Community, and the Capper/Carrollsburg Family Resource Center, which offers intervention for families at risk for child abuse and neglect.

Mission Possible's manager explains that they offer children more than just after-school care. Operating at the public housing site, Mission Possible provides the kids with tutoring, arts and crafts projects, and cultural events. One neighborhood volunteer has recruited several adults to help in the program and is teaching the children to play the drums and perform an African dance. Other programs for the 15 active participants include art lessons and a storytelling project that helps the children learn public speaking skills. Additional CHGM services for youth include mentoring programs for teens that focus on building long-term relationships, developing their self-esteem, and preparing them for the workplace.

Receiving government funding through the South Washington/West of the River Family Strengthening Collaboration, Capper/Carrollsburg Family Resource Center (CCFRC) helped 700 families in 2000 through parenting classes, support groups, emergency aid and referrals to drug treatment programs, and provided 36 families with full case management. CCFRC's primary objective is to decrease the number of children who are placed into foster care. CCFRC refers clients with substance abuse problems to other agencies. The program's manager explains that this issue is the community's biggest challenge: "Substance abuse is 80 percent of what I'm dealing with… Crack changes the dynamics of the community… I have to break through that barrier to be able to do the rest."

Emergency assistance helps people in crisis with their utility bills, rental fees, and food and transportation needs. In addition, the program offers Family Sponsorship, a service that provides ongoing rental assistance for up to six at-risk families while they pursue training or other strategies to improve their earning potential. Emergency assistance also conducts a street outreach to inform homeless individuals of their rights and about helpful community services.

Working through a Capitol Hill business networking group that supports the ministry, CHGM is able to resolve business-owners complaints about "street people," while protecting the homeless. For example, Baker-Matthews intervened when business-owners wanted to see the area soup kitchen closed to eliminate large gatherings of street people. She negotiated with the church-based soup kitchen and its customers, and now early arrivers wait for their meal inside the church.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Moving beyond emergency services has placed new demands on the ministry, as CHGM's Deputy Director points out: "The organization has expanded and now we have to develop the infrastructure to support it." According to Baker-Matthews, one goal is to develop an evaluation plan that will clearly define and measure what they do. Equally important, Baker-Matthews wants to develop a communications strategy to better articulate their mission and community impact to CHGM's supporters. To reach these goals, CHGM recently applied and was accepted to participate in the Learning Circle Program, a series of workshops and consultations that is organized by Innovation Network, Incorporated and underwritten by the Fannie Mae Corporation. The training will help staff members better identify CHGM's strengths and resource needs, measure outcomes, and communicate these factors to the community.

CONGREGATIONAL TIES

CHGM is an "interfaith, interracial coalition of congregations," however, the member churches are mostly over 80 percent non-Hispanic white. Member churches must either make an annual contribution of $500 or receive a waiver of this requirement for donating space or material goods. Current member congregations include one Unitarian church and 19 Protestant and Catholic congregations. Two churches provide space for CHGM's administrative offices and the emergency assistance program. The board consists of 8 to 12 elected members, the majority of whom must be representatives of member congregations.

Cultivating relationships with clergy and lay leaders is a significant goal that includes efforts such as actively recruiting clergy as board members, speaking before church groups, reviving interest in regular clergy lunches, and instituting a standing committee to involve congregations in advocacy projects. One program manager serving on the committee voices just a few of the questions that concern her about congregations' awareness and interest in advocacy: "Are [congregational members] educated about the need? When their council member is voting, are they guided by their faith and do they ring in? It is about charity versus justice."

STAFF AND BUDGET

Total revenues for 2000 were approximately $700,000, with government funding representing 48.1 percent. A significant portion of these funds is funneled to CHGM through collaborative organizations. Foundation grants accounted for 20.3 percent of the 2000 income. Judicatories and congrega-tions contributed 5.8 percent and 5.4 percent respectively, and individuals gave 5.8 percent of the total.

The predominantly African American staff includes 10 full-time and 9 part-time positions. Full-time positions include the executive and deputy directors, program managers, and case aides. Part-time positions include outreach workers, a van driver, and project aides for the after-school program. The executive director and one program manager have MSW degrees, the deputy director is an ordained minister, and of the two other program managers, one has a BSW degree and the other is a Catholic nun.

Every program area has one "para-professional" employee, many of whom are former CHGM clients, who has personally experienced clients' challenges,. In addition, the by-laws require that one board member be someone who has been homeless. Baker-Matthews explains that this strategy gives them an "insider's" perspective of what clients go through, and knowledge about the community and how to access available resources. It also provides clients with a "walking example" of a successful outcome and complements the ministry's community-building goals by providing disadvantaged Hill residents with a non-threatening environment in which to grow personally and professionally.

THE ROLE OF FAITH

Faith is not a formal part of CHGM's programs but it is important in the lives of many of the ministry's staff members. The comments of the CHGM's deputy director convey the essence of faith's role at the ministry: "Our focus in on wellness and the wholeness of clients. Faith comes into the motivation and commitment of our staff." One program manager who acknowledges that faith is very important to her feels the same: "I did not come here because [CHGM] is faith-based. I came here to do the work." Staff members report that faith motivates them to respect clients and one states that it helps him to trust that "everything will be okay," despite the overwhelming obstacles their clients face.

Most staff members report that they do not discuss spiritual issues with the clients. However, several of the para-professional staff members indicate that as they tell a client their own story they also encourage the client to pray. For example, one staff member who has received TANF in the past and battled drug addiction tells clients: "There is a power greater than yourself if you will only surrender. I've been there. There's a better 'you' if you'll just decide what you want."

Discussion

The ministries described in this report vary in their organizational structure, programs and resources. While many factors influence a ministry's development, the case studies demonstrate that location plays a significant role. Above all, the ministries are products of their local communities. The networks from which they evolve and in which they participate are shaped and constrained by the local culture. Furthermore, as nonprofit service organizations, the community influences their mission and the resources at their disposal.

Despite the variation in the ministries, interviews and observations identified five areas important to understanding community ministries and their role in the social welfare safety net. These are: 1) the role of faith; 2) congregational ties; 3) organizational strategies; 4) financial resources and their impact; and 5) client needs and the impact of welfare reform.

The following five sections examine the common themes and issues related to these topics. A final section identifies areas recommended for future research.

The Role of Faith

Faith is the "heart" of community ministry; however, its influence and how it is manifested varies across the ministries. The following discussion examines the ways in which directors and staff members articulate the faith dimension of their ministries.

STORYTELLING AND LANGUAGE

The language and stories of the ministries are ways of directly accessing the role of faith and its influence on each ministry's work and organizational culture. Describing the work of community ministries, one executive director states: "Religious communities can provide direct services but we also have some vision pieces that we can put before the community out of our sacred text and from the real experiences that we collect. We're storytellers. We collect stories and we have an obligation to tell those stories."

Religious language demonstrates the lens through which the ministries view their experiences and those of their clients. Their work is not a profession, it is a *call-*

ing, and client success stories represent *resurrected* lives. Furthermore, the language of faith allows the ministries to communicate about these issues with the wider community from a perspective that is frequently overlooked.

Variation can be seen across the ministries in the manner in which faith directs their missions and operations, and some ministry staff members are more articulate about faith's role than others. To some extent, however, each ministry's goals are influenced by faith and revealed through faith-based language. The following areas are some of the ways in which the role and language of faith are manifested.

Vision – Faith is the ministries' inspiration. It is the guiding principle behind their mission to address problems of poverty "one person at a time" and their mission to help people achieve "wholeness." Some ministries describe the visioning process itself in terms of their faith. For example, one executive director explains that new missions are like a "divine spark" and that "holy

timing" can be an influence in their implementation. Another explains that the ministry was born because they were involved in "God-based relationships" and looking for what "God was leading" them to do.

Ministry – The spiritual perspective that clients are "God's children" is fundamental to understanding these faith-based organizations as *ministries*. One executive director explains: "There are two principles that guide me: If I were this person, how would I want to be treated; and if this were Jesus Christ, how would I want to treat Him." Many report that their faith is where they draw energy and what leads them to treat each person with respect. One staff person explains: "I learned that being faith-based means that the organization treats clients in a Christ-like manner, not that it is a Christian organization."

Other aspects of the ministries' language are imbued with Christian teachings of individual worth. One director rejects a "box-

like faith" and avoids using labels that "define people by their circumstances." For example, she refers to *homeless* individuals as "people without homes." Another program manager believes that rebuilding neighborhoods requires a faith-like response to social inequality: "I have to love other people's children as much as I love my own. If they are hurting, then at some level I am hurting, too"

Faith and staff – Most ministry leaders indicate that they do not use religion to screen applicants in their hiring decisions, and most ministries have at least a few employees who do not have a personal faith. However, many staff members describe faith as their motivation, such as one program manager who explains why she works at the ministry: "I can and I should, that's part of my faith." The ministry can also strengthen staff members' faith. One staff member reports that she had been raised in the Christian church but it was working at the ministry that helped her understand that she was "doing ministry" and how her work relates to her faith. One executive director explains that ministry work often helps people to be "more of who Jesus wants us to be than what we do in church."

The work of the church – The history of the ministries is rooted in the work of neighborhood churches. By telling their own story, community ministries also present the churches with an understanding of their history and their own role in the community. One executive director explains that the congregations can see the ministry "doing mission work in their communities" which helps them "visualize their own outreach." Furthermore,

some ministries encourage churches towards a deeper understanding of their spiritual calling. Many ministries ask churches to sign covenants such as one that requires congregations to pledge they will "relate the resources of the church to the human needs of the city" and "demonstrate the unity of the church." One ministry leader believes that welfare reform may be a catalyst that will help society recover the "caring dimension" that it lost when the government became responsible for social welfare. He states it will be "tough to recover" but we can do it "one person, one church at a time."

Advocacy – Many ministry leaders describe their positions on public policy as convictions of their faith, convictions that are based on a gospel of "wholeness" and "dignity" for every person. They believe that community ministries can, and should, play an important role in bringing religious teachings to bear on social policy, which includes promoting personal responsibility for building healthy communities. One executive director explains that Christian ministry includes "integrity in the economy." Several ministries are concerned about helping churches connect the "symptoms" of poverty to systemic cause, and fashion a response to injustice that is based on biblical principles. Another executive director believes that the churches are in need of "conversion" and a better understanding of what the "Bible has to say about social concerns."

PROSELYTIZING

The role that faith plays in their relationship with clients is an issue that each ministry self-consciously confronts. Most ministries empha-

size that proselytizing is not part of their mission and that they will only discuss religion with clients who ask. Most give one or both of the following reasons for why their ministries do not evangelize. First, meeting clients' physical needs is an important mission and their primary goal. One executive director explains: "[Community ministries] are not in the business of teaching and giving instructions about faith; they are about putting faith into action." Second, overtly sectarian practices are discouraged in most of the ecumenical and interfaith community ministries because of their religious diversity.

Only one ministry identifies connecting clients with religious communities as a primary goal. The executive director of this ministry states that they downplay their spiritual differences by focusing on what they can agree upon which is the "physical needs of their clients and people's need to know who God is." Mentoring takes place in the individual congregations, as opposed to the ministry's centralized location, possibly reducing the potential for conflict.

Some ministry personnel hope that their own faith may be an inspiration for clients, although they do not proselytize. One executive director states: "Faith-based organizations can talk about God, pray—not impose. But we have the freedom to talk about faith, hope, love, and those other flowery things of faith." Another states: "We do not proselytize but as we engage with clients and they trust us, I hope they see our personal faith…[and that seeing it] encourages them to develop their own."

Congregational Ties

The ministries' connection to supporting congregations is important to their identities as faith-based organizations, and the churches are an important source of leadership, volunteers, and donations. Keeping the churches engaged in a meaningful way is a primary goal and one that many ministries find challenging for several reasons. First, the churches in most communities face challenges of their own. In addition, one executive director indicates that as the newness of the ministry wears off, the churches' interests wane. Finally, as a ministry becomes larger, support may dwindle because congregations believe they are no longer needed. The following four factors emerged in this study as important to the community ministries' ties with the churches and to maintaining their strong support.

Clergy are important partners in keeping congregations enthusiastic about the ministry's mission.
Enthusiasm from the pulpit is important for generating congregational support. However, keeping clergy involved has become an ongoing challenge. In many cases, the passage of time has weakened ties between clergy and the community ministry. Most ministries evolved into formal ecumenical organizations either from a dialogue among local church pastors or out of a denominationally supported ministry. However, clergy often withdrew from the operation of the ministry as laity involvement increased and direct service programs became more staff driven. Furthermore, in areas of limited resources, pastors may have second jobs or be responsible for multiple parishes, and therefore difficult to engage. Also, clergy and ministry turnover make building new relationships continually necessary.

Ministries cultivate clergy support through direct communication and by recruiting them as board members. One ministry implemented a clergy advisory council that participates in task forces and strategic planning initiatives. Many regularly host clergy breakfasts or luncheons to foster relationships and update them on the ministry's activities.

Congregations need clear and flexible avenues for involvement.
Strategies for engaging volunteers are often intentional efforts to increase both the ministry's capacity as well as churches' involvement. Ministries must be innovative and provide cost effective methods that help all churches and their members stay involved. Affluent congregations have more resources to share; however, churches are often located in the same community as the ministry's clients and face their own economic challenges. Furthermore, demographic changes such as aging populations and increased ethnic and religious diversity can be a drain on the energy of once thriving congregations.

The ministries have found that recruiting within congregations, training, and flexible management are critical for maintaining an effective and committed volunteer work force. Several find that utilizing space provided by congregations is an economical way for some churches to support the community ministry, and a method that can help the ministry stay connected to the church. Ministry governance is a key area in which church members participate in the organization. Most ministries require that at least a majority of their board members come from the churches. One ministry tries to insure that small churches, as well as the larger congregations, are represented on the board.

It may be important for community ministries to consider how organizational decisions impact avenues for church participation. For example, as the ministries grow they may become more interested in board development, which can change how board members are selected. In addition, many ministries find that assembly meetings at which all churches are represented become too cumbersome and may decrease the frequency with which they meet or eliminate them altogether.

A mutual influence exists between church vitality and the church's relationship to the community ministry.
A church's vitality can affect the congregation's commitment level to the community ministry; in turn, participation in the ministry can positively impact the vibrancy of the church. Congregations can become focused "within the four walls," and churches located outside the ministry's primary area of service may be less committed to serving disadvantaged neighborhoods. Participation in a community ministry can bring new life and sense of purpose to a congregation and help renew the church's ties to the wider community. In addition, by revitalizing and sharing a struggling congregation's underused facilities, a community ministry can help preserve and expand a

church's presence in its neighbor-hood.

Several community ministries offer programs that engage congregations in service as a church community, in contrast to having only programs that recruit volunteers out of the church. Community ministries can act as a catalyst for these projects by providing ideas, technical assistance, and funding for congregation-based services.

Some executive directors spoke of the "passivity of the churches" and the difficulty of moving them from "hands-on volunteering to social justice." Strategies ministries use to engage congregations in systemic problems include workshops targeting issues such as racial reconciliation and social welfare concerns, hosting community events such as ecumenical worship services and Martin Luther King Day celebrations, and committees to promote advocacy projects.

Sustained interest and support requires effectively communicating the ministry's mission and activities.
Ministries must be able to articulate a clear vision and offer compelling evidence of community needs and the organization's impact upon them. Most ministries publish a newsletter and are avail- able for presentations to congregations. One offers tours for church members so they can witness first-hand the community's needs. As ministries become more strategic about their mission, they often develop an organizational culture and vocabulary that helps them to present a coherent image. Two community ministries have a written history, outlining the ministry's evolution and its vision for the future.

Organizational Strategies

One executive director pointed out: "How the ministry is run is as important as its mission." Local resources and needs may significantly influence how the ministries develop, but leadership and organizational strategies largely determine the vision and the ministry's ability to make the vision a reality. Despite variation among the ministries, three key factors emerged as critical to creating and sustaining a strong community ministry: 1) leadership; 2) strategic planning; and 3) collaboration.

LEADERSHIP
Executive Directors: The "face" of the ministry and "practical visionaries."
The executive director is the "face" of the ministry and is responsible for building and maintaining relationships. One executive director captures the range of social worlds in which the leaders operate: "I know the mayor and a guy who lives under a street bridge who prays for me everyday." Many executive directors state that their role requires they be comfortable in cross-cultural worlds and develop a variety of vocabularies. They must be able to relate to the poor and affluent, different ethnic groups, business and civic leaders, and a diverse array of churches, and they must help these varied stakeholders find common ground without compromising their organization's, or their own, values.

The executive director's position requires vision and an entrepreneurial spirit, as well as the practical managerial skills necessary to accomplish the vision. The challenge, according to one executive director, is to balance the "ministry of the church" with "being a bureaucrat." The organization's value system, as well as its work, must reflect and further the goals of faith-based ministry. Maintaining "family friendly" policies and positive relationships requires flexibility in an organiza- tion that must raise most of its budget each year and operate diverse programs in multiple locations, and in most cases, without the infrastructure that many businesses take for granted.

STRATEGIC PLANNING
Develop a clear mission and "live every minute by it."
Strategic mission statements serve as guideposts in the development of ministries' programs and are important for communicating with supporters and community stakeholders. However, being able to "tell the ministry's story" is equally important for the organization. A clearly articulated mission can become woven into the ministry's culture, creating and reflecting harmony between its mission and organizational behavior. Several sites have an internal vocabulary that signals their organizational culture and also helps articulate their mission. For example, one ministry expresses its mission as

helping people to emerge from hurting situations. The individuals they serve are not referred to as clients, but as participants who partner with the ministry in rebuilding their lives. This language has become an integral part of communicating the ministry's mission, identifying program gaps and measuring their success. It is also central to how staff members evaluate clients' needs and understand and work towards the ministry's goals.

Strategic planning is a key component in the evolution of most of these ministries, and some are currently involved in a visioning process. Through an intentional analysis, the ministries identify their strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. Periodic review of the ministry's mission is necessary to determine whether or not its goals are still aligned with the organization and the community. Identifying core values and goals helps the ministry build an organizational structure that supports its mission. Growth and organizational development, however, can create periods of instability and require changes that are difficult for the staff. One executive director acknowledges that as a ministry expands, it becomes necessary to balance the "needs of the staff with the needs of the organization," and often the organization's needs must take precedence.

COLLABORATION
Be an "active and responsible partner in the community." Partnering with congregations is just one example of the communi-ty ministries' collaborative efforts. Most ministries either directly partner, or maintain links, with government agencies and other community organizations. As one ministry staff member states: "If we can't give [you what you need], we can find someone who can." Collaborating with healthcare professionals and other program area experts allows the ministries to contribute their strengths in service to clients they might not otherwise reach. Through collaboration, the ministries and the institutional church have a stronger voice in the community and greater access to government agencies and decision-makers. Collaborative efforts also improve their access to funding and the community's ability to coordinate and equitably distribute services and resources.

Financial Resources and Their Impact

Fund raising is an ongoing challenge for community ministries, and financial stability is difficult to achieve. Some staff members relate that they constantly worry about money, and many indicate that continually "chasing dollars" diverts time and energy away from serving clients. Furthermore, funding sources have a significant impact on the organizations. They can influence a ministry's outreach capacity and partnerships, the populations they serve, and their operating practices. The following section discusses funding challenges, funding sources' impact on the ministries, and concerns about the increased emphasis on measuring outcomes.

FUNDING CHALLENGES
Increased Costs and Administrative Needs – Administrative and infrastructure needs expand as the ministries and their services grow; however, funding for such initiatives can be difficult to obtain. In addition, one executive director explained that they must continually find "new money" because funding from existing sources such as government contracts does not increase while their costs do.
Shifting Priorities – Foundations and government funding interests can shift, resulting in sudden and dramatic budget cuts, reduced services, and, in some cases, program elimination.
Local Resource –: Community resources play a significant role in determining ministries' revenues and funding options. Factors such as the strength and policies of local foundations, the affluence and vitality of community churches, and the effectiveness of local networks can influence ministries' choices and the sources to which they have access.

FUNDING SOURCES AND THEIR IMPACT
Collaborations: Government agencies and private foundations have been instrumental in leading community ministries into collaborative arrangements to achieve efficiencies in funding allocation and to coordinate the distribution of services.
Government Funding – Government funding is increasing as a source of revenue for many ministries. The strength of government contracts is the amount of long-term support that they offer.

However, the executive directors express some of the following concerns regarding government contracts and the increased emphasis on using government monies to fund faith-based social services:

- **Funding Restrictions –** Government contracts typically target certain population groups, requiring ministries to find alternative funding sources and run "parallel programs" for clients that do not meet the guidelines. One ministry indicated that "milestone-based" funding creates cash-flow problems, and another reported that the statewide perspective of a government agency is forcing the ministry to develop services that do not match its community's needs.
- **Impact on Values –** One executive director stated: "Where your money comes from influences your values." Many fear that "being in bed with the government" could make it difficult to criticize policies that impact their clients, leading to an emphasis on "fixing the individual and not the system." Some expressed concerns that the government will abdicate its responsibility and "put caring for the poor on the backs of the churches." However, many consider it positive that faith-based organizations are receiving so much national attention as a result of charitable choice and the faith-based initiative. Some see the potential for being better able to compete against larger religiously affiliated providers such as Catholic Charities and having more influence on social policy decisions. One executive director especially welcomes this new level of scrutiny, and believes it will demonstrate that

faith-based organizations are more effective at changing lives than secular programs.

Private Foundations – Foundations are an important resource for many of the ministries. However, large foundations are often difficult to access and ministries' local options are limited. One executive director reports that the only local foundation has a policy that prohibits funding of faith-based organizations. A funds development staff member summarizes one major concern voiced by many ministry personnel who work with foundation grants: "I would never dream of asking a foundation to fund the same thing [twice in a row]." Many staff report that they are forced to continually create new programs or add services to existing ones in an effort to qualify for funding, a practice that can overextend the ministry and its staff.

Church Support – Church contributions are a critical component of the ministries' identity as faith-based organizations and an important source of unrestricted funds, monies that become increasingly important as the government looks to faith-based organizations to enlarge the shrinking safety net. Some ministries express concern that government support will weaken churches' involvement. In addition, the "chaos of the denominations" is having an impact on judicatory support, according to two ministries. This can inhibit the equitable redistribution of resources and likely has a larger impact on ministries located in neighborhoods with smaller, less affluent congregations.

MEASURING OUTCOMES

Government and private funding contracts have always included reporting requirements. However, both of these funding sources have a renewed interest in program evaluation. President Bush's Faith-Based Initiative has increased the pressure to determine the effectiveness of faith-based social services, and private foundations are becoming more interested in measurable results.

Many ministry leaders acknowledge the importance of monitoring how money is spent and several have worked with funders and consultants to develop evaluation plans. The executive director of one ministry states: "As faith-based organizations prove themselves in a documented way, then the argument [about funding them] is over. Bottom line—if faith-based organizations are more effective, then we are remiss in not using them." However, an examination of these ministries points to several issues that are problematic when defining outcome measurements for community ministries.

How do you measure a smile?
Several executive directors said that while they understand their importance, measurements are almost antithetical to what they do. One states: "It is not part of our emphasis to measure the work, the emphasis is on the individual being served."

What is success?
Measuring how a ministry's action has changed someone's life may be difficult. One program manager who works with troubled youth reported that just seeing a "kid complete the program is a success." Similarly, how do you measure the

benefit that the ministry and its programs have for a community? One executive director found it difficult to obtain funding to start a community newspaper because funding sources wanted to know how he would measure its impact. His colleague argues that it is not always easy to quantify outcomes, and that some proposals require such specificity as to be a barrier to projects that could really make a difference.

Defining and measuring successful mentoring relationships is challenging, according to one ministry's county official: "People are demanding accountability and want to know if local programs are working…We don't know what to ask for [in the contracts]…and how can we expect them to immediately succeed at what we have been trying and failing to do, for 40 years?"

Who or what really makes the difference in a person's life?

Many community ministries refer their clients to, and work in collaboration with, other organizations. One executive director points out that to really determine outcomes, one would have to follow a client for a long time. In a similar vein, a program manager states: "It's planting seeds. You don't always see the harvest—you don't always see the results, but many germinate later on."

How do you interpret client numbers?

At a minimum, most community ministries keep records of the number of clients served. However, even this basic measure can be difficult to obtain and interpret. The ministries vary in their ability to easily track client data and maintain historical documentation. Many lack the technical equipment and expertise to fully automate the process, and hard-copy records are less easily and safely stored.

Examining these ministries also demonstrates the need for caution in relying on client numbers to evaluate community needs and the impact of social policies. Many factors subject to change, both internal and external to the ministry, can influence client numbers overall and at the program level. These factors include ministry policies and services, program success and referrals, revenues and funding sources, local social service networks, and population changes.

Client Needs and the Impact of Welfare Reform

Welfare reform's potential impact on both disadvantaged individuals and faith-based organizations has been a major factor in current debates surrounding social policy. Therefore, client needs and the impact of welfare reform was a major area of inquiry at the ministries in this report. Comparing ministries' client numbers between 1995 and 2000 is one method that was proposed to evaluate this impact. As previously mentioned, however, a thorough review of each ministry reveals difficulties with interpreting client data. Site visits and comprehensive interviews with ministry personnel reveal five factors that limit the ability to assess welfare reform's impact based on client numbers:

1) Many ministry programs were implemented after 1996. In addition to their limited years of operation, new programs can influence the number of clients at the ministry or in particular programs because of their impact on the ministry's resources and overall mission.

2) The ministries programs are dynamic, responding to communities' needs, available resources, and organizational requirements. They relocate services, expand hours and space of operations, develop new funding sources and collaborations, and alter policies to fit their changing missions.

3) Local factors such as housing, social service networks, population characteristics, church vitality, and the economy can lead to variation among the coalitions. Furthermore, local changes in these factors can make it difficult to compare dif-

ferent points in time at the same ministry.

4) Resources for some programs are predetermined by factors such as contracts and space constraints. Examples of this include government-funded programs and shelters.

5) Ministries vary in the infrastructure they have available to easily track and store client information. In some cases, client data and characteristics such as ethnicity are not available.

Despite these limitations, thorough interviews with executive directors and their staff are a rich source for identifying major concerns about clients' needs and how the ministries are responding to the impact of welfare reform.

CLIENTS AND WELFARE REFORM

Working Poor – The ministries report that they are serving an increased number of people who work but earn wages that keep them continually on the edge of crisis. Staff members relate these increased numbers to welfare reform and the growing number of low-paying jobs. "Work first" policies force individuals into jobs that do not pay living wages or provide benefits, and that have limited potential for future growth. Many ministries report that gentrification and well-intentioned projects designed to improve their communities are displacing families and intensifying problems associated with low wages.

Government Policies and Procedures – Some report that in addition to strict eligibility require-

ments and recertification rules, the number of those without benefits is increasing because of inconvenient policies that discourage those who are eligible from applying. They also report that government agency staff are poorly trained regarding county and state welfare benefits, and several ministries indicate that late child care payments from government contractors are causing clients to be dropped by their child care provider. They believe that government case managers have too many clients to provide them with the support they need and that clients are confused by the maze of agencies' departmental policies. Furthermore, they charge that agencies' compartmentalized organizational structures offer a fragmented approach to clients' inter-related issues.

Client Needs – While other areas of concern were identified at the ministries, most report that the three following issues are priorities in their communities: adequate and affordable housing, hunger, and youth services. In addition, most report that clients are dealing with complex issues that impede their progress out of poverty. Ministry personnel indicate that families are "breaking down" and clients do not have healthy, supportive family members to which they can turn. Many are dealing with problems such as abuse, addiction, and mental illness.

Impact on the Ministries – Welfare benefit restrictions and strict eligibility requirements have reduced revenues at several ministries by their impact on program reimbursements. Furthermore, many

ministries fear that they will be hit hard as the most difficult to employ lose their welfare benefits. One ministry with a large welfare population implemented a mentoring program with government funding to address this concern, but the government cancelled their contract. One ministry that currently provides mentoring for welfare-to-work clients reports that the complexity of clients' problems has increased as those most able to work leave the welfare rolls.

RESPONSE TO CLIENT NEEDS

Social and demographic change, devolving social services, and welfare reform policies that stress personal responsibility have generated demands for new services and increased pressure on faith-based organizations. Opinions among the ministries about welfare reform reflect subtle differences but all agree that clients are presenting "hard core" problems that emergency assistance will not fix. One program director explains: "We need soup kitchens, but they are only one piece of the system. Nothing is going to happen at that soup kitchen that will allow that person to not need it the next day."

Emergency assistance, frequently the first service implemented, remains the anchor of many ministries' outreach programs. However, the ministries implemented many new programs during the 1990s, mostly related to the following key areas:

Education and Employment – Several ministries have implemented educational programs, ESL classes, and job preparation services to help move clients into meaningful, living-waged jobs. These programs also include workshops to intervene in destructive patterns and help clients with life skills such as budgeting and parenting.

Youth – Several sites are involved in implementing after-school and mentoring programs for youth. The need for affordable child care is a frequently mentioned concern that ministries find difficult to address. Factors that make it difficult to implement child care programs include manpower and space requirements, regulations, funding, and liability issues. Welfare reform and increased demands for child care are also compromising child care quality, an issue that one ministry is addressing by providing child care workers with training and other services.

Mentoring – Several community ministries now offer mentoring and case management programs to provide clients with intensive, long-term support. These programs assist clients by helping them set goals and take manageable steps towards independence, and by giving them friendly encouragement in the process.

Shelter – Several case management programs are offered in conjunction with emergency shelter and transitional housing, services that many ministries report as underserved needs in their community.

Research Recommendations

The ministries in this report represent variations in terms of region, community profile, geographic service area, mission and programs, and resources. The next research step should involve a national sample of community ministries in order to enhance our understanding of their rich diversity across the United States, as well as provide a national data base on successful strategies and programs for meeting community needs. Four areas in particular are recommended for further study:

1) As ministries respond to social change, they become more sophisticated in terms of their missions and their needs. How does this growth impact the organization and what strategies are most successful for strengthening the organization while keeping the ministry's values intact? Some areas to consider include organizational structure and development, program evaluation, strategic planning, and communications.

2) How do mission expansion and new funding sources and networks affect the ministries' relationships with the congregations? What role do the congregations play in shaping the ministries and in what ways do the community ministries influence the congregations? What organizational strategies are most effective for maintaining strong ties with congregations?

3) Funding practices are a primary concern for the ministries. Working cooperatively with funding sources, more analysis should be given to the following issues: 1) funding strategies that encourage innovation and yet provide long-term support for existing programs; 2) program and funding strategies that insure that a safety net exists for all community members; and 3) identifying methods to address uneven services due to variation in community resources.

4) What support is there among the community ministries for utilizing a national organization such as ICMN to act as a coordinating agent for funding and advocacy?

Conclusion

Community ministries are a critical link in the social service system. They play an important role in rebuilding distressed communities by strengthening networks and helping to concentrate and equitably distribute resources to disadvantaged neighborhoods. Furthermore, by promoting collaboration, community ministries enable congregations to put their faith into action and expand their outreach capacity. This report demonstrates the need to include community ministries in research of faith-based social services. Enhancing the effectiveness of community ministries depends on understanding more about their challenges and their interrelationships with congregations and other community partners, and on identifying successful strategies that ministries can use to strengthen their organizations.